

Introduction:
James Madison and Political Science

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To his apparent discomfort, James Madison came to be celebrated during his lifetime as the “father of the Constitution.” Modern-day students of American politics appreciate his contribution somewhat differently, more for the quality of his political science than for his stamp on the Constitution that the above moniker implies. In other words, modern political scientists view James Madison as one of them—another, arguably America’s first, political scientist. It is this interest in Madison that motivates the contributors to this volume. Even those essays that examine his politics depict Madison, as one delegate to the Philadelphia Convention summed him up as “a profound politician” combined with a “scholar” (Adair 1974d, 193). We begin, then, with an overview of Madison’s scholarship and contributions to political science.

Early in his education, Madison’s personal habits and intellectual tastes revealed an individual inclined to scholarship. After graduating from Princeton, Madison stayed another year to continue his studies, during which time he read Adam Smith, David Hume, and other Enlightenment theorists. The next year, Madison returned to Virginia and began studying law to prepare for a career for which he had apparently little enthusiasm. In correspondence, he explained to a college friend that what most interested him was political science: “[T]he principles and modes of government [which] are too important to be disregarded by an inquisitive mind” (*The Papers of James Madison* [hereafter MP] 1, 100–101). He then advised his friend to begin his

studies by examining "principles of Legislation" and, where necessary, consulting with lawyers and politicians. Years later, Madison followed his own advice by preparing for the Philadelphia Convention through an intensive investigation of the histories of past confederations extending back into antiquity. For this, Madison sent Jefferson a list of nearly two hundred books needed for his research. Jefferson scoured Paris bookstores and shipped to Madison a "literary cargo" that provided the basis for his essay "Of Ancient and Modern Confederacies."

At the Constitutional Convention the scholarly Madison reappears vividly in the accounts of fellow delegates. While others headed straight to a tavern after their long and exhausting daily sessions, Madison returned to his boarding house, where he spent the evening transcribing and filling in his notes on the day's proceedings. He complained privately that this grueling routine was ruining his health (a familiar scholarly complaint) but he persevered. As he explained in the preface to *Notes of the Debates to the Federal Convention of 1787* (Madison 1966), his purpose in this exercise was essentially academic—namely, to provide a record for future generations of scholars on the motivation behind and expectations for the performance of the Constitution's plan of government. In his study of ancient governments, Madison had repeatedly found himself frustrated by the dearth of information on what the constitutional framers of antiquity had in mind as they designed what in some instances struck Madison as peculiar institutional arrangements.

As he approached the political science literature of his day, Madison conveyed the confident, independent judgment of a scholar who had his bearings. Writing as Publius in Number 51 of *The Federalist*, he enlists Montesquieu as the "oracle who is always consulted," but privately he was more reserved, concluding that Montesquieu "lifted the veil from the venerable errors which enslaved opinion, and pointed the way to those luminous truths of which he had but a glimpse himself" (MP 14, 233–34). The constitutional concoctions of Hume and Condorcet were summarily dismissed as the fanciful mind games of those who had no responsibility for designing real governments. Many more vignettes of a mind devoted to dispassionate inquiry into the organization of the civic life in a republic abound in Madison's letters and other writings and in the reports of those who knew him. "All his life," sums up biographer Jack N. Rakove (1990a, 178), Madison "approached political problems with a quizzical intelligence that preferred careful distinctions to simple formulations."

Scholars evaluate one another by the quality of their writing. Madison stands up well to such scrutiny. Easily the most important and famous of his writings are his essays in *The Federalist*, especially Numbers 10 and 51 (both

reprinted in the appendix). Although published in newspapers to promote ratification of the Constitution, these essays' deductive arguments, abstract reasoning, and reliance on general principles stand them apart from the campaign rhetoric of scare tactics and sloganeering (Riker 1991) that flowed from both sides of the ratification debate. In contrast, Madison's *Federalist* essays reflect their source origins. Most contained arguments that were developed earlier in more dispassionate contexts more suitable for scholarship. These include a lengthy and deeply comparative essay, "Of Ancient and Modern Confederacies" (1786), and, a year later, "Vices of the Political System of the United States" (1787, see appendix), which examines the different governmental arrangements adopted in the states and by the national government.

