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*The Political Structure of Constitution Making: The Federal Convention of 1787**

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The authors contend that our understanding of the Federal Convention and of the Constitution that it produced has been substantially and unnecessarily clouded by an ancient dispute between the adherents of two very broad traditions of political analysis. A "rationalist" line of interpretation has consistently argued for the centrality of ideas and political principles to the outcome of the Convention's debates, while a "materialist" tradition has consistently stressed the importance of practical politics and economic interests. The authors integrate these alternative traditions of analysis and explanation by demonstrating that a dynamic relationship of mutual interdependence existed between philosophical *and* material influences in the Convention. The authors demonstrate, through both empirical and interpretive means, that, although questions of both philosophical and material content and import were before the Convention throughout, questions of each general type dominated the Convention's attention during particular phases of its work. Therefore, the focus of debate and decision, as well as the voting coalitions that confronted one another over the issues under discussion, were organized around shared principles at some stages, while at other times they were organized around conflicting material interests.

> *Ever since men began reflecting on politics they have oscillated between two diametrically opposed interpretations. According to one, politics is conflict. . . . According to the other . . . , politics is an effort to bring about the rule of order and justice.*
>
> —*Maurice Duverger (1966, p. xii)*

Introduction

This study contends that our understanding of the Federal Convention and of the Constitution that it produced has been substantially and unnecessarily clouded by an ancient dispute between the adherents of two very broad traditions of political analysis. Robert Dahl located the epistemological source of this intellectual dispute by identifying "two fundamentally different types" of explanation for the relationship between political institutions and the broader socioeconomic and cultural contexts within which they rise. Dahl (1963) has argued that "a *Rationalist* explanation . . . gives primacy to the way men think about politics. . . . But

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since men do not have equal power, it is the philosophical beliefs of the rulers that are [treated as] particularly critical. . . . A *Materialist* explanation . . . holds that . . . the way people think about politics is a rationalization or defense of the political, social, and economic institutions that they think will maximize their own material interests'' (pp. 107–8). Because rationalist and materialist explanations of politics and political behavior are based in radically different epistemological traditions, they have frequently been viewed as mutually exclusive by devotees who adhere to them with ideological fervor.

We argue that the impact of this dispute on studies of the Federal Convention has been both clear and almost wholly unfortunate. One line of interpretation has consistently argued for the centrality of ideas and political principles to the outcome of the Convention's debates, while the other has stressed the importance of practical politics and economic interests.

In this study we attempt to integrate these alternative traditions of explanation and analysis by demonstrating that a dynamic relationship of mutual interdependence existed between philosophical *and* material influences in the Convention. Our thesis is that principles guided action on distinguishable types of questions, while on other sets of questions personal, state, and regional interests encroached upon, and in some cases overwhelmed and subordinated, the independent impact of ideas. More importantly, we demonstrate that questions of each general type dominated the Convention's attention during particular phases of its work, so that at some stages, the dominant voting coalitions were organized around shared principles, while at other times the dominant coalitions were organized around conflicting material interests.

Conflicting Interpretations: Principle versus Interest

Americans entered the twentieth century convinced that British Prime Minister William Gladstone had captured the special character of the American Constitution in describing it as ''the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man'' (Smith, 1980, p. 94). Yet, less than a decade into the new century, J. Allen Smith (1907) set the tone for an explicitly materialist interpretation of the Convention's work by arguing that ''the American scheme of government was planned and set up to perpetuate the ascendancy of the property-holding class'' (p. 298). Charles A. Beard (1913) elaborated this ''economic interpretation'' of the motives of the Framers and the outcome of their deliberations. He concluded that ''the members of the Philadelphia Convention which drafted the Constitution were, with a few exceptions, immediately, directly, and personally interested in, and derived economic advantages from, the establishment of the new system'' (1913, p. 324).

By mid-century, the charges against the Founders had become less personal, but no less materialist in character. John P. Roche (1961) applied the assumptions of democratic pluralism to his analysis of the Convention and concluded that the Constitution was no more than a particularly impressive example of ''political improvisation'' (p. 810). It was ''a patchwork sewn together under the pressure

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of both time and events by a group of extremely talented democratic politicians'' (p. 815). Though Roche did not intend his reading to ''suggest that the Constitution rested on a foundation of impure or base motives'' (p. 801) many analysts feared that the cumulative impact of his and other materialist interpretations of the Founding had diminished the nation's sense of direction and purpose. Walter Lippmann (1955) concluded that ''the public philosophy [that guided the nation's early development] is in large measure intellectually discredited among contemporary men. . . . The signs and seals of legitimacy, or rightness and of truth, have been taken over by men who reject . . . the doctrine of constitutional democracy'' (pp. 136–37).

The recovery of a sound and effective ''public philosophy'' did not come quickly. Fully twenty years after Lippmann wrote, Martin Diamond (1976) was forced to conclude that ''the old root American ideas have been challenged on nearly every front and cast into doubt by the most powerful contemporary intellectual currents'' (p. 3). In defense of the Founders and the political system that they created, Diamond adopted and promoted a view that clearly, even combatively, emphasized the impact of ideas and political principles over material interests in the Convention. He argued that ''the Convention supplies a remarkable example of . . . how theoretical matters govern the disposition of practical matters'' (Diamond, 1981, p. 30). In Diamond's view, ''the debate over the Constitution was a climactic encounter between two rival political theories of how the ends of democratic consent, liberty and competent government can best be obtained'' (1981, p. 54). Despite the profound impact of Diamond's work on many students of American political ideas and institutions, others have continued to embrace the predominately materialist view that we have identified with Smith, Beard, and Roche.

Despite the persistence of this long-standing dispute within the tradition of constitutional studies, we take the view of Maurice Duverger that politics is ''always and at all times both the instrument by which certain groups dominate others . . . and also a means . . . of achieving some integration of the individual into the collectivity for the general good'' (1966, p. xiii). Therefore, we seek to demonstrate that debate moved between two levels of constitutional construction and that these levels represented significant shifts in the relative importance of political principles and material interests in the Convention.

This reading of the Convention's work has been given impressive theoretical support by two important analytical distinctions concerning the logical structure of constitutional choice made some twenty years ago by James Buchanan and Gordon Tullock and elaborated more recently by Vincent Ostrom. Buchanan and Tullock (1962) began their attempt to develop a ''positive'' or ''economic theory of constitutions'' by distinguishing between the ''operational'' level of practical politics and the ''ultimate constitutional level of decision-making'' (p. 6). Ostrom (1979) has expanded on this distinction by explaining that choice at ''the *constitutional level* focuses upon alternative sets of rules or institutional arrangements . . . that apply to the taking of future operational decisions'' (p. 2). At the

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operational level, on the other hand, "one is concerned with who gets what, when, and how," and at this level, "the primary preoccupation of inquiry is with the play of the political game within a given set of rules" (ibid., p. 1).

