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POLITICS AND VIRTUE IN HUME
HUME'DA SİYASET VE ERDEM

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ABSTRACT

It is a widely held conviction in Humean literature that, for Hume, institutions and good laws are primary in securing peace and order rather than morality or a virtuous body of citizenry in a society. This conviction partly relies on Hume's rejection of the classical republican idea of virtue which considers institutions as well as a virtuous body of citizenry as essential for politics. Although Hume rejects the classical set of virtues as inhumane, obsolete, and impractical for the newly emerging modern society, this should not lead us to see Hume's politics as wholly untouched by any idea of virtue. Rather, Hume advocates a new set of virtues that he thinks will suit the needs of the modern era. A comprehensive analysis of Hume's politics would reveal that Hume considers a virtuous body of citizenry as significant as institutions and good laws in politics.

Key Words: David Hume, Virtue, Institutions, Classical Republicanism, Politics

ÖZET

David Hume'la ilgili literatürde toplumsal düzen ve istikrarın sağlanması konusunda Hume'un erdemli bir vatandaş topluluğundan daha çok kurumlar ve yasalara dayandığına dair yaygın bir görüş vardır. Bu tez kısmen Hume'un klasik cumhuriyetçi teorinin erdem görüşünü reddetmesine dayanır. Klasik cumhuriyetçilik hem kurumları hem de erdemli bir vatandaş topluluğunu sağlıklı bir siyaset için gerekli görür. Hume klasik erdemlerin modern toplum açısından gayri insani, eski ve uygulanamaz olduğunu ileri sürse de, bu durum bizi Hume'un siyaset teorisinin erdem kavramını bütünüyle reddettiği sonucuna götürmemelidir. Hume modern dönem için daha uygun olduğunu düşündüğü yeni bir erdemler listesi ve vatandaşlık vizyonu sunar. Hume'un siyaset teorisinin kapsamlı bir analizi, onun hem kurumları/yasaları hem de erdemli bir vatandaş topluluğunu sağlıklı bir siyaset için gerekli gördüğünü ortaya koyar..

Anahtar Kelimeler: David Hume, Erdem, Kurumlar, Klasik Cumhuriyetçilik, Siyaset

INTRODUCTION [**]

It is a widely held conviction in Humean literature that, for Hume, institutions and good laws are primary in securing peace and order rather than morality or a virtuous body of citizenry in a society (Forbes, 1975; Frey, 1995;

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Cohen, 2000; Chabot, 1997; Gauthier, 1992). Although this conviction can be supported by many remarks on the significance of good laws and institutions in Hume's works, it ignores too much of his theory on politics. It represents a selective reading of Hume's arguments on politics rather than a comprehensive reading. This conviction, I think, partly relies on Hume's rejection of the classical republican idea of virtue. Two different issues are confused in this conviction which needs to be analyzed separately: First issue is Hume's critique of the classical republican idea of virtue and second issue is the relation between institutions or politics and virtue. The classical republican idea of politics considers institutions as well as a virtuous body of citizenry as essential for politics. Although Hume rejects the classical set of virtues as inhumane, this should not lead us to see Hume's politics as wholly untouched by any idea of virtue. Rather, Hume advocates a new set of virtues or vision of citizenship that he thinks will suit the needs of the modern era. A comprehensive analysis of Hume's politics would reveal that Hume considers a virtuous body of citizenry as significant as institutions and good laws in politics.

In this article**,** I argue that Hume's politics does not discard virtue as irrelevant to social order. Yet Humean virtues are different than those of the classical republicans. In the first section, I analyze Hume's critique of the republican idea of politics and virtue to show that his critique of the classical idea of virtue does not aim to reject the idea of virtue itself rather it sees a particular idea of virtue (the classical republican view of virtue) as obsolete, inhumane, and impractical for the newly emerging modern commercial society because of its essentially military character. This will clear the confusion that since Hume rejects the classical idea of virtue; his politics is untouched by any morals and manners. In the second section, I analyze and criticize the institutionalist interpretation of Hume's politics as a reductionist reading of his theory which ignores too much of his arguments on politics. To show this, I analyze Hume's notion of factions (a particular form of parties) or factionalism/partisanship which reveals the role a particular type of virtue (moderation) plays in his politics. This critique is necessary to have a more accurate and balanced view of Hume's politics.

HUME'S CRITIQUE OF REPUBLICAN POLITICS

Hume presents a new vision or way of doing politics for a new era. The newly emerging commercial modern society provides the setting for which he formulates a new way of doing politics. Hume believes that the rise of commercial modern society has changed the fundamental structures and culture of traditional society in such a way that a regular and humane vision and practice of politics would become possible (Manzer, 1996: 492). The very same process also, asserts Hume, would make the classical republican vision of politics obsolete. As Moore (1977: 810) puts it "Hume's political science can best be understood as an elaborate response to the political science of the

classical republicans."