The first was written after months of study. Madison compiled his notes into a forty-one-page, pocket-size booklet, perhaps designed to be readily available for floor debates in the legislature or some future constitutional reform convention (Ketcham 1990). Passages from this essay later appear in *Federalist* 14 through 18. "Vices" is briefer and written as a kind of executive summary for fellow nationalists. It highlights the problems of confederation and the kinds of reforms appropriate for strengthening the national government. In addition, it notably introduces a rudimentary version of the factional competition argument that would receive refinement in floor addresses at the Constitutional Convention and assume its canonical form in *Federalist* 10. Finally, published posthumously (intentionally so, in part to provide for his wife's financial security) are Madison's *Notes of Debates in the Federal Convention of 1787* (Madison 1966), which analyzes as well as reports arguments and issues that would receive their initial public airing in *The Federalist*.

One of these writings stands apart from the others and assures Madison a place in the bibliography of essential republican theory. *Federalist* 10 has at times been chided (Epstein 1993) for failing to defend the Constitution's actual provisions and, hence, being largely parenthetical to the ratification debate. Yet over the years a consensus has emerged that it is the most important theoretical statement to come out of this era. In part, this essay's durability can be found in the logic of its argument. Precise yet broadly applicable definitions enter syllogisms from which he deduces the counterintuitive conclusion that the solution to factional tyranny lies in the profusion of factions. Substantively, this conclusion served the ratification's cause by answering critics that republican institutions could survive only in compact, homogeneous settings. For the modern reader, this conclusion provides the theoretical rationale for pluralism.

Within several years Madison's intellectual contribution to the Founding

appeared well established. Thomas Jefferson had assigned it as required reading (the only book of political science on the list) for students at the University of Virginia. Professors were dedicating their early American government textbooks to him (see, for example, Duer 1833). Before embarking on his trip through America, Alexis de Tocqueville had consulted *The Federalist* closely (Jardin 1988) and had even planned to end his journey by visiting the "last of the founders" at his home in Montpelier, but he fell behind schedule and had to return to France. During this half-century, *The Federalist* had been published dozens of times in America and abroad. Given this early recognition, one might reasonably assume that the enthusiasm with which modern students of American politics approach Madison's scholarship reflects his unflagging fame from then until now. The history, however, is actually quite different. Madison's impact on political science is in reality comparatively recent.

From the Civil War until the early twentieth century, Madison's scholarship steadily sank into obscurity, even disrepute. Indeed, the most widely read biography on Madison of that era "treated him with contempt and scorn" (Adair 1974c, 112-13). Several editions of *The Federalist* published toward the end of the century "stole twelve of the essays written by Madison and attributed them to Hamilton, who all . . . the editors agreed was the greatest of the Founding Fathers" (Adair 1974c, 112-13). The *coup de grace* came in a 1904 article in the *American Historical Review* (Ford 1904, 97), in which, when compared with Hamilton, Madison cut a second-rate figure: "[T]he colorless attitude of the mind, in which his learning threatened to neutralize his energy" left Madison playing a "small" part at the Convention, "in spite of the many times that he took part in the debates." About the only compliment the author managed for this erstwhile "father of the Constitution," was that "this [scholarly] attitude made him the best possible recorder of the debates as he was in a receptive frame of mind . . . ready to study what others had to propose."

By the 1880s a recognizable political science literature began emerging from American universities and so, too, one might think, would interest in Madison and *The Federalist*. As important as the institutional arrangements of America's separation of powers were to Woodrow Wilson in *Congressional Government* in 1885 and Henry Jones Ford (1898) in *The Rise and Growth of American Politics*, neither examined the theoretical rationale Madison offers for the institutions they critique. Rather these and the other contemporary progressives dismissed him as an anachronism. Questioning "whether the Constitution is still adapted to serve the purposes for which it was intended," Wilson (1885, 27 and 215) called for reforms "to make government among

us a straight-forward thing of simple method, single, unstinted power and clear responsibility." As Mahoney (1987, 257) has observed, it was the Framers' success in thwarting tyranny of the majority that allowed this era's scholarly reformers to view popular majorities as safe and deserving control of the levers of a responsive national government. With the publication of two other books a decade later, Madison was brought to the dock to account for the reactionary constitutional system he and his interested co-conspirators had foisted onto the nation. These are J. Allen Smith's *The Spirit of American Government* in 1907 and Charles Beard's classic *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* in 1913. Beard had far greater impact on subsequent scholarship, but both books help explain why even after Madison's rediscovery in these prominent sources, the next generation of political scientists still failed to embrace his political science.