When concern focuses exclusively upon choice and decision at the constitutional level, Buchanan and Tullock (1962) suggest that the constitution-maker must address two related but analytically distinct sets of issues or questions. "Individuals choose, first of all, the fundamental organization of activity. Secondly, they choose the decision-making rules" (Buchanan and Tullock, 1962, p. 210). This distinction highlights the fact that the first order of business during constitutional construction is to address what, in this essay, we will call "higher" level questions of regime type and of the basic options for institutional design. Only when these decisions have been made does choice pass to what we will refer to as a "lower" level of constitutional design, where the decision rules that will regulate and order behavior within the regime's primary institutions are selected. These "lower" level choices specify the ways in which later operational decisions will be made, by whom, and over what range of issues.

At the "higher" level, the constitution-maker wrestles with general questions concerning the scope, scale, and form appropriate to government. Will the regime be an aristocratic, democratic, or mixed republic? Will the government have a legislative or an executive focus? Will its legislature be bicameral or unicameral? Will its executive be one man or several? These questions are less likely to be decided with reference to the economic status, social role, or material characteristics of the constitution-maker than with reference to his philosophical assumptions concerning the interplay among human nature, political institutions, and the good society.

As the general institutional design and the relationships that will pertain among its component parts become clear, the individual constitution-maker moves closer to the realm of practical politics. The questions that dominate this "lower" level of constitutional design concern the regulation of political behavior through rules governing such specific matters as citizenship, suffrage and voting, eligibility to office, and representation. The choices made concerning these matters determine the context of day-to-day politics at the operational or practical level. Therefore, questions at this level are much more likely to be decided with direct reference to the political, economic, and social characteristics of the chooser, his state, or his region than with reference to his philosophical principles.

Our intention in this essay is to suggest that the division of scholarly analysis into rationalist versus materialist or principle versus interest interpretations of the Convention's work derives from a tendency of scholars to focus on one level of constitutional choice or the other. Those who posit the dominance of ideas in the Convention have concentrated their attention almost exclusively on the "higher" level of constitutional choice, where the group is choosing among regime types (as in extended versus small republic forms). Those analysts who posit the dominance of interests in the Convention have focused on questions at the "lower" level of constitutional choice, where debate over specific decision rules (as in

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proportional versus equal representation in the legislature) tends to bear much more the interest-laced character of practical politics.

Further, we show that when the Convention concentrated on "higher" level questions of constitutional design, coalitions formed along lines of intellectual cleavage. During these phases of the Convention's work, the delegates from the more nationally oriented Middle Atlantic states opposed the more locally oriented delegates representing the northern and southern periphery. When the focus shifted to "lower" level choices among specific decision rules, each of which represented an alternative distribution of authority within and over the institutions of government, the states split along lines defined by economic and geographic interest, state size (large versus small), and region (North versus South).

The Extended Republic versus Traditional Republicanism: Power and Principle

The Convention's first two weeks of substantive debate, 29 May to 9 June, saw a fundamentally important clash of ideas at the "higher" level of constitutional choice (Jensen, 1964, p. 43; Smith, 1965, pp. 36–41). In broad outlines very similar to those sketched by Martin Diamond, Douglass Adair (1957) has argued that the American Constitution was born in a clash between a new science of republican politics, spawned by the Scottish Enlightenment, and traditional republicanism. In addition, Adair contended that "the most creative and philosophical disciple of the Scottish school of science and politics in the Philadelphia Convention was James Madison," and "his most amazing political prophecy . . . was that the size of the United States and its variety of interests could be made a guarantee of stability and justice under a new constitution" (1957, p. 346). Madison's theory of the "extended republic" sought to offer a positive new approach to providing "a republican remedy for the diseases most incident to republican government" (Earle, 1937, p. 62).

Nonetheless, Madison's "new science" met substantial opposition from delegates who clung to the traditional republicanism that had informed the Revolution, the early state constitutions, and the Articles of Confederation. As Martin Diamond (1972) correctly noted: "The main thrust of the opposition resulted from the more general argument that only the state governments (small republics), not some huge central government, could be made effectively free and republican" (p. 635).

These alternative visions of the appropriate scope and scale for republican government did not stand on equal terms as the Convention opened. After a decade of upheaval and turbulence at the state level and impotence at the level of the Confederation, traditional republican solutions had come to be questioned by nearly everyone and rejected by many. Whereas Madison arrived in Philadelphia with a new understanding of the governing potential inherent in the republican form, the traditional republicans arrived clinging to old nostrums whose credibility seemed clearly to be on the wane. Cecilia Kenyon (1955) has captured the predicament of these dispirited republicans by describing them as "men of little

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faith'' (p. 3). Perhaps more to the point, they were ''men of shaken faith,'' men whose political principles many now thought more appropriate to spawning a revolution than to providing the proper basis for just and stable republican government (Wood, 1969, pp. 396–413).

James Madison and those members of the Convention who sought to enhance dramatically the authority and independence of the national government moved decisively and successfully to capture the Convention's agenda and therewith to set the tone of its deliberations. The adoption, on 29 May, of Madison's Virginia Plan gave the ''extended republic'' men an initial edge because their general principles obviously underlay its specific provisions. On 30 May, they sought to solidify this potential advantage by putting the Convention on record in favor of radical change. Therefore, Edmund Randolph moved ''that a *national* Government [ought to be established] consisting of a *supreme* Legislative, Executive and Judiciary'' (Farrand, 1911, vol. 1, p. 33).

Many delegates sympathized with this root and branch approach, but others were wary, preferring the incremental approach to the Convention's business enunciated by John Dickinson of Delaware. Dickinson simply thought that wholesale change was unnecessary. ''We may resolve therefore, . . . that the confederation is defective; and then proceed to the definition of such powers as may be thought adequate to the objects for which it was instituted. . . . The enquiry should be—

1. What are the legislative powers which we should vest in Congress.
2. What judiciary powers.
3. What executive powers'' (Farrand, 1911, vol. 1, p. 42).

Table 1 highlights the dramatic division within the Convention over how to proceed and over the purposes and intentions that underlay the alternative approaches. The extended republic men (factor 1) sought to undertake immediately the radical changes necessary to institute a truly national government, while the small republic men (factor 2) favored incremental changes in the existing Confederation. The fact that nearly two-thirds (64.3 percent) of the variance in the roll-call voting over the Convention's first two weeks is captured by this two-factor solution indicates that this cleavage was both deep and stable.