The positive relation between a virtuous or public-spirited body of citizenry and the quality of political life goes back to classical political theory (Burtt, 1993: Wallach, 1992: Stilz, 2003). Classical republican politics assumes that the well-being of society depends on the existence of a constitution and public-spirited citizens (Zagorin, 2003: 3) in a particular social-economic setting and thus focuses upon "the institutional, moral and material conditions of free citizenship in a political community" (Robertson, 1983: 452). The constitution provides the institutional framework in society. Moral condition refers to the existence of a public-spirited body of citizenry which depends on the possession of material independence or autonomy, which meant the existence of slave labor in society. As Stilz (2003: 2) puts it, "[t]he ancient republic was based on slavery as a form of production, allowing it a free and leisured citizen class with the ability to participate actively in politics and War." That's why, "only those – assumed to be few in number – in a position to satisfy their needs without making themselves dependent on others were capable of the requisite civic virtue" (Robertson, 1983: 452) in ancient republics. Such material independence provided necessary time for citizens to be able to participate exclusively to public life and also escape from activities which were supposed to make one to immerse into self-interested activities such as commerce. Accordingly, this vision believes that "the political virtue and a spirit of independence were most likely to be found in the ranks of country gentlemen, uncorrupted by the urban world of commerce, manufacturing and finance" (Moore, 1977: 829). In other words, this vision attributes high worth to the citizens' readiness to sacrifice their private interests to the public good and shows hostility to commercial activities as well as luxury as leading corruption that would pose threat to civic virtue (Zagorin, 2003: 3). Being fully human means being citizen, and being citizen means to dedicate oneself to public life. The quality of political life or the strength and the health of the state depend on this idea of patriotic citizenship in the classical republican view.

In spite of its discriminatory and hierarchical nature, this ancient vision of public-spirited citizenship or insistence on civic virtue and patriotism has been attractive for many from Rousseau to contemporary communitarians and neo-republicans against the vision of atomistic individualism associated with liberalism (Zagorin, 2003: 4; Castiglione, 2005: 453). Yet, Hume argues that this classical public spirited vision of citizenship as seen in ancient republics cannot be considered as an option for modern society and its practice can be explained with ancient republics' particular situations in that era. Hume (1985: 259) asserts that ancient republics

> *were free states; they were small ones; and the age being martial, all their neighbors were continually in arms. Freedom naturally begets public spirit, especially in small states; and this public spirit … must encrease, when the public is almost in*

> *continual alarm, and men are obliged, every moment, to expose themselves to the greatest dangers for its defense. A continual succession of wars makes every citizen a soldier.*

The possibility of citizen-soldier as the vision of citizenship in the classical political thought depends on certain conditions both within society and international relations. The former requires an independent body of citizenry whose independence is provided by the slave labour. The latter refers to almost constant wars among states. This kind of international relations led to the rise of a body of citizenry whose primary qualities were military virtues. They excelled in public spirit. However, as Hume (1985: 383-84) puts it in "Of the Populousness of Ancient Nations", in ancient states most people were not participants in political life. They were reduced to "slavery and subjection" to provide the material independence of citizens, which turned every citizen into "a petty tyrant" in his domestic life. Citizenship was privilege of a minority at the cost of the rest of the population.

Although ancient citizens had material independence, claims Hume (1985), they were "unacquainted with gain and industry" (259). Since the republican virtues were military in essence, ancient politics contained "little humanity and moderation" (414) and "their governments [were] more factious and unsettled" (421). More significantly, this form of societal regulation, asserts Hume (1985), was "violent, and contrary to the more natural and usual course of things" (259). This vision and practice of citizenship, for Hume, could become possible only under strict conditions as exemplified by the ancient republics, for it is contrary to basic principles of human nature which, according to Hume, is essentially self-interested.

Against this vision and socio-economic structure Hume advocates commerce and formulates his politics which, he believes, "would reflect more accurately the conditions of [modern] society" (Moore, 1977: 834). Hume (1985: 263) asserts that the principles of ancient politics, such as exclusive public-spiritedness and the abstinence of citizens from commerce and industry, are not possible any more in commercial society; "these principles are too disinterested and too difficult to support", for in a more peaceful environment the animating principle of human conduct is "a spirit of avarice and industry, art and luxury". And the strength of the state as well as the well-being of citizens in modern society depends on commerce.

> *The greatness of a state, and the happiness of its subjects, how independent so ever they may be supposed in some respects, are commonly allowed to be inseparable with regard to commerce; and as private men receive greater security, in the possession of their trade and riches, from the power of the public, so the public becomes powerful in proportion to the opulence and extensive commerce of private men. (Hume, 1985: 255)*

Hume's politics also advocates "foreign commerce" among states as

opposed to ancient warlike international relations. International trade has a benevolent impact on domestic politics. First, the absence of war among states allows individuals to engage in commercial activities. Second, foreign trade provides both new goods and a market for society. Of special importance, international trade can lead to the rise of commerce and industry in a traditional society and becomes the source of subsequent developments.

