

English Abstract & Table of contents

Federalism

The Idea and its implications in the Arab World

To pave the way to understand federalism