The extended republic men from the Middle Atlantic region, led by Virginia's Madison and by Pennsylvania's James Wilson and Robert Morris, obviously held the early initiative. This largely reflected the fact that the small republic men had yet to formulate an acceptable balance between national and state authority that could be offered as a coherent alternative to Madison's Virginia Plan. As a consequence, their opposition lacked the conviction and cohesion that characterized the support for Madison's extended republic. This uncertainty was evident in the fact that two of the small republic delegations, Massachusetts and North Carolina, gave substantial support to the extended republic cause. These two states split their support almost evenly between the two factors, while no state on the first factor provided even modest support for the incremental approach favored by the small republic men.

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TABLE 1

Extended Republic versus Small Republic: Power and Principle—Two-Factor Solution for Roll-Call Votes 1–36, 29 May–9 June, Varimax Rotation (Ortho)

	1 Extended Republic	2 Small Republic	h^2
New Hampshire	absent	absent	absent
Massachusetts	(.60)	(.67)	.81
Connecticut	–.21	(.63)	.44
New York	(.76)	.29	.66
New Jersey	absent	absent	absent
Pennsylvania	(.82)	–.10	.68
Delaware	(.70)	.08	.49
Maryland	(.77)	–.12	.60
Virginia	(.66)	.32	.54
North Carolina	(.51)	(.68)	.73
South Carolina	–.04	(.86)	.74
Georgia	.27	(.81)	.73
Sum of squares	3.50	2.93	6.43
Percentage of variance explained	35.00	29.30	64.30

NOTE: The following definitions may help those who are not familiar with factor analysis to interpret the table above and those which follow. The columns headed by numbers and titles contain factor loadings. "The loadings . . . measure which variables (state voting delegations) are involved in what factor (coalition of state voting delegations) and to what degree. They are correlation coefficients between variables and factors" (Rummel, 1970, p. 137). "The column headed h^2 displays . . . the portion of a variable's (state's) total variance that is accounted for by the factors and is the sum of the squared loadings for a variable" (Rummel, 1970, p. 142). Parentheses identify the states that achieve full coalition membership, defined as factor loadings of .50 or higher. See the methodological appendix for a brief discussion of the factor model employed in this study.

Madison's vision of a great commercial republic, ruled by a powerful national government that would regulate with competence and justice the activities of the several states, was directly challenged by John Dickinson on 2 June. In Dickinson's view, the critical problem posed by government in a free society was the danger that authority might concentrate and become tyrannical (Bailyn, 1969, pp. 55–93). To minimize this constant danger, Dickinson argued, the national government should remain weak and "the Legislative, Executive, & Judiciary departments ought to be made as independent [separate] as possible" (Farrand, 1911, vol. 1, p. 86).

On 4 June, Madison set about dismantling Dickinson's argument that the defense of republican liberty required a strict separation of responsibilities between the departments of a modestly empowered national government. In this

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important speech, Madison carefully presented and explained the theoretical underpinnings of his ''extended republic.'' William Pierce of Georgia recorded that ''Mr. Madison in a very able and ingenious Speech . . . proved that the only way to make a Government answer all the end of its institution was to collect the wisdom of its several parts in aid of each other [by blurring a pure separation of powers] whenever it was necessary'' (Farrand, 1911, vol. 1, pp. 110). By stressing the principle of ''checks and balances'' as a supplement and buttress to a strict ''separation of powers,'' the extended republic men sought to create a governmental structure in which each department was fully capable of and motivated to self-defense. If the integrity of the structure and its ability to forestall tyranny by maintaining separate centers of power could be depended upon, then great power could be given to the national government in the knowledge that one branch would check potential abuses of the other.

As the full implications of Madison's program became clearer to the small republic men, they struggled with increasing determination against the idea that substantial authority at the national level could be either necessary or safe. On 6 June, Roger Sherman contended that great power could not be well used because ''the objects of the Union . . . were few'' (Farrand, 1911, vol. 1, p. 133). Moreover, great power should not be housed at the national level because most ''matters civil & criminal would be much better in the hands of the States'' (ibid.). Therefore, Sherman concluded, ''the Genl. Government [should] be a sort of collateral Government which shall secure the States in particular difficulties. . . . I am against a Genl. Government and in favor of the independence and confederation of the States'' (ibid., pp. 142–43).

Madison met Sherman's opposition to a ''Genl. Government'' by challenging his assumption that the responsibilities of the national government would be few. In addition to those objects noted by Sherman (defense, commerce, and disputes between the states), Madison ''combined with them the necessity, of providing more effectually for the security of private rights, and the steady dispensation of Justice'' (Farrand, 1911, vol. 1, p. 134). Most of the delegates agreed when Madison argued that interested local majorities had been ''the source of these unjust laws complained of among ourselves'' (p. 135). Madison proposed a solution to the problem of majority tyranny that few others understood and that many saw as dangerously speculative. ''The only remedy is to enlarge the sphere . . . as far as the nature of Government would admit. . . . This [is] the only defense against the inconveniences of democracy consistent with the democratic form of Government'' (p. 136).

Madison's opponents knew that additional powers would have to be granted to a central government, but the idea of a truly national government clashed directly with the philosophical assumptions with which they (and most Americans with them) had been operating since before the revolution. Yet, bereft of viable alternatives, these ''men of shaken faith'' could oppose only half-heartedly when Madison contended that ''it was incumbent on [them] to try this [extended republic] remedy, and . . . to frame a republican system on such a scale & in such a

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form as will control all the evils which have been experienced'' (Farrand, 1911, vol. 1, p. 136). While the conflict remained at this ''higher'' level of constitutional choice, the small republic men cast about for alternatives to Madison's frighteningly radical approach. None came readily to hand (Diamond, 1981, p. 27).

Large States versus Small States: Power and Interest

On 7 June the tenor of the questions before the Convention began to drift from the high plane of theory to the rough and tumble of practical, interest-driven power politics. Dickinson opened the discussion on 7 June by restating the modest commitment of the small republic men to ''the preservation of the States in a certain degree of agency'' (Farrand, 1911, vol. 1, p. 153). James Wilson, on behalf of the supporters of the Virginia Plan, observed that the ''doubts and difficulties'' surrounding the place of the state governments in the proposed system derived from the threat that they seemed to pose to the independence and effectiveness of the national government; ''he wished to keep them from devouring the national Government'' (ibid.).

Those delegates who followed the logic of Madison's extended republic expected any initiative left with the state governments to be misused. Their theoretical principles told them that small republics had always been violent and short-lived because interested local majorities, possessed of the means, invariably acted unjustly. Therefore, Charles Pinckney proposed ''that the National Legislature should have authority to negative all [State] Laws which they should judge to be improper'' (Farrand, 1911, vol. 1, p. 164). Madison seconded the Pinckney motion, saying that he ''could not but regard an indefinite power [Pinckney had called it a ''universality of power''] to negative legislative acts of the States as absolutely necessary to a perfect system'' (ibid.).