> *Thus men become acquainted with the pleasures of luxury and the profits of commerce; and the delicacy and industry, being once awakened, carry them on to farther improvements, in every branch of domestic as well as foreign trade. And this perhaps is the chief advantage that arises from commerce with strangers. It rouses men from their indolence. (Hume, 1985: 264)*

Thus, for Hume (1985: 259, 260), commerce not only fits "the common bent of mankind" within society but also in international relations and reflects "more natural and usual course of things". For Hume, commercial society provides the best environment for self-interested agent and opportunity for increase of wealth for the whole society and nations. Such individuals are more interested in their private interest, yet their conduct unintentionally serves the social order. As Frey (1995: 286) asserts, "pursuit of one's own advantage or happiness fortunately, not as a matter of benevolent motivation but as an unintended by-product of self-interested motivation, furthers the advantage or happiness of others". Hume's humane society is a commercial free society of self-interested agents as opposed to the republican society of citizen-soldiers. As Moore (1977: 834) puts it "[t]he society which underlies Hume's model of…government was quite explicitly a commercial society of manufacturers, merchants and financiers, and the laborers, porters and clerks who worked in their service."

Hume's notion of commercial society is underlined by his notion of human nature as essentially self-interested actor seeking a commodious life. Yet, the beneficial results of commercial society are not limited to its appropriateness to the self-interested nature of individuals. According to Miller (1997: 180), Hume "is more impressed by the political, social and intellectual results of commercial progress than by its material results." Hume thinks that beyond the material wealth commerce increases, it also creates the necessary conditions for a nonviolent and more humane form of politics by transforming narrowly self-interested human nature as well as socio-economic structures. He recognizes "the important social changes brought about by the rise of commerce" (Davis, 2003: 289) favorable for a freer and more egalitarian society and his interest in commerce has a philosophical dimension. Indeed, as Schuler and Murray (1993: 589) argue, "Hume was arguably the first great thinker to embrace commercial life as a point of philosophical principle…for Hume, commerce is a forceful cultivator of the human nature". Hume's view of the

transformation of human nature is a product of the historical transformation of human society. Hume as a member of the Scottish Enlightenment had a developmental view of history which is known as "the four-stage thesis" according to which all human societies were "imagined as naturally moving from hunting, to herding, to farming, to commerce, a developmental process that simultaneously tracked a cultural arc from 'savagery,' through 'barbarism,' to 'civilization'" (Kohn, 2006). According to Kohn (2006), the development of commercial civilization does not mean "just a marker of material improvement, but also a normative judgment about the moral progress of society". Within this larger framework of historical understanding, Hume assumes the moral transformation of self-interested agent.

Commerce creates the necessary material conditions for more egalitarian socio-economic relations among individuals which, according to Hume (1985: 265), are "most suitable to human nature" and necessary for social order, for "a too great disproportion among the citizens weakens any state. Every person, if possible, ought to enjoy the fruits of his labour, in a full possession of all the necessaries, and many of the conveniences of life". The wealth must be widespread in society, since Hume believes that "both individual and sociopolitical interests are best served when a large portion of the members of a society are also property holders" (Venning, 1991: 146).

The most significant result of such a process is the development of the middle-class or civil society in final analysis. The increase of wealth, argues Hume (1985: 277-78), frees traditionally oppressed groups such as farmers and workers and enlarges the middle-class "who are best and firmest basis of public liberty. They neither submit to slavery nor tyrannize over others. Rather they try to secure their property and support equal laws in society". Hume, thus, sees a close link between the development of the middle-class as the backbone of a free and prosperous society and the increase of the wealth as a result of commercial activities. Hume maintains that middle-class' life activities and station in society provide the best position for them to acquire necessary skills, habits, virtues, experience, knowledge, wisdom, and common sense for the perpetuation of order, promotion of the quality of social life, and establishment of a more humane and free society:

> *These form the most numerous Rank of Men, that can be suppos'd susceptible of Philosophy; and therefore, all Discourses of Morality ought principally to be adress'd to them. The Great are too much immers'd in Pleasure; and the Poor too much occupy'd in providing for the Necessities of Life, to hearken to the calm Voice of Reason. We may also remark of the middle Station of Life, that it is more favourable to the acquiring of Wisdom and Ability, as well as of Virtue, and that a Man so situated has a better Chance for attaining a Knowledge both of Men and Things, than those of a more elevated Station.*

(Hume, 1985: 546-47)

Commerce also awakens individuals' creativity, improves their judgment: "The mind acquires new vigour; enlarges its powers and faculties" (Hume, 1985: 270). Hume (1985: 271) maintains that once individual mind is awakened, it leads to improvement in other areas:

> *the minds of men, being once roused from their lethargy, and put into fermentation, turn themselves on all sides, and carry improvements into every art and science. Profound ignorance is totally banished, and men enjoy the privilege of rational creatures, to think as well as to act, to cultivate the pleasures of the mind as well as those of body.*

Industry and commerce, thus, lead to improvement in arts and sciences as well as individual rationality. Improvement of individual rationality is a product of its application to commercial activities and arts and sciences. The improvement of judgment, argues Hume (1985: 279), is closely linked to social order: "Laws, order, police, discipline; these can never be carried to any degree of perfection, before human reason has refined itself by exercise, and by an application to the more vulgar arts, at least, of commerce and manufacture".