Smith and Beard reflect their era's distinct but related intellectual currents of populism and progressivism, respectively. Both movements sprang from deep dissatisfaction with the state of the nation's civic life and its seeming intractability to reform. For Smith and Beard, the Constitution was the product of a conspiracy of a landed aristocracy intent on limiting the prerogatives of states while hamstringing national action. With Madison they discover the behind-the-scenes ringleader to sustain their conspiracy theory. In *Federalist* 10, which had virtually disappeared along with its author, each found a frank discussion of society's competing interests that must be contained. After heavily excerpting *Federalist* 10, the populist Smith railed against the anti-majoritarian institutions in Washington and their preemption of more responsive state governments. Much of his argument has the coloration and urgency of a polemicist, but Smith strikes home with the theoretical sensibilities that reveal him to be a genuine political scientist working his way through Madison's arguments. One example: where most reformers of the era were antipartisan, Smith berates Madison for setting up a governmental system that spawned irresponsible political parties and hence stripped majorities of a vehicle for controlling national policy. "The fact that under the American form of government the party can not be held accountable for failure to carry out its ante-election pledges has had the natural and inevitable result" (Smith 1907, 210) of allowing parties to issue promises, "recklessly and extravagantly." Party platforms are merely means to winning election rather than a statement of obligations. Smith is working the same distinction between strong and weak political parties as would his contemporary, Ostrogorski (1904), but Smith is more directly locating it in Madison's political science.

Beard offers a progressive, even Marxian slant to the conspiracy. He begins with the same basic aristocratic origins of a constitution designed to im-

pede majority control, and he even quotes the same passages from *Federalist 10* on the relevance of economic cleavages for factional conflict. But Beard's real target lies beyond majority rule and is instead a governmental system that appears incapable of the kinds of regulation of the economy that a modern industrial nation requires. For Beard *Federalist 51*'s separation of powers reinforced by checks and balances constitutes the real problem for twentieth century American politics. Beard does not hesitate to tie Numbers 10 and 51 together by declaring their author to be James Madison, the ringleader. In fairness, Beard's reading offers Madison certain compensations that eluded Smith, and contributed to Madison's elevation by future scholars. For one, Beard acknowledges the brilliance of Number 10 and describes it as the foremost theoretical statement of American politics. While, like Smith, he ignores all but the economic cleavages in that essay, the prominence he gives it led others to the essay, such as Lippman (1922), who were inclined to read it more objectively and even appreciatively. Equally important, in associating factional competition in 10 with constitutional separation of powers in 51—which, frankly, was easy to do since 51 concludes by reprising much of 10—Beard presents for the first time the Madisonian model that has over the years come to encapsulate Madison's theory of governance (Dahl 1956).

From a cursory inspection, the next generation of scholarship appears as though it turned *Federalist 10* into a research agenda. Interest groups became the main topic of investigation, whether in the formation of national, state, or local policy. And yet, these scholars failed to cite, much less draw upon, the fundamental rationale for their work—namely, that by design majorities in America are composed of coalitions among factions. Rice (1924), Merriam (1931), Odegard (1928), Bentley (1908), Herring (1929), and toward the end, Latham (1952) all fail to recognize Madison as their intellectual godfather.

This introduces a striking irony about Madison's political science. All recognize the singular quality of *Federalist 10*. Yet this rigorous and elegant syllogistic argument on a topic that everyone seems to acknowledge lies at the foundation of America's pluralism failed to serve as more than a lightning rod. Rediscovery of Madison's political science came much later, arguably as late as the 1950s and 1960s, when political scientists turned their analytical sites from groups to institutions. Apparently *Federalist 51* and its related essays (47–50) provided more hypotheses and insights relevant to the research agenda of this generation's scholars than did Number 10 for those of preceding generations who studied the group basis of politics.

David Truman's 1951 classic, *The Governmental Process*, offers a good benchmark for Madison's resurgence. Truman opens by directly addressing the limitations of the literature that fails to take government adequately into

account. Ironically, he frames this literature in Madison's vernacular, "The Alleged Mischief of Faction" (chapter 1), which, as noted, the literature itself fails to do. Truman praises Bentley's work as "a well developed argument for concentration on political behavior and the proper object of political research. It develops and elaborates some of the leading ideas found in James Madison's essay Number 10 of *The Federalist*." And yet, Bentley never acknowledges Madison.

