

# Compare and contrast the theories of government held by the the Federalists and Anti-Federalists. (2023)

## 1. Introduction:

Convention of Philadelphia drafted the constitution but divided Americans into two groups: Federalists and Anti-Federalists. Both the groups were different in perspectives regarding the government of U.S.A. However, they shared little similarities too. These two groups then emerged as two main political parties of U.S.A. The Democrats and The Republican. The Federalists were mainly wealthy class and Anti-Federalists were farmers. They presented their views accordingly.

Overview here

## 2. Points of convergence and divergence between Federalists and Anti-Federalists:

### (a) Points of convergence:

Belief in individual rights and liberties

Concerns over tyranny

Aimed to create a stable government

Government for people and common good



These both groups knew the under Article of confederation government is not stable. And, Shay's Rebellion of 1785 displayed just how weak and powerless it was to stop an internal rebellion. So they agreed on this point to prevent future internal and external threats to U.S.A.

(iv) A Government for the People and Common Good:

The last similarity between Federalists and Anti-Federalists was their shared goal for the people and their common good. Both groups assisted each other's belief regarding true human nature and the purpose of government, which were all rooted in classical liberalism. So, for them the duty of government lied in protection of people.

(b) Points of Difference Between Both Federalists and Anti-Federalists:

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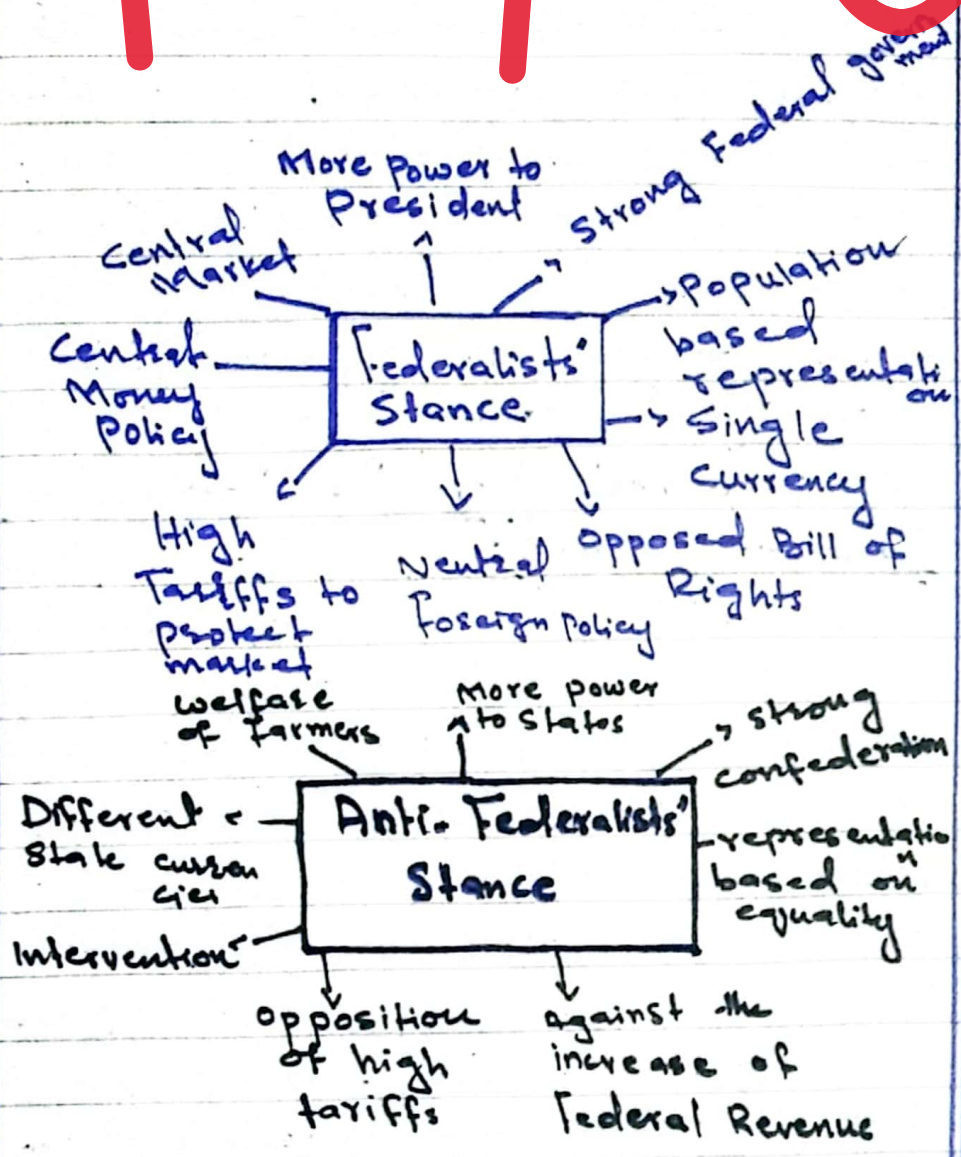


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(b) Points of Difference Between Both Sides Federalists and Anti-Federalists:



(i) Political Philosophy:  
Federalists:

Federalists held a view that common people are not competent enough to govern, so power should be in the hands of few. Such federalists have inherent right to exercise power.