Mechanical arts and commercial activities lead to improvement in more sophisticated and refined activities such as "the liberal" arts. This process of improvement starts in ruder activities and moves to more refined ones, whether intellectual, mechanical, and commercial activities or interpersonal relations. According to Schuler and Murray (1993: 594), Hume believes that "Commercial life wrenches us out of what Marx unkindly calls 'rural idiocy' and habituates us to an enlarged, unbiased point of view", since for Hume material abundance is prerequisite to "intellectual and cultural refinements which distinguish a people of advanced civilization from those of more barbaric times and circumstances" (Venning, 1991: 142). Material development as a result of commercial and industrial activities allows human beings to have the opportunity to develop their human essence which distinguishes humans from animals. While both animals and human beings share similar physical and biological needs to live, humans are distinguished from other creatures by their distinctively human potential. Hume's notion of civilized society or civilized agent is the realization of this potential. The realization of this distinctively human potential is made possible by commercial and industrial activities which creates necessary material security for individuals.

Other advantages commerce creates are increase of "sociability", softening of tempers, refinement of interpersonal relations, and the rise of the modern commercial city.

> *The more these refined arts advance, the more sociable men become; nor is it possible, that, when enriched with science, and possessed of a fund of conversation, they should be contented to remain in solitude, or live with their fellow-citizens*

> *in that distant manner, which is peculiar to ignorant and barbarous nations. They flock into cities; love to receive and communicate knowledge; to show their wit or their breeding…Particular clubs and societies are everywhere formed…the tempers of men, as well as their behavior, refine apace. So that, beside the improvements which they receive from knowledge and the liberal arts, it is impossible but they must feel an encrease of humanity, from the very habit of conversing together, and contributing to each other's pleasure and entertainment. Thus industry, knowledge, and humanity, are linked together by an indissoluble chain, and are found, from experience as well as reason, to be peculiar to the more polished, and, what are commonly denominated, the more luxurious ages. (Hume, 1985: 271)*

According to Hume, activities associated with commerce have a transformative impact on individuals in many respects: Sociability develops, individual temper softens, fellow-feeling or sense of humanity increases, and individual rationality improves. In other words, human beings develop distinctively human qualities that separate them from animals. As a result of this transformative process, individuals come to acquire certain qualities in a way that they are in a better condition both psychologically and rationally to live in peace and order with each others.

The modern commercial city arises as the site of civilized life as a result of the process ushered in by the rise of commerce and activities associated with commerce. The modern commercial city is the medium in which the middle-class develops and most of the population is above and beyond bare minimum living conditions. The middle-class or civil society rises as the backbone of every sort of creativity and productivity from economic to intellectual activities; individuals' taste for both material and literary goods as well as for philosophical understanding has improved; the place of rationality is larger now in individuals' lives compared to earlier stages, especially to the savage condition; and also individuals sociability as well as moral sense or humanity increases. The city represents the ideal place for Hume's civilized agent.

Although the initial factor that unleashes the development of civilized-commercial life is the love of gain or avidity which is self-interested and directed to the betterment of one's own living conditions, the end result, civilized-commercial life, has created an agent whose judgment and taste are improved and refined and whose sense of humanity and sociability are increased as its by-product. Improvement of judgment, rationality, refinement of taste, and increase of humanity or moral feeling and sociability, coupled with a more convenient, prosperous and equal socio-economic situation, creates a more appropriate structural, cultural, and moral environment for individuals in their relation with each other for a more humane society. Hume (1985: 276),

thus, claims that the civilized-commercial society is in a better position to check the avidity of man which is the driving force of development that ushered in the development of civilization: "Nor can any thing restrain or regulate the love of money [self-interest], but a sense of honour, and virtue; which…will naturally abound most in ages of knowledge and refinement".