To quantify the profession's emerging interest in locating contemporary political science with that of Madison, during the 1950s fifteen articles published in the *American Political Science Review* cited Madison, which is just one short of the total number of such citations in the journal's previous forty-four-year history. And in the next four decades, the *Review's* citations of Madison have averaged fourteen per year.

If the shift from groups to institutions as the central concern of political science research accounts for Madison's restoration, then the more recent emergence of the "new institutionalism," or the application of microeconomics to institutions, should only serve to burnish Madison's relevance and fame even further. Indeed, during the 1990s twenty *Review* articles, or one every other issue, cited Madison, which is more than in any other decade. Where Madison's political science shared substantive interests with the previous research agendas of twentieth century political science, his attraction to the new institutionalism extends well beyond their common terrain. For one, they share common antecedents. We know that Madison read and invoked Adam Smith and David Hume, both of whom couch their arguments either explicitly or implicitly in utility theory conceptions of individual behavior. And with "interest," whether for groups in society (i.e., factions) or politicians in office, comes attention to incentives. Moreover, McLean (this volume) offers intriguing evidence that Madison's political science was to a degree also informed by the highly analytic and choice theoretic ideas of Condorcet, particularly familiarity with a couple of his counterintuitive principles of interest aggregation (most notably, the jury theorem and cycling). Similarly, Dougherty (this volume) finds numerous instances of Madison in varying contexts sounding remarkably close to Mancur Olson (1965). One does not need to read much into Madison to find him grappling with many of the same issues for which modern scholars rely on choice theory.

One does not, however, need to have Madison reading choice theory to understand how he came to practice it. From his early adulthood, before he became politically active, Madison appears to have been interested in analysis of political institutions. And from his early experiences in public office (see Wilson, this volume), he was thinking about how institutions could be

configured differently to produce different outcomes. As he deliberated reforms, he necessarily thought about their results. And given his inclination to concentrate on interest and incentives, it was quite natural to work through these dynamics by addressing how an institutional feature would lead a politician, a citizen, or a faction to act in a particular way. That is to say, Madison's political science always generated statements about "balance," stability, and durability. In the vernacular of choice theory, Madison's arguments—especially during the productive years from 1785 to 1788—always conclude with a description of the equilibrium properties of his proposals (Schwartz 1989). And as a republican theorist, he was interested in "delegation" of authority from citizens to officeholders and in the "agency" responsibilities of representatives, two important concepts in modern research on institutions. In sum, current scholarship is more indebted to and comfortable with James Madison's political science than was any previous generation. This volume is a natural tribute of scholars acknowledging their debt.

The Essays

None of the authors of the essays here is a "Madison scholar" per se, and only a couple have written elsewhere about the nation's constitutional development. Yet, as is commonplace these days, all in the course of their research had encountered something about Madison's ideas or politics that intrigued or puzzled them. This project afforded all the occasion to turn their research toward topics that for some were quite distant from their specialty in order to satisfy their curiosity.

In "Before and after Publius: The Sources and Influence of Madison's Political Thought," Iain McLean explores the intellectual origins of Madison's ideas on republican theory and constitutional design, as stated in his core writings beginning with "Notes on Ancient and Modern Confederations" and ending with *The Federalist*. In light of Madison's influence on modern political science, McLean pays particular attention to the arguments from incipient game theory—particularly Condorcet—as well as from the congenial arguments of the Scottish Enlightenment. McLean then turns from the roots of Madison's original ideas to their branches—that is, their effects on subsequent constitutional development in Europe and the British Empire. The pre- and post-Publius domains, McLean demonstrates, are not really separate topics, for this was an era of fervently developing theory and rapidly democratizing institutions.

In the next chapter, "Madison's Theory of Public Goods," Keith Dougherty continues McLean's consideration of the choice theoretic con-

text of Madison's ideas. James Madison had a clear understanding of the logic of collective action, which he developed while observing state behavior during the Revolutionary War. As the war progressed, Madison joined in a movement to end the collective action problem among states, using selective incentives and joint products. This chapter compares Madison's theory of public goods with that of Mancur Olson, investigates the origins of Madison's thinking on the subject, and shows how Madison applied collective action theory to his more famous works on pluralism and republican government.

