

Introduction to the American Political Process

Class 7: The Constitution

Asya Magazinnik (Professor)

1. Readings

Dahl, “How Democratic Is the American Constitution?”

Pope and Treier, “Voting for a Founding: Testing the Effect of Economic Interests at the Federal Convention of 1787”

Klarman, “The Constitution as a Coup against the Public Opinion”

Readings

Dahl, “How Democratic Is the American Constitution?”

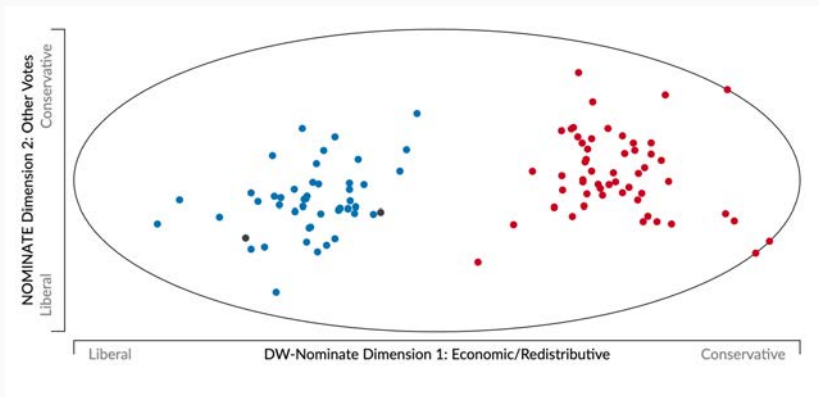
1. Slavery
2. Suffrage
3. Electoral college
4. Selection of senators for 6-year terms by state legislators
5. Equal representation in the Senate
6. Judicial power over the legislative process
7. Limits on Congressional authority

Pope and Treier, “Voting for a Founding”

Political ideology in one dimension:



Pope and Treier, “Voting for a Founding”



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Dimensions of conflict at the Constitutional Convention:

1. Representation (equal → proportional)
2. Balance of power within government (Congress → President)
3. Federalism (states' rights → centralization)

Pope and Treier, “Voting for a Founding”

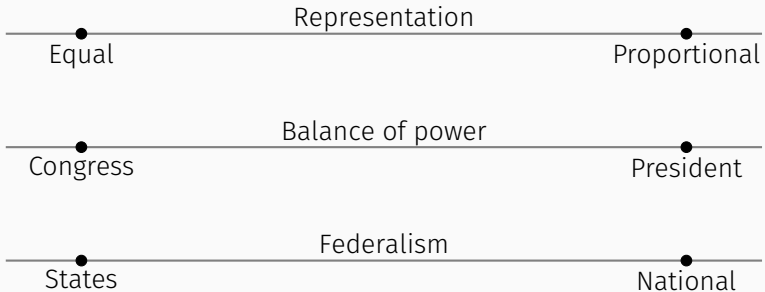
Table 1. Predictors of Delegation-Level Behavior and Delegate-Level Behavior.

State Predictors	Source	Mean	SD	Maximum	Minimum
White state population	1790 census	236166.7	134188.4	4420000	46000
Slave holdings, per 100 whites	McGuire	26.3	28.6	76	0
Percentage rural	1790 census	95.1	4.8	100	86.5
State wealth	Pitkin	46637067.95	34068192.64	102145900.90	6233412.25
Individual Predictors					
Personal slave holdings	McGuire	37.9	67.0	300	0
Distance to water	McGuire	54.4	53.2	200	0
Private securities	McGuire	2405.5	9308.6	52000	0
Public securities	McGuire	1078.5	2098.8	10000	0
Agricultural land holdings	McDonald	.56	.5	1	0.0
Western land holdings	McDonald	.22	.42	1.0	0.0
Farmer	McGuire	0.1	0.3	1.0	0.0
Merchant	McGuire	0.1	0.3	1.0	0.0
Age	Biographies	44.1	11.9	81.0	26.0
Service in the revolution	McGuire	.27	0.45	1.0	0.0
College	Heckelman and Dougherty	.68	.47	1.0	0.0
Hierarchical religion	Heckelman and Dougherty	0.68	0.47	1.0	0.0
Communitarian religion	Heckelman and Dougherty	0.17	0.38	1.0	0.0
English ancestry	McGuire & Biographies	0.49	0.51	1.0	0.0
Scottish ancestry	McGuire & Biographies	0.22	0.42	1.0	0.0

Note—Sources for each entry are listed at right. In the case of religion, we used Heckelman and Dougherty’s classifications but then supplemented that with delegate biographies, chiefly Bradford (1982) and delegate biographies on the Library of Congress’s website.

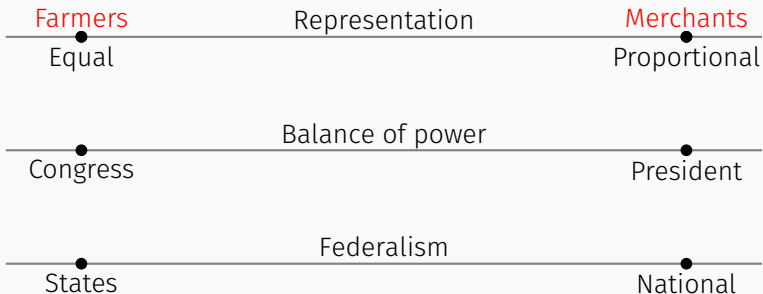
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“It was an economic document drawn with superb skill by men whose property interests were immediately at stake” (Beard 1913).



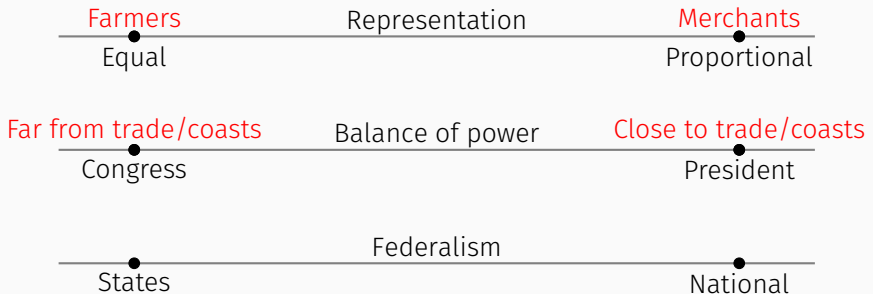
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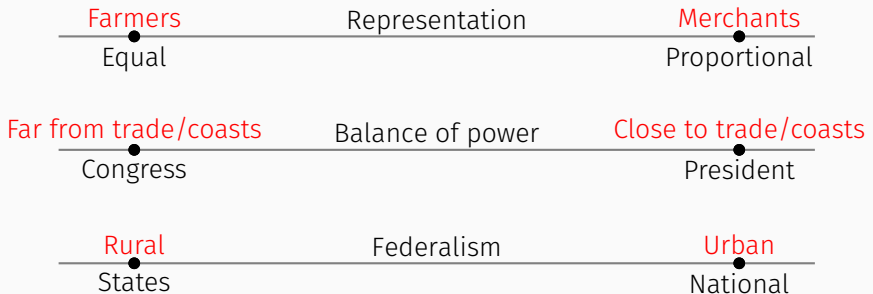
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Nationalist:

- Greater Congressional control over taxation, military, interstate and foreign commerce
- **Necessary and Proper Clause:** gave Congress *implied powers* beyond *enumerated powers*
- **Supremacy Clause:** theoretical statement and practical means of enforcing federal supremacy over the states

Antipopulist:

- Longer terms for federal officeholders
- Indirect elections: judges, Senators
- Small House → large constituencies

How did this happen?

- Elite delegates
- Antifederalists declined to attend/left early
- Electoral geography

Thus, initial inequalities became enshrined in institutions.

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