As a result, self-interested agent is transformed in parallel to the development of commercial society in such a way that s/he has acquired some other qualities besides self-interest, which would equip her/him with necessary skills, understanding, and qualities to become a citizen as we will see in the next section. As Robertson succinctly puts it "as wealth increases and extends through society, so, Hume (1985: 454) suggested, more and more of its members would tend to acquire the material independence and moral attributes that, in civic terms, equip men to be citizens". In other words, Hume, like classical republicans, thinks that being citizen requires both material independence and intellectual and moral development. Yet his understanding of material independence is not parasitical unlike the classical view which requires a slave labor. Rather, Humean independence is civilized in nature and a product of one's own labor or struggle. This very process of struggle, besides providing material independence, also transforms human nature in such a way that individual self-interest is tamed and turned into enlightened and socialized one which does not ignore outcomes of his/her behavior on public life. Hume does not advocate sacrifice of self-interest to public interest. Rather he wants a balance between these two interests, which, he thinks, is more realistic and practical in terms of human nature. Such a balance is made possible by the process of the development of commercial/civilized society which has a transformative impact on human nature. In the next section, I analyze the relation between Humean civilized agent as product of commercial activities and the type of politics he prescribes for modern society.

INSTITUTIONS, FACTIONALISM AND VIRTUES

As we saw above, Hume denies that the classical republican virtues can be a viable alternative for modern society by claiming that they do not easily fit to human nature, that's why became possible only in a certain domestic and international environment and, with the change of societal structure, would become obsolete in modern era. Hume's critique of classical republican thought is limited to its notion of virtue and human excellence. Once Hume discards both desirability and the possibility of such republics in modern era, he formulates a new model of politics that, he believes, fits "the common bent of mankind".

It is usually accepted that Mill and Tocqueville recognize the significance of the qualities of individuals in politics, yet Hume is seen as similar to Hobbes who is credited with using rational choice assumptions or social contract model in his political theory (Moss, 1991; Gauthier, 1992;

Taylor, 1987), relying on manipulation of self-interested agents by creating an appropriate structural environment and incentives to establish and perpetuate social order, and thus seeing no connection between virtue and politics (Forbes, 1975; Frey, 1995; Cohen, 2000). Accordingly, they assert that he is an institutionalist who sees social order as depending solely on institutions and good laws.

Indeed, in his *Essays*, Hume endorses an institutionalist concept of politics that seems to discard any role for virtue in political life. In "Of the Independence of Parliament", Hume (1985: 42) asserts that in theorizing on politics or establishing a government "every man must be supposed a knave [free-rider]" who "has no other end, in all his actions, than private interest". Similarly, Hume discusses whether virtuousness and education of the rulers and the people or the institutions are more significant in the well functioning of the state. In "That Politics may be reduced to a Science", he distinguishes "absolute governments" from "a free and republican government"; the former depend on manners, morals, and education of the rulers, whereas the latter primarily depends on well-formed institutions (check and balance system, separation of powers, and the rule of law). While "The very same [absolute] government, in different hands, has varied suddenly into the opposite extremes of good and bad", Hume (1985: 15-16) asserts,

> *a republican and free government would be an obvious absurdity, if the particular checks and controuls, provided by the constitution, had really no influence, and made it not the interest, even of bad men, to act for the public good. Such is the intention of these forms of government, and such is their real effect, where they are wisely constituted.*

He (1985: 24) asserts that institutions' impact in politics is independent of "the humours and tempers of men" or qualities or virtues of individuals. And, moreover, they direct individuals to act in certain ways in society.

> *so little dependence has this affair on the humours and education of particular men, that one part of the same republic may be wisely conducted, and another weakly, by the very same men, merely on account of the difference of the forms and institutions, by which these parts are regulated.*

In a similar fashion, in "Of the Origin of Government", Hume (1985: 38) argues that private virtue is not related to public order; "a bad neighbor" does not necessarily mean "a bad citizen and subject". Rather "experience…proves that there is a great difference between the cases. Order in society, we find, is much better maintained by means of government [institutions]". Hume's (1985: 16) conviction is that the force of laws and institutions is so great that "consequences almost as general and certain may sometimes be deduced from them, as any which the mathematical sciences afford us". Therefore, "Legislators…ought to provide a system of laws to

regulate the administration of public affairs to the latest posterity" (Hume, 1985: 24).

Hume in these passages endorses a notion of politics that exclusively relies on the regulatory impact of institutions on political behavior and seems to discard any role for virtue in politics. As we will see below, the institutionalist interpretation of Hume's politics mostly relies on such passages. And as Chabot (1997: 336) puts it, "scholarly opinion leans toward the view that Hume looked rather to good laws and institutions than to morality or citizenship" to secure order in society.

Cohen (2000: 123-24) presents an institutionalist interpretation of the relation between virtue and politics in Hume. In general, Cohen accepts that Hume believes the improvement of manners and morals or virtues is product of social development, yet denies that, once manners, morals or virtues develop, they have any impact on institutions. Rather he sees the relation between institutions and virtues as one-sided in Hume. He maintains that Hume relies "Correctly modeled" institutions which function independently of the virtues of the people, "making it the interest even of bad men to act for public good", that's why "Hume's political scientist is not mainly concerned with the morality of people, because the fate of nations depends on their institutions, not on their manners and morals".