Elbridge Gerry, Gunning Bedford, and William Paterson sprang to the defense of the states. Gerry scornfully rejected the idea of ''an indefinite power to negative legislative acts of the States'' as the work of ''speculative projector(s)'' whose theory had overwhelmed their experience and their judgment (Farrand, 1911, vol. 1, pp. 164–65). Bedford reminded his small state colleagues of the dangers inherent in such a plan. Paterson reinforced Bedford's remarks by holding up ''Virginia, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania as the three large States, and the other ten as small ones'' (p. 178). He concluded that ''the small States will have everything to fear. . . . New Jersey will never confederate on the plan before the Committee. She would be swallowed up'' (ibid., pp. 178–79). James Wilson responded in kind for the large states. He said that ''if the small States [would] not confederate on this plan, Pennsylvania and [he presumed] some other States, would not confederate on any other'' (ibid., p. 180). This exchange indicates how quickly and decisively the Convention's focus shifted from general theories about the nature of republican government to the impact of various modes of representation on particular states and regions. It also highlights the interest-laced char-

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acter (who gets what, when, and how) of discussion at the "lower" level of constitutional choice.

Table 2 shows how dramatically the voting alignments changed when the Convention's attention shifted from "higher" to "lower" level questions of constitutional choice. During the Convention's first two weeks, the states of the Deep South (the Carolinas and Georgia) had been wary of Madison's plan to place great power at the national level. Nonetheless, the extended republic men had successfully overcome the objections of the delegates from the Northeast and the Deep South to establish firmly the principle of a strong national government. Now the question was who would wield this great power? Under these new circumstances, the rapidly growing states of the Deep South joined Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Virginia (factor 1 of Table 2) to pursue proportional representation in both houses of the national legislature. The large states were opposed by five smaller states from the Middle Atlantic region (factor 2 of Table 2) demanding equal representation in at least one branch of the proposed legislature. The opposition voting pattern in Table 2 accounts for over one-half (50.7 percent) of the variance in the voting of all the states present between 11 June and 17 July.

The confrontation intensified on 11 June when Roger Sherman of Connecticut suggested that seats in the House of Representatives be allocated to the states in proportion to the number of free inhabitants, with each state to have one vote

TABLE 2

Large States versus Small States: Power and Interest—Two-Factor Solution for Roll-Call Votes 37–156, 11 June–16 July, Varimax Rotation (Ortho)

	1 Large States	2 Small States	h^2
New Hampshire	absent	absent	absent
Massachusetts	(.80)	.13	.66
Connecticut	.13	(.59)	.37
New York	−.02	(.52)	.27
New Jersey	−.13	(.75)	.58
Pennsylvania	(.65)	.09	.43
Delaware	−.08	(.74)	.56
Maryland	.25	(.78)	.68
Virginia	(.73)	.08	.54
North Carolina	(.79)	.12	.64
South Carolina	(.55)	−.22	.36
Georgia	(.69)	−.10	.49
Sum of squares	3.13	2.45	5.58
Percentage of variance explained	28.45	22.25	50.70

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in the Senate. The large state men still demanded proportional representation in both houses. Rufus King of Massachusetts and Wilson of Pennsylvania countered with a motion proposing "that the right of suffrage in . . . [the House of Representatives] ought not to be according to the rule established in the Articles of Confederation [equality], but according to some equitable ratio of representation," which after some discussion passed seven to three with one abstention (Farrand, 1911, vol. 1, p. 196). The large state coalition unanimously voted yes and was joined by Connecticut in pursuance of Sherman's suggested compromise. New York, New Jersey, and Delaware opposed the measure, while the Maryland delegates were divided. Wilson then sought to reinforce the allegiance of the southerners to the large state coalition by awarding them a three-fifths representation for their slaves. Only New Jersey and Delaware opposed (ibid., p. 201). Pressing the large state advantage, Wilson and Alexander Hamilton moved that "the right of suffrage in the 2nd branch [the Senate] ought to be according to the same rule as in the 1st branch" (ibid., p. 202). They were successful by the same six-to-five alignment that appears in Table 2. Thus, proportional representation in both houses, for a time, had been achieved by the triumph of the large states.

The opposing coalitions held firm through 29 June, when Connecticut's Oliver Ellsworth again declared the need for a compromise settlement. Wilson, arguing against any compromise by the large states on this crucial issue, adamantly rejected the idea, saying, "If a separation must take place, it could never happen on better grounds" (Farrand, 1911, vol. 1, p. 482). Gunning Bedford of Delaware answered for the small states, "I do not, gentlemen, trust you. If you possess the power, the abuse of it could not be checked; and what then would prevent you from exercising it to our destruction?" (ibid., p. 500).

With the proceedings obviously at a dangerous impasse, a compromise committee was chosen on 2 July that not only failed to include Wilson and Madison but also omitted every one of the strong spokesmen for the large state interest in proportional representation. Elbridge Gerry, who some weeks earlier had called Madison a "speculative projector," was elected committee chairman. According to Gerry, the small states held "a separate meeting . . . of most of the delegates of those five States [factor 2 of Table 2], the result of which was, a firm determination on their part not to relinquish the right of equal representation in the Senate" (Farrand, 1911, vol. 3, p. 264). With the small states still unyielding, no course was left but to compromise. On 5 July, Gerry delivered the report of his committee to the Convention. It proposed: "That in the first branch of the Legislature each of the States now in the Union be allowed one Member for every forty thousand inhabitants. . . . That in the second Branch of the Legislature each State shall have an equal Vote" (Farrand, 1911, vol. 1, p. 524). Between 5 July and 16 July when the Connecticut Compromise was finally adopted, the North and the South battled over the apportionment of seats in the House of Representatives through two additional compromise committees and interminable floor debates to insure that the regions of the new nation would be institutionally positioned to defend their paramount interests (Jillson, 1981, pp. 36–41).

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Executive Power and Citizen Participation: Principle and Interest

The coalitions that had aligned behind conflicting views of republican government during the Convention's first two weeks resurfaced immediately following the Connecticut Compromise as the Convention's focus turned again to questions at the ''higher'' level of constitutional choice. These familiar coalitions, still divided by philosophical differences concerning the nature of republican government, controlled the Convention's business for the next five weeks, well into late August. The small republic men (factor 1 of Table 3) sought to control the potential for abuse of governmental power by means of a strict separation of departments, a modest empowerment, and the use of explicit constitutional prohibitions and restraints where danger still seemed to lurk. Madison repeatedly enunciated the counterargument in favor of ''checks and balances'' as a supplement to a pure ''separation of powers'' that the extended republic men considered definitive and to which they frequently referred during debate over questions at the ''higher'' level of constitutional choice. He argued that

> if a Constitutional discrimination of the departments on paper were a sufficient security to each against encroachments of the other, all further provisions would indeed be superfluous. But experience had taught us a distrust of that security; and that it is necessary to introduce such a balance of powers and interests, as will guarantee the provisions on paper. Instead therefore of contenting ourselves with laying down the Theory in the Constitution that each department ought to be separate and distinct, it was proposed to add a defensive power to each which should maintain the Theory in practice. In so doing we did not blend the departments together. We erected effectual barriers to keep them separate. (Farrand, 1911, vol. 2, p. 77; see also *The Federalist,* nos. 47, 48, and 51)

An initial glance at Table 3 would seem to indicate that the six-member coalition of large and small Middle Atlantic states, ranging from Connecticut to Virginia, would again outnumber the five-member coalition of peripheral states, made up of New Hampshire and Massachusetts in the North with the Carolinas and Georgia in the Deep South. But on closer analysis, the match begins to look more even, perhaps even positively skewed in favor of the peripheral group.