## Anti-Federalists:

Anti-Federalists believed that government should be controlled by common people. They had faith in ability of common people to participate in government's affairs. They were also doubtful of dangers of powers in the hands of elites.

## (ii) Economic ideology:

### Federalists:

Federalists wanted the property to be concentrated in the hands of upper classes. They plead for government protection to business and wanted government to protect industrial and commercial classes, and they were not in favour of 'Laissez Fair'.

### Anti-Federalists

Anti-Federalists stood for equal distribution of wealth and opposed the grant of several favours to upper classes. They demanded for the policies and subsidies in the favour of farmers and rejected the ideas of federalists.

## (iii) System of Government:

### Federalists:

They were of the view of

protecting the interest of upper classes. They wanted strong presidential government and weak states. They believed strong central government would be in favour of upper classes and will not grant advantages to agrarian classes.

### Anti-Federalists:

They opposed strong central government. Therefore, they demanded strong federal units. They looked upon central government with all powers with suspicion and believed it will always be controlled by privileged classes. They were willing for the power of Congress to levy taxes and duties, to regulate trade and compel states to pay the sums assessed against them by federalist government.

### (iv) Representation to Congress:

#### Federalists:

Federalists were vocal for population based representation in both houses.

#### Anti-Federalists:



Anti-Federalists urged for equal representation in both houses. They feared that if representation provided on the basis of population, the Federalists would undermine their interests.

#### (V) The Bill of Rights:

##### Federalists:

Federalists did not favor the idea of incorporating Bill of Rights into the Constitution. They argued the inclusion of rights would limit the scope of rights to people.

##### Anti-Federalists:

Anti-Federalists were reluctant to add Bill of Rights into the Constitution because they saw no harm in including these rights and constitutional security for their basic rights.

#### (VI) Ratification of Constitution:

##### Federalists:

Federalists were aware that opponents would try to block the ratification of Constitution but were therefore keen to secure ratification via maximum number of states.

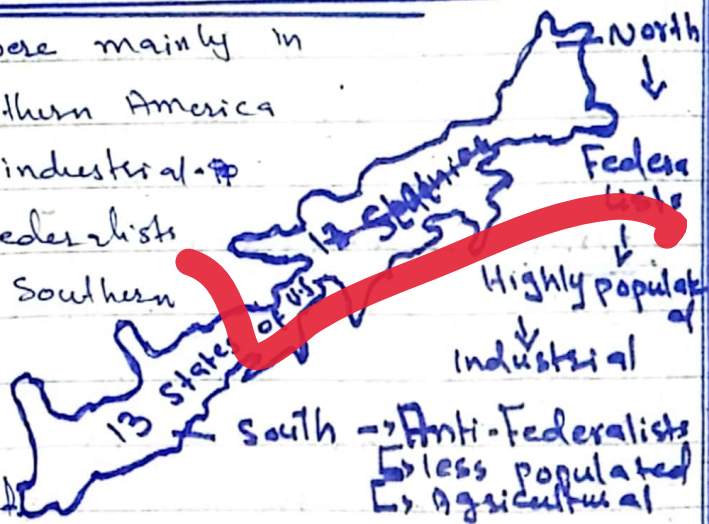
Federalists tried to counter the criticisms of Anti-Federalists through publishing a series of articles and secured favorable votes.

### Anti-Federalists:

Anti-Federalists had only hold on rural areas which were less populated and failed to mobilize their opinion regarding ratification. So, carried propaganda against Federalists.

### 3. Geographical difference between Federalists and Anti-Federalists:

Federalists were mainly in hold of northern America which was industrial while Anti-Federalists belonged to Southern areas which were agrarian and slavery based.



### 4. Conclusion:

United States of America after its independence soon divided between ideological groups like Federalists and Anti-Federalists. These groups shared limited similarities on general topics. While, they mostly opposed each other regarding political policies, economic ideologies, system of government, representation of Congress, Bill of Rights and ratification of constitution. Thus, leading to unending ideological differences.

Add apt references from books, quotations etc