In "Personal Motives, Constitutional Forms, and the Public Good: Madison on Political Leadership," Randall Strahan portrays Madison's political science as more complex than it is typically represented as being. While Madison sought republican institutions capable of checking or controlling self-interested behavior by both citizens and their leaders, he also aspired to design institutions, Strahan argues, that would motivate political leaders to advance the public good. Staying close to his writings and other statements during the years surrounding the Constitutional Convention, Strahan examines Madison's understanding of the personal motives that lie behind political action, paying particular attention to the respects in which these motivations will differ between officeholders and ordinary citizens. This requires that he consider Madison's arguments about the basic objectives or ends of republican constitutions and what he meant by "the public good." These fundamental ideas, Strahan shows, informed Madison's analysis of constitutional forms in which a republican constitution could be designed both to channel and control the lower or most common motivations of political officeholders and to encourage them to advance the public good. Strahan concludes by comparing Madison's approach with current research on political leadership.

In *Federalist* Numbers 10 and 51, James Madison addressed the problem of configuring republican institutions to thwart tyranny. The first essay grapples with the tyrannical impulses of society's factions and the second, with self-interested politicians who might be tempted to usurp their authority. Each finds a solution in a principle—the first, in factional competition and the second, in separation of powers. These two principles have been universally accepted as representing the theoretical pillars of the Constitution and of Madison's political science, but in the next essay, "The True Principles of Republican Government: Reassessing James Madison's Political Science," Samuel Kernell concludes that these principles have proven far less compatible than generally assumed, and Madison's reputation as a theorist has suffered for it. In this paper he tests the proposition that in these campaign essays, Madison intentionally conflated his sincere views on republican

governance with campaign rhetoric designed to rebut Anti-Federalist claims that the Constitution would lead the nation to tyranny. Kernell arrives at this conclusion after examining the essays' internal consistency, novelty, and rhetorical value. By these criteria critical arguments within Number 51, but not Number 10, appear to have been fashioned for the ratification debate and have little place in Madison's theory of republican institutions. He concludes that James Madison was less attracted to separation of powers and more willing to rely on pluralism to regulate democracy than is generally assumed.

Whatever Madison's private preferences and motivation for tendering the particular variant of separation of powers that appears in *Federalist* 51, it remains a compelling conjecture about the likely equilibrium properties of the institutional arrangements implanted in the new Constitution. John Ferejohn in "Madisonian Separation of Powers" assesses the rationale of Madison's proposition that the legislature is the chief threat to liberty in republican government. All of his prescriptions for checking powers amounted to separating and checking the power of the legislature. The other branches of government were thought to have too little natural authority in a republican scheme, and to be too simple and limited in their powers, to pose any real threat to liberty. The early experience of the new government showed Madison that these assumptions were incorrect and that the president and his ministers had resources for usurping power that had not been imagined. As a result, over the first decade of the American republic, Madison and his allies were forced to develop new means of checking and separating powers. This new project—developing a Madisonian separation of powers—remains as urgent today as it was in those early tumultuous years.

Whatever the value of the Senate in protecting the constitutional order against an aggrandizing House of Representatives, at the Convention Madison was preoccupied by the downside of the particular upper chamber promulgated by the small states' delegates and embedded in the compromise. Daniel Wirls, in "Madison's Dilemma: Revisiting the Relationship between the Senate and the 'Great Compromise' at the Constitutional Convention," re-examines the Great Compromise from Madison's perspective. A properly constructed Senate and proportional representation were the keystones of Madison's institutional architecture for a national republic. The deliberations of the Constitutional Convention quickly showed, however, that these two keystones could not fit in the same edifice. Madison and some of his fellow delegates were vexed by the dilemma he helped create, a dilemma that ultimately led to the decision in favor of equal representation for the Senate. While it would be stretching the truth to argue that representational compromise came into existence because of the Senate, or more precisely, be-

cause of the near consensus on the need for an upper house, Wirls identifies significant ways in which the widespread agreement on the need for a republican Senate in a stronger national system helped define the alternatives from which a compromise would be fashioned. A Senate was crucial to the new system, regardless of any struggles for political power. The Convention made sure that there would be a Senate, even if it were not precisely the one Madison had sought.