The factor loadings for the peripheral states on factor 1 are not only quite strong, but all five are closely clustered between .70 and .79. Obviously, the very divisive battles of the several weeks past had cost the small republic coalition almost nothing in terms of support among its core members. Within the coalition of Middle Atlantic states, the situation was quite different. The small states had become much more wary of their large state colleagues. This is clearly indicated by the modest commitments of Connecticut, New Jersey, and Delaware to the coalition of Middle Atlantic states. Therefore, in close votes on critical issues, the likelihood was that the coalition of Middle Atlantic states would be weakened by the relatively frequent defection of its smaller members.

On 17 July, the day immediately following the resolution of the struggle between the large and small states over political control of the legislative branch, the question of the general form appropriate to the executive establishment was

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TABLE 3

Small Republic Localists versus Extended Republic Cosmopolitans—Two-Factor Solution for Roll-Call Votes 157–399, 17 July –29 August, Varimax Rotation (Ortho)

	1 Small Republic	2 Extended Republic	h^2
New Hampshire	(.75)	.14	.58
Massachusetts	(.70)	.12	.51
Connecticut	.24	(.52)	.33
New York	absent	absent	absent
New Jersey	.08	(.58)	.35
Pennsylvania	.16	(.71)	.53
Delaware	.19	(.55)	.34
Maryland	−.04	(.66)	.43
Virginia	.19	(.63)	.43
North Carolina	(.71)	.21	.55
South Carolina	(.79)	.06	.63
Georgia	(.70)	.19	.52
Sum of squares	2.84	2.36	5.20
Percentage of variance explained	25.82	21.45	47.27

taken up. Early in the Convention Roger Sherman had expressed the doctrine of executive power to which the small republic men (on factor 1 of Table 3) adhered when he said that he "considered the Executive magistracy as nothing more than an institution for carrying the will of the Legislature into effect" (Farrand, 1911, vol. 1, p. 65). Sherman's views were immediately challenged by the extended republic men (on factor 2 of Table 3), who held that power need not be severely limited if its undue concentration in any single branch of government was avoided. Seen in this light, a powerful and independent executive could be used to restrain a volatile and potentially dangerous legislature (Bailyn, 1967, pp. 55–93; Wood, 1969, pp. 18–28, 352–59, 430–38).

The Convention quickly translated these two perspectives on executive power into three major structural elements: mode of appointment (by the legislature or by specially chosen electors); length of term (tenure); and reeligibility (Jillson, 1979, p. 388). It was apparent to the delegates that these elements were themselves interrelated and that they all revolved around the question of the relationship of the executive branch to the legislature. Charles Warren (1928) has noted that "the views of most of the delegates as to length of term and as to re-election were dependent on the *mode* of election" (p. 365).

The battle over executive selection was rejoined on 17 July over the clause "To be chosen by the National Legislature," which, after two challenging pro-

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posals for popular election and selection by electors were soundly rejected, won unanimous approval. To counter the peripheral states' (factor 1 of Table 3) achievement of selection by the national legislature, the Middle Atlantic states (factor 2 of Table 3), behind Gouverneur Morris of Pennsylvania, successfully moved to strike out "to be ineligible a second time," arguing that to do otherwise would be to institutionalize inexperience at the helm of the national government. When a motion was defeated to strike out the seven-year term as well, the Convention was left with legislative selection and a long term of seven years, but with reeligibility permitted; thus, virtually assuring, in Madison's words, that "the Executive could not be independent of the Legislature, if dependent on the pleasure of that branch for a re-appointment" (Farrand, 1911, vol. 2, p. 34). Even the advocates of a broadly empowered national executive hesitated at the prospect of an unrestricted eligibility to successive long terms of office.

The question of executive selection reappeared on 19 July, allowing Ellsworth of Connecticut to reintroduce the idea of electors. The six Middle Atlantic states, ranging in a solid phalanx from Connecticut to Virginia, voted in favor of electors, while the three states of the Deep South opposed electors and Massachusetts divided on the issue (Farrand, 1911, vol. 2, p. 58). Both reeligibility and a six-year term were also quickly approved. Though the principle of electoral selection now seemed to enjoy majority support in the Convention, the practical question of distributing power among the states as they participated in that process continued to defy resolution (Thach, 1923, p. 102).

This problem in "lower" level constitutional design, the allocation of presidential electors among the states, was directly confronted on 20 July when Oliver Ellsworth, speaking for the small Middle Atlantic states, proposed "the following ratio: towit—one for each State not exceeding 200,000 inhabitants, two for each above that number and not exceeding 300,000 inhabitants, and, three for each state exceeding 300,000" (Farrand, 1911, vol. 2, p. 57). James Madison, always the advocate and defender of proportional representation, observed "that this would make in time all or nearly all the States equal. Since there were few that would not in time contain the number of inhabitants entitling them to 3 Electors" (ibid., p. 63). With this proportional representation view again dominating the large state delegations, New Jersey and Delaware abandoned their large state colleagues to join the five members of the peripheral coalition in reinstituting legislative selection, a long term, and an ineligibility. Soon thereafter, the Convention adjourned for ten days to give the Committee of Detail "time to prepare and report the Constitution" (ibid, p. 128).

The critical questions facing the Convention over the three weeks immediately following the delivery of the Committee of Detail report on 6 August concerned the stance that the new republic would take toward its citizens, particularly those citizens who might hold office in the new government. On the one hand, the cosmopolitan delegates from the Middle Atlantic states, generally supporting Madison's "extended republic," held a cautious but optimistically positive view of the ordinary citizen's ability to participate in a well-constructed national gov-

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ernment broadly empowered to govern freely as changing times and an indeterminate future might dictate. On the other hand, the localist delegates of the peripheral coalition, generally fearful of concentrated power and supporting the ''small republic'' view, took a much less optimistic view of the quality of popular participation and of the feasibility of constructing adequate ''checks and balances'' in any government awarded great discretion. The small republic men still thought it both wise and expedient to depart as little as possible from a pure theory of ''separation of powers.''