Forbes (1975: 224) similarly endorses an institutionalist interpretation of Hume's politics. He argues that Hume's constitutionalism reveals the importance of institutions in "determining human behavior in politics and national character". He (1975: 227) maintains that form of government determines manners and morals, yet "manners have not the same influence on the proper functioning…of constitution". Therefore "Hume's political scientist is not concerned with the moral health of a people at all because the fate of nations depends on their institutions, not on manners and morals [virtue]" (Forbes, 1975: 229). Forbes' conviction (1975: 224) is that "Hume at any rate was wholly untouched by that Machiavellian moralism".

These scholars emphasize the regulatory significance of institutions on individual conduct. Yet this interpretation is reductionist, at least, for two reasons: First, the remarks that Hume makes on the significance of institutions are related to mostly theoretical-general reasoning on institutions. There are certain other issues for which Hume does not endorse institutions; rather he endorses the improvement of morality. Second, they do not evaluate Hume's many arguments which see virtues as having significant roles not just in politics but also in larger social life.

Indeed, Hume's endorsement of institutions as primary factors in politics is closely linked to general/theoretical statements about politics. When he compares absolute governments to free governments and different regions with different forms of governments in a country, he emphasizes the impact of institutions on individual conduct. In particular, the underlying rationale in

Hume's institutional argument is that he endorses the safest assumption to provide the minimal requirements of peace and order; individuals are supposed to be "knaves" or free-riders and a well-balanced constitutional system backed by legal force directs self-interested agents to cooperate in such a scenario. This is Humean response to the classical problem of peace and order, as known Hobbesian problem, selfish agents encounter (Putnam, 1993: 165). Yet this is not the only major problem Hume deals with in politics. In response to a particular problem due to which, he thinks, even a well-balanced institutional system could collapse; he advocates a particular form of virtue. This problem is factionalism or partisanship in politics. When it comes to factionalism Hume does not endorse institutions. Rather he endorses moderation or a particular way of doing politics which has nothing to do with institutions and also shows both the proper place and the limits of institutions and the role of manners and morals in political life.

In "Of Parties in General", Hume (1985: 57) classifies parties into two groups; "Personal" and "Real". Personal parties depend on "friendship or animosity" among opposing groups. Real parties stem from "some real difference of sentiment or interest". He cautions that these are not purely personal or real parties. In real life parties are mixed. Yet, depending on the dominance of principle, a party can be seen as real or personal. Personal parties, asserts Hume, appear mostly in small republics and almost anything can lead to the rise of such parties. He believes that individuals have a tendency to create such parties:

> *Men have such propensity to divide into personal factions, that the smallest appearance of real difference will produce them. What can be imagined more trivial than the difference between one colour of livery and another in horse races? Yet this difference begat two most inveterate factions in the GREEK empire, the PRASINI and VENETI, who never suspended their animosities, till they ruined that unhappy government.*

Hume (1985: 59-60) divides real factions (parties) into three groups: faction from interest, faction from principle, and faction from affection. Among these three, Hume finds the faction from interest "the most reasonable, and the most excusable", for it stems from differences of interest among different groups. "The distinct orders of men, nobles and people, soldiers and merchants, have all a distinct interest". Parties from principle stem from "speculative" principles: "Parties from principle, especially abstract speculative principle, are known only to modern times, and are, perhaps, the most extraordinary and unaccountable phenomenon, that has yet appeared in human affairs". Parties from affection refer to those that stem from "the different attachments of men towards particular families and persons, whom they desire to rule over them" (1985: 63). Although, Hume (1985: 55) argues, parties can appear in any state; they appear and spread easily in free governments which provide the best

environment for them.

In "Of the Coalition of Parties", he (1985: 493) maintains that to abolish parties is neither "practicable" nor "desirable, in a free government". They are facts of political life. Yet he believes a particular type of party is very dangerous for social order and must be avoided:

> *The only dangerous parties are such as entertain opposite views with regard to the essentials of government…where there is no room for any compromise or accommodation, and where the controversy may appear so momentous as to justify even an opposition by arms to the pretensions of antagonists.*

Here Hume refers to factionalism or partisanship. For Hume, parties from principles have a tendency to create factionalism. In particular, parties from principles refer to two types of principles; secular ideologies and religious principles. Both principles dispute the legitimacy of the fundamentals of a system. Social order depends on the acceptance of a system as legitimate by individuals as well as groups or parties in a society. "The essentials of government" refers to basic institutions and regulations of society. These provide "the rules of game" (Stewart, 1992: 159) by which different parties or individuals interact and regulate their conflicts with each other. In other words, a legitimate system provides the framework within which conflicts among different social forces and parties are contained. If there is a disagreement on the fundamental structure of a system and as a result is seen as illegitimate, then the conflict might destroy the system itself. For Hume, civil wars are examples of such conflicts. Thus, such factions for Hume have the potential to override institutions. In other words, an institutional framework may not contain conflict created by factions in society. According to Hume (1985: 55), while institutions provide peace and order, factions have the contrary tendency:

> *As much as legislators and founders of states ought to be honoured and respected among men, as much ought the founders of sects and factions to be detested and hated; because the influence of faction is directly contrary to that of laws. Factions subvert government, render laws impotent, and beget the fiercest animosities among men of the same nation, who ought to give mutual assistance and protection to each other.*

Thus, for Hume, factions have a contrary and destructive tendency to good laws and institutions. Institutions and good laws are not the solution for factions. Contrary to the claim that Hume sees institutions and good laws as sufficient for political life, factions show that institutions are not sufficient. Indeed, in Hume, the regulatory impact of institutions mainly targets isolated and selfish individual conduct. Yet factions represent groups of individuals. As we will see below, for Hume, factions have a transformative impact on individuals in a way that the regulatory impact of institutions and laws loses their influence on individuals. Rather, Hume looks to the development of certain

virtues among individuals to prevent parties turning themselves into factions.

For Hume, although parties and conflict among them are inevitable in a free society, the kind of conflict that leads to the destruction of social order is not inevitable. In other words, political conflict is a fact of political life. Yet, it does not necessarily lead to animosity among parties or to the destruction of social order. What makes conflict destructive of social order is not necessarily related to the mere existence of parties or conflict among parties. Rather, such destructive conflict stems from the nature of factions. First, factions dispute the fundamentals of the system; second, factions provide group-based moral justifications for their members' conduct which leads them to deny that social order is public good; and third, factions create uncompromising theoretical viewpoints or disposition which ignores the complexity of political life and problems and thus create utopian visions of society.

According to Hume (1985: 43), when an individual acts alone, he is concerned with the results of his conduct from the standpoint of society. In other words, some common notion of appropriate form of conduct approved by society makes the individual consider his conduct within the requirements of social life; he is concerned with his reputation. Yet, when an individual acts as a member of a group, he may not be worried about such a sense of appropriate conduct. Rather, he may justify his conduct according to some principles or understanding provided by his party. Hume (1985: 43) explains this as follows; "But where a considerable body of men act together, this check is, in a great measure, removed; since a man is sure to be approved of by his own party, for what promotes the common interest; and he soon learns to despise the clamours of adversaries".

Hume, here, seems to argue that even though individuals participate in different parties, larger society must provide some common understanding of appropriate conduct and sense of right and wrong or common rules for all. Differences in political approaches must not lead them to discard some shared mode of conduct among themselves. Otherwise, if every single party endorses its own particular understanding of right and wrong for its members, political conflict would be a conflict among tribes which do not have any common language among them. According to Phillipson (1989: 315), for Hume, factions provide individuals "with confined and partial views of the public interest" which leads them to forget that peace and order is public good.

Conflict about fundamentals of a system by its nature creates a destructive conflict for Hume. According to Stewart (1992: 159), Hume's notion of justice provides "the rule of game" in society. If individuals fight over "the rule of game", they would not have any shared principle according to which to regulate their relations with each other. Similarly, the fundamentals of a system must provide such shared rules for parties which can act within certain limits and prevent destructive conflict among them. For Hume, the rule of law, check and balance system, separation of powers, and individual freedom, in short, a

constitutional system provides "the rule of game" for parties (Stewart, 1992: 159). As a result, both a shared sense of right and wrong and an institutional framework are necessary to prevent partisanship in politics.

The third factor refers to a particular perception and disposition created by factions in individuals. In his *Essays*, Hume presents many cases of conflict among different parties that are not necessarily destructive for social order, yet how parties understand those conflicts transforms them into animosity and destructive conflict among parties.

According to Hume, speculative principles create uncompromising position among group members, for such parties assume that their principles or positions on a subject reflect the truth. As Boyd (Boyd, 1985: 115) asserts, Hume is worried about the claim of certainty for one's position that endorses "rational visions of society". This vision posits "a world of universal and logical consistency-one abstracted from the ambiguities, tensions, and particular traditions of the real world". This rationalistic vision that depends on the certainty of one's principles shifts "the balance of society away from civility and toward what the modern world has come to call 'ideological politics'" (Boyd, 2000: 116). Once we assume certainty for our position and judgment, we necessarily see our opponents as completely wrong or even evil. Due to the certainty of our perception of our principles, we develop a radical disposition in our conduct. As a result, factions "translate political questions into moral crusades" (Letwin, 1965: 123). Once political conflicts are perceived as conflict of good and evil, opposing groups see compromise as a deviation from the absolute principles. Thus, tension among opposing groups increases and conflict could lead to destruction of social order.

In order to prevent this destructive outcome, Hume does not mention institutions at all, rather he introduces a particular virtue he calls moderation. Moderation is a complex term in Hume. It refers to a cautious, realistic, and well-balanced pragmatic approach to political questions. According to Hume (1985: 494),

> *There is not a more effectual method of promoting so good an end, than to prevent all unreasonable insult and triumph of the one party over the other, to encourage moderate opinions, to find the proper medium in all disputes, to persuade each that its antagonist may possibly be sometimes in the right, and to keep a balance in the praise and blame, which we bestow on either side.*

According to Wulf (2000: 89), in order to prevent radicalization of political arguments, Hume endorses moderation in both "political discourse" and "dispositions of political actors". Hume tries to prevent both "the unreflective sensibilities of common life" and "radical philosophy" from guiding politics by using his political essays to show that political questions are "more complex and balanced" than such parties or groups assume (Wulf 2000:

89-91). The general purpose of Hume's political writings, as Whelan (1985: 327) puts it, "was to moderate partisan zeal by calling attention to plausible elements in the competing doctrines." Seeing political life as a complex phenomenon and thus recognizing that each party could capture one aspect of this complexity inevitably leads to recognition of the partiality of our position and views on politics, which in turn, would create moderation. Such an approach would ease the tension between opposing parties.

According to Hume, a philosopher could teach people how to develop moderation in both judgment and conduct in order to have a more accurate picture of the issues in dispute and prevent destructive conflict. In "Of the Protestant Succession", he performs such a mission to teach the opposing groups how to be moderate and pragmatic (Hume, 1985: 507):

> *It belongs ... to a philosopher alone, who is of neither party, to put all the circumstances in the scale, and assign to each of them its proper poise and influence. Such a one will readily, at first, acknowledge that all political questions are infinitely complicated, and that there scarcely ever occurs, in any deliberation, a choice, which is either purely good, or purely ill. Consequences, mixed and varied, may be foreseen to flow from every measure: And many consequences, unforeseen, do always, in fact, result from every one. Hesitation, and reserve, and suspence, are, therefore, the only sentiments he brings to this essay or trial.*

While moderation advocates sensibility to complexity of political life, factions provide perfect theoretical solutions to political problems by creating utopian visions which create uncompromising dispositions in individuals. For Hume both religious and secular principles are dangerous precisely for this reason; both types of principles advocate uncompromising positions in individuals, which makes them unaware of the complexity of political questions. That's why Hume endorses "an undogmatic approach and counsels bargaining and compromise" for political practice (Letwin, 1965: 394).

Hume (1985: 415) here endorses moderation in our judgment as well as in our conduct. Awareness that our opponents can be sometimes right is, according to Hume, an appropriate position in dealing with conflict in political life. It creates moderate conduct and eases the tension among groups. Thus, not just the mere existence of conflict but how we approach it is a critical factor that eases or increases tension in political life. How we react to conflict determines how we are responded to. Increase of tension may create a vicious circle: "One extreme produces another". On the other hand, civilized language in presenting our position and considering our opponents as having a legitimate perspective though different than ours softens political discourse and ease the tension among parties (Jones, 1982: 154-56). In other words, Hume "pleads not for an end to conflict, but, for restraint in our language" (Conniff, 1997: 387) or "to

counteract the polarization" of politics (Schmidt, 2003: 291) by endorsing "a more skeptical civic mentality" in individuals by confronting them with the complexity of political questions as well as their inevitability (Chabot, 1997: 337). According to Chabot (1997: 339), Hume urges party-men to "detach themselves from their partisan commitments without surrendering them" in order to see the narrowness of their perspective. Accordingly, Hume advocates "the education of public opinion" (Phillipson, 1989: 34) as he exemplifies such an education in his *Essays*.

CONCLUSION

Hume's analysis of factions or partisanship as a problem in political life has a striking feature: The regulatory significance of institutions cannot help us against ideological conflicts characteristics of factions or partisan politics. He does not appeal to institutions or the state to solve this problem. Moreover, he thinks that this type of conflict could destroy the institutional structure itself. Hume's notion of faction reveals the limits and the proper place of institutions and the necessity of a particular virtue he calls moderation in his politics. This shows that Hume advocates both institutions and a virtuous body of citizenry as necessary to achieve efficient cooperation in political life. Yet institutionalist interpretations of his theory ignore this fact.

In regard to prevent partisanship, as we saw above, Hume thinks that commercial civilization provides the general ground. As Wulf (2000: 92) asserts, Hume's strategy to teach party men moderation relies on the improved culture in civilized society and the beneficial impact of activities associated with civilized life style. The Humean notion of civilized society, or "liberal commercial republics" provides the best environment for the rise of moderate judgment and disposition in political agents (Wulf, 2000: 94) by enlarging individual mind, increasing sociability, and softening tempers. That's why, as Phillipson succinctly explains, Hume believes "that the future of liberty and prosperity…depended on cultural not constitutional reform" (1989: 23). The idea of cultural transformation reveals that Hume does not discard the link between virtue and politics but he discards just the classical republican notion of virtue.

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