In "Constituting a National Interest: Madison against the States' Autonomy," David Brian Robertson returns us to the collective action issues identified by Dougherty. The Constitutional Convention primarily aimed to correct the path of American economic policy. Endowed with varied economic assets, the thirteen new states were pursuing different, often rivalrous and self-defeating economic policies. James Madison proposed to remedy American economic governance by investing national policy-makers with the means and the motive to pursue national economic interests, completely independent of the interests of individual states or coalitions of states. Madison aimed to make a reconstituted national government the sovereign economic authority in the United States. He proposed national policy-making processes that would motivate national policy-makers to pursue national economic interests rather than state interests, including a national veto of state policies that diverged from the national interest. Commercially vulnerable states in the middle of the Confederation resisted Madison's plan, seeking national authority over a more limited set of public goods, protection for the remaining economic prerogatives of the states, and a national economic policy process controlled by a supermajority of the states. Madison's opponents largely won. The Constitution expanded some national economic authority, but it also protected state officials' control over their economic endowments, including slavery, the regulation of domestic markets, resource use, economic development, and the encouragement of enterprise. This understanding of Constitutional design helps explain several unique aspects of American political development, including policy fragmentation, the mixed record of the states in mitigating the effects of capitalist development, the business corporation as a distinct feature of American capitalism, and the absence of a programmatic labor party.

Madison set out to cure state mischief by strengthening the national government, a solution Jenna Bednar argues in the next essay, "The Madisonian Scheme to Control the National Government," that begs the question of how one controls this new power. Madison had a two-pronged approach: interinstitutional conflict and elections. This essay assesses the weaknesses of both approaches. First, the federal structure creates a national power whose

members will at times find it attractive to put aside its internal disagreements and to dominate policy in the states. Second, electoral control may fail because voters have no way to articulate their general vision of the federation. The consequence of oversubscription to Madison's political science is that we undervalue judicial review's stabilizing potential.

In the last three essays we turn from Madison's ideas and role in shaping the Constitution to his performance in the political arena. The first surveys Madison's experiences under the Articles of Confederation, and the next two his early efforts under the new republic to influence its subsequent development.

Surveying Madison's unhappy experiences in the Confederation Congress, Rick Wilson, in "Madison at the First Congress: Institutional Design and Lessons from the Continental Congress, 1780-1783," shows clearly that both the purposes and institutional provisions for reform followed as much from his experience as from political theory. Indeed, comparing the state of the literature (a familiar phrase of Madison's) with his reactions to the dilemmas posed by the Confederation, one finds experience providing the clearer lessons about the collective action problems inherent in civic life. This essay examines Madison's experiences in the Continental Congress and links them to his later efforts to change the institutional infrastructure of the federal system. Wilson reveals Madison to have been well aware of several important problems of institutional design that concern contemporary political science. He learned of these problems from firsthand experience, and they in turn influenced the way he thought about institutional change. The hodgepodge institutional arrangements of the Continental Congress were a breeding ground for a variety of collective action problems. It is no wonder that Madison would concentrate his energies on analyzing and repairing the deleterious effects of "private passions" on collective action.

In his diaries, Thomas Jefferson notes that in June of 1790 he helped broker a deal between Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton and Virginia congressman James Madison that settled two issues that had vexed the First Federal Congress—determining the location of the new nation's capital and the assumption by the federal government of state war debts. The historiography of the Compromise, as well as certain theoretical difficulties, raises serious questions about aspects of Jefferson's account. In his essay "Vote Trading in the First Federal Congress? James Madison and the Compromise of 1790," D. Roderick Kiewiet offers a clearer and more compelling account of what actually happened. Adopting a rational choice framework, he specifies the legislative goals that Madison sought to achieve, the obstacles that stood in his path, and the strategies that he pursued to overcome them. The

results portray a Madison mastering the game of bicameral legislative politics that he had been so instrumental in devising.

James Madison and Alexander Hamilton were allies during the ratification campaign but soon came to oppose each other during the formation of the two-party system. In "Madison and the Founding of the Two-Party System," Norman Schofield argues that Hamilton intended to construct a version of what he refers to as the Walpole Equilibrium in the United States. The Walpole Equilibrium in Britain, formed in the 1720s, allowed Britain to stabilize its fiscal system and increase both agricultural and manufacturing output dramatically. Because of the differences between the British and U.S. economies, Hamilton's version would have benefited manufacturing over agriculture, and in response, it drove Madison and Jefferson to create an agrarian, Republican coalition. Hence the appearance of a two-party system. This partisan cleavage remained stable until the slavery crisis of the 1850s. In recounting this partisan history, Schofield has Madison and Jefferson enlisting principles akin to social choice theory in strategically "designing" the political economy of the United States.

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