The debates that occurred during the week of 9 to 15 August on residency qualifications for the House and the Senate provide an example of the middle states' openness and the peripheral states' skepticism toward the nation's citizens. On 9 August, Gouverneur Morris proposed a 14-year residency requirement for Senators, ''urging the danger of admitting strangers into our public Councils'' (Farrand, 1911, vol. 2, p. 235). Charles Pinckney agreed when George Mason indicated that ''he should be for restraining the eligibility into the Senate, to natives,'' were it not for the fact that many foreigners had served nobly in the Revolution (ibid.). Pierce Butler of South Carolina supported Mason and Morris, observing that foreigners bring with them ''ideas of Government so distinct from ours that in every point of view they are dangerous'' (ibid., p. 236).

Madison and his nationalistic supporters from the middle states thought this approach unnecessary, illiberal, and unbecoming to the nation. Madison indicated that ''he thought any restriction in the Constitution . . . improper: because it [would] give a tincture of illiberality to the Constitution'' to bar new citizens from the Senate for fully 14 years, let alone to restrict that high privilege to natives. Benjamin Franklin rose to Madison's support, also dwelling on the ''illiberality,'' as well as the adverse impact on European opinion, of such an idea permanently ensconced in the Constitution. Wilson joined Madison and Franklin in pointing to ''the illiberal complexion which the motion would give to the System'' (Farrand, 1911, vol. 2, p. 237).

The vote on Morris's motion for a 14-year residency requirement, then one for 13 years, and, finally, another for 10 years were all defeated by a Middle Atlantic bloc of states stretching from Massachusetts to North Carolina. Finally, nine years was proposed and narrowly approved. Wilson sought to turn this modest victory into positive momentum for the middle state nationalists by moving to reconsider the citizenship requirement for the House in order to reduce it from seven years to three. Though this motion was defeated by a united Periphery, a futher attempt was made to attach ''a proviso that the limitation [of seven years] should not affect [the rights of] any person now a Citizen'' (Farrand, 1911, vol. 2, p. 270). In response, a familiar chorus of voices from the Periphery argued that even this presumption in favor of immigrants who had attained citizenship under state laws would constitute a danger. John Rutledge observed that ''the policy of precaution was as great with regard to foreigners now Citizens; as to those who are to be naturalized in [the] future.'' Sherman supported Rutledge with the very remarkable statement that ''the U. States have not invited foreigners

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nor pledged their faith that they should enjoy equal privileges with native Citizens'' (ibid.). Madison, Morris, and Wilson presented counterarguments, but when the votes were recorded a familiar pattern was evident. Once again, a united coalition of the Periphery had successfully exploited the divisions within the more diffuse coalition of Middle Atlantic states to transform its conservative preferences into constitutional provisions.

With these fundamental questions of executive selection and citizen participation at least temporarily resolved, both coalitions sought to exert their influence on collateral issues. The peripheral group did so always for the general purposes of limiting power and maintaining the cherished doctrine of ''separation of powers.'' The middle state coalition sought to provide each department, or combinations thereof, with the ability to defend itself. Once the integrity of the structure was guaranteed, the extended republic men took care to avoid minute restrictions on the assumption that future governments, confronting new and unforeseen problems, would need to draw on an unrestricted range of options.

Slavery, Commerce, Executive Selection and the West: State and Regional Interest

As the Convention moved into late August, several critical issues at the ''lower'' level of constitutional choice, including some provision for the critical regional issues of slavery and commercial regulation, for executive selection, and for control of the western lands, stood unresolved. Initially, it seemed that the dominant coalition of peripheral states would resolve each of these issues in its own favor against the increasingly desultory opposition of the Middle Atlantic states. As the middle state coalition tottered toward collapse, the more cohesive peripheral coalition seemed to gather new strength as its northern and southern wings quickly and smoothly came to an accommodation on the dangerous and divisive regional issues of the slave trade and commercial regulation.

When debate on the slave trade opened on the morning of 22 August, General Charles Cotesworth Pinckney went directly to the regional economics of the conflict between the states of the Upper South (Maryland and Virginia of the middle state coalition) and the states of the Lower South (the Carolinas and Georgia of the peripheral coalition) on this volatile issue. General Pinckney said, ''South Carolina & Georgia cannot do without slaves. As to Virginia she will gain by stopping the importations. Her slaves will rise in value, & she has more than she wants'' (Farrand, 1911, vol. 2, p. 371). For the shipping interests so dear to the northern wing of the peripheral coalition Pinckney held out the prospect that ''the more slaves, the more produce to employ the carrying trade; The more consumption also, and the more of this, the more revenue for the common treasury'' (ibid.).

Though Dickinson and others from the middle Atlantic argued that further importations were ''inadmissible on every principle of honor and safety,'' King spoke for the dominant peripheral coalition when he remarked that ''the subject should be considered in a political light only'' (Farrand, 1911, vol. 2, p. 372).

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Viewed from this practical perspective, King feared that "the exemption of slaves from duty whilst every other import was subjected to it, [was] an inequality that could not fail to strike the commercial sagacity of the Northn & middle States" (ibid., p. 373). General Pinckney agreed that allowance for a modest duty would "remove one difficulty," and G. Morris quickly moved to broaden the ground for compromise to include the sensitive regional concerns of slavery and commercial regulation, saying, "these things may form a bargain among the Northern & Southern States" (ibid., p. 374). A compromise committee of one member from each state was quickly appointed.

Luther Martin, Maryland's representative on the committee, later reported that the substance of the committee's report involved an interregional quid pro quo between the northern and southern wings of the peripheral coalition. "The eastern States, notwithstanding their aversion to slavery, were very willing to indulge the southern States, at least with a temporary liberty to prosecute the slave-trade, provided the southern States would, in their turn, gratify them, by laying no restrictions on navigation acts" (Farrand, 1911, vol. 3, p. 210–11). The Deep South would be allowed to continue importing slaves until at least 1800, while the northern states would be allowed to set commercial policy by simple majority vote of the national legislature.

The Commerce and Slave Trade Compromise was reported to the floor on 24 August but was not debated until 25 August. In the interim, the Convention returned to the complex issue of executive selection. Again, the Middle Atlantic states were powerless against a united coalition of peripheral states. The precise question before the Convention was whether the Periphery's preference for legislative selection would be exercised by separate ballots in the House and Senate, or, as Rutledge now suggested, in the hope of driving a wedge between Pennsylvania and Virginia and their small state allies, by "joint ballot" of both houses voting together. Sherman immediately objected that the "joint ballot" would deprive the smaller states "represented in the Senate of the negative intended them in that house." When the vote was taken, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and the Carolinas were supported by the largest of the Middle Atlantic states, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, in approving the measure seven to four. Delegates from the smaller states quickly sought to reestablish their influence in the presidential selection process by proposing that each state delegation should have one vote even if the polling was done by "joint ballot." The motion was lost by a single vote, five to six, when Pennsylvania and Virginia again joined the peripheral states to turn back their former allies. The remnants of the Middle Atlantic state coalition successfully avoided final defeat by postponing the issue.

When debate on the provisions of the Commerce and Slave Trade Compromise opened on the morning of 25 August, General Pinckney moved to extend the period during which free importation of slaves would be allowed from 1800 to 1808. On this amendment, and on the entire clause as amended, the commercial northeast, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Connecticut, anticipating northern control over commercial regulation in direct exchange for their support on this

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matter of the slave trade, joined the Deep South to defeat the Middle Atlantic states of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Virginia. With the southern half of the compromise thus easily confirmed, the northern sections dealing with commercial regulation were postponed and did not reappear until 29 August.

In the interim, the delegates from South Carolina maneuvered to gain additional security for their property in slaves, while many other southerners grew increasingly apprehensive that they had given up too much in agreeing to commercial regulation by simple majority. When the northern half of the compromise did come before the Convention, Charles Pinckney moved to strike out the section allowing simple majority decision on commercial questions. Fearing that the entire Commerce and Slave Trade Compromise (particularly the right to continue importations) might come unhinged, the older Pinckney argued that the ''liberal conduct toward the views of South Carolina'' shown by the northern states had convinced him that ''no fetters should be imposed on the power of making commercial regulations'' (Farrand, 1911, vol. 2, pp. 449–50).

Despite the assurances offered by General Pinckney, opinion in the southern delegations ran strongly to the view that commercial regulation by simple majority was an invitation to southern destruction. Mason argued strenuously that ''the *Majority* will be governed by their interests. The Southern States are the *minority* in both Houses. Is it to be expected that they will deliver themselves bound hand & foot to the Eastern States?'' (Farrand, 1911, vol. 2, p. 451). Randolph was finally driven to declare that ''there were features so odious in the Constitution as it now stands, that he doubted whether he should be able to agree to it'' (ibid., p. 452). Putting the interests of the southern states in commercial regulation at the disposal of the northern states ''would compleat the deformity of the system'' (ibid.). Despite this deeply rooted southern opposition, a solid bloc of six northern states, ranging from New Hampshire to Delaware, joined only by South Carolina, defeated Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia on the question.

South Carolina's service to the northern states was quickly rewarded by an additional increment of security for her property in slaves. The Convention approved Butler's proposal that ''any person bound to service . . . [escaping] into another State . . . shall be delivered up to the person justly claiming their service or labor'' (Farrand, 1911, vol. 2, p. 454). But, the cost to larger southern interests, in which South Carolina obviously shared, was high. South Carolina's blind pursuit of security for her property in slaves broke the South as an effective force in the Convention.

With the peripheral coalition broken by the shattering of its southern wing and the coalition of Middle Atlantic states disrupted by a renewed tension between its large and small members, the tone of the Convention's final days was unmistakably set by the debates that began on 30 August over control of the unsettled western lands. Daniel Carroll of Maryland opened this confrontation by moving to strike out a provision requiring ''the consent of the State to [lands under its jurisdiction] being divided'' (Farrand, 1911, vol. 2, p. 461). Carroll argued that this was an absolutely fundamental point with those states that did not hold claims

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to vast tracts of the western territory (Jensen, 1966, p. 150; Rakove, 1979, p. 352).

Pennsylvania's James Wilson opposed Carroll's motion, arguing that "he knew nothing that would give greater or juster alarm than the doctrine, that a political society is to be torne asunder without its own consent" (Farrand, 1911, vol. 2, p. 462). This argument struck the delegates from the smaller states as yet another brazen rejection of principle in favor of interest. Luther Martin said that "he wished Mr. Wilson had thought a little sooner of the value of *political* bodies. In the beginning, when the rights of the small States were in question, they were phantoms, ideal beings. Now when the Great States were to be affected, political Societies were of a sacred nature" (ibid., p. 464). When the votes were counted, New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland stood alone.

It was eminently clear to the delegates from the smaller states that the Convention was once again slipping out of control and that dangerous consequences could result. If the larger states effectively dominated the executive selection process and the vast resources represented by the unsettled lands in the West, their stature in the new system could only be enhanced, while that of the smaller states would just as certainly decline. With these concerns foremost in the minds of the delegates from the smaller states, a committee of one member from each state was appointed on 31 August to resolve matters that still remained undecided. The Brearley Committee on postponed and undecided parts reported briefly on 1 September, but it was not until 4 and 5 September that it delivered the main components of its complex and controversial compromise report to the full Convention.

Table 4 highlights both the impact of the issues that broke the dominant coalitions in late August and the nature of the new alignments that emerged from the Brearley Committee to dominate the Convention's final days. The large states were effectively isolated (see factor 2 of Table 4), while the five southern states, their influence in the Convention largely spent, were scattered harmlessly across all three factors in Table 4. The small states, on the other hand, emerged from the Brearley Committee determined to defend a report that was designed to enhance dramatically their potential for influence in the new government (Warren, 1928, p. 664).

Most of the members of the new majority of small and northern states had long preferred executive selection by specially chosen electors to legislative selection. The Brearley Committee report envisioned a return to electoral selection, but perhaps more importantly, the failure of any candidate to receive a majority of the electoral votes would result in the reference of the five leading candidates to the Senate (where the small states had an equal vote with the large states) for final selection. Madison, Morris, and Mason feared that the Senate would ultimately decide "nineteen times in twenty" (Farrand, 1911, vol. 2, p. 500). Further, treaties, as well as ambassadorial, Supreme Court, and other major administrative appointments were to be made by the President only "with the Advice and Consent of the Senate" (ibid., pp. 498–99). And finally, although

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TABLE 4

A New Northern Majority Defends the Role of the Small States—Three-Factor Solution for Roll-Call Votes 441–569, 4–17 September, Varimax Rotation (Ortho)

	1 Northern Majority	2 Large State Minority	3 Southern Minority	h^2
New Hampshire	(.72)	.44	.25	.77
Massachusetts	(.62)	(.55)	−.18	.73
Connecticut	(.78)	.22	.03	.63
New York	absent	absent	absent	absent
New Jersey	(.81)	.04	.18	.69
Pennsylvania	.16	(.80)	.03	.66
Delaware	(.74)	.04	.18	.59
Maryland	.45	.23	(.59)	.61
Virginia	−.07	(.76)	.38	.73
North Carolina	.04	.05	(.81)	.65
South Carolina	.38	(.55)	.11	.45
Georgia	.45	.37	.45	.53
Sum of squares	3.29	2.26	1.51	7.06
Percentage of variance explained	29.90	20.50	13.90	64.30

the House would charge the President in impeachable offenses, the final disposition of these charges would occur in the Senate. These provisions gave the smaller states what many of the delegates thought would be fearfully direct control over the appointment, conduct in office, and removal of the President. Both the larger states (factor 2 of Table 4) and the Deep South (dispersed across factors 1, 2, and 3 of Table 4) opposed these dramatic enhancements of senatorial authority. Yet, as the Convention entered its final days, neither the large states nor the southern states were in a position to oppose effectively the Brearley Committee report and the determined phalanx of small Middle Atlantic and northeastern states that stood behind it.

The great fear of many delegates was that the powers added to the Senate to enhance the role of the small states in the new government had set the stage for aristocracy. Much of 5 September was taken up by the expression of such fears and by the search for ways to alleviate them without reducing the influence of the smaller states over the process of executive selection. Mason feared that, "considering the powers of the President & . . . the Senate, if a coalition should be established between these two branches, they will be able to subvert the Constitution (Farrand, 1911, vol. 2, p. 512). Randolph's comments "dwelt on the

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tendency of such an influence in the Senate over the election of the President in addition to its other powers, to convert that body into a real & dangerous Aristocracy'' (ibid., p. 513).

In light of these fears, felt by small state men as well as large, it is not surprising that the response was immediate and overwhelmingly positive when Connecticut's Roger Sherman, speaking for the dominant majority of small northern states, proposed that recourse in the event that no candidate had a majority of the electoral votes for president should not be to the Senate, but to ''the House of Representatives . . . each State having one vote'' (Farrand, 1911, vol. 2, p. 527). Mason quickly responded that he ''liked the latter mode best as lessening the aristocratic influence on the Senate'' (ibid.). Nearly everyone agreed, as the vote on Sherman's motion was approved ten to one, with Delaware alone still adamant about retaining this authority in the Senate (ibid.). This solution allowed the small states to retain their dominant position in the executive selection process, while simultaneously alleviating the fear that the Senate had come to be a dangerously powerful body. With this last and most difficult question finally resolved, the Convention hurried toward adjournment.

Conclusion

We began this essay with an argument about the nature of political reality, namely, that it is characterized by the interaction of alternative visions of the community's general interest or common good with the partial and exclusive interests of the individuals, groups, classes, states, and regions that comprise the community. Throughout this essay, we have sought to show that the debates and decisions of the Federal Convention bear the distinctive marks of that grudging accommodation between principles and interests that is characteristic of democratic politics.

General principles, such as republicanism, federalism, separation of powers, checks and balances, and bicameralism, define the structure of government only in vague outlines. Therefore, discussion of general principles serves merely to identify the broad paths along which the general interests and the common good of the community can be pursued. Other considerations, primarily deriving from diverse political, economic, and geographic interests, suggest and often virtually determine the modifications, adjustments, and allowances that principled consistency must make to political expediency. James Madison made precisely this point in a letter that accompanied a copy of the new Constitution sent to Jefferson in Paris in late October 1787. Madison explained that ''the nature of the subject, the diversity of human opinion, . . . the collision of local interests, and the pretensions of the large & small States will . . . account . . . for the irregularities which will be discovered in [the new government's] structure and form'' (Farrand, 1911, vol. 3, p. 136). Similarly, Alexander Hamilton felt constrained to warn his readers in the first number of *The Federalist* that though ''our choice should be directed by a judicious estimate of our true interests, unperplexed and unbiased by considerations not connected with the public good, . . . the plan . . . affects

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too many particular interests, not to involve in its discussion a variety of objects foreign to its merits'' (Earle, 1937, p. 3).

In our attempt to illustrate and explain the interaction between principles and interests in the Federal Convention, we used three interpretive devices. The first was a theoretical distinction between a ''higher'' level of constitutional choice, where we expected and found the influence of principle to guide action, and a ''lower'' level of constitutional choice, where we expected and found the influence of political and economic interests to be decisive. The second device, factor analysis, was used to analyze the roll-call voting record left by the Convention. Through this means, we identified the voting coalitions that formed among the states at the various stages of the Convention's business. Finally, we engaged in a close examination of the Convention's debates in order to link the contending voting coalitions to the conflicting patterns of political principle at the ''higher'' level and to opposing patterns of political, economic, and geographic interests at the ''lower'' level of constitutional choice.

We conclude that the Federal Convention of 1787, from its opening day on 25 May until its final adjournment on 17 September, confronted two distinct, but intimately related, aspects of constitutional design. The first was general. What kind of republican government should be constructed? As the delegates considered and discussed alternative visions of the relationship between human nature, the institutions of government, and the quality of the resulting social order, the temper and tone of their deliberations was quiet and philosophical. Some measure of detachment was possible at the ''higher'' level of constitutional choice because the debates over general principles provided little indication of precisely how the choice of one set of principles over another would affect the specific interests of particular individuals, states, or regions.

While the delegates considered questions of basic constitutional design, they seemed almost oblivious to the conflicts of interest that inevitably arose as they moved to the ''lower'' level of constitutional choice, where their theories and principles would be shaped and molded into practical arrangements for governing. When distributional questions came to the fore, debate intensified, tempers flared, and conflict predominated. Questions touching upon the allocation of representatives and presidential electors, the status of slavery, and regulation of the nation's commerce and its western lands directly affected the political, economic, and social interests of distinct classes, states, and regions. Indeed, it was only at this ''lower'' level of constitutional construction, where interests clashed so loudly, that the Convention was threatened with dissolution.

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APPENDIX

Methodological Note

In this study, we employ factor analysis primarily in its role as a ''confirmatory'' or ''hypothesis-testing'' device. As Harman (1976) explains, ''Confirmatory factor analysis may be used to check or

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test . . . a given hypothesis about the structure of the data'' (p. 6). The introduction to this paper offers a hypothesis designed to explain the complex interactions that characterized the Federal Convention's business. Others have offered alternative explanations. Factor analysis will aid in showing which of these explanations comports most easily with the empirical ''structure of the data.''

This study employs a principal component *Q*-factor analysis throughout (Rummel, 1970, pp. 112–13). We group states (variables in the matrix columns) on the basis of their responses to the 569 roll-call votes (cases in the matrix rows) taken during the Convention. The 12 states that attended the Convention comprise the variables in this study. They are New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. As indicated above, the cases are the 569 roll-call votes taken during the Convention as recorded in Farrand's *The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787* (1911). Votes were coded for analysis as follows: 1—yes, 2—no, 3—absent, 4—divided. Each factor analysis in this study begins from a correlation matrix (Nie, 1970). Since voting in the Convention was by state delegation, rather than by individual delegate, deletion of absences and divided votes allows each cell of each correlation matrix to define the degree of association between two states in yes and no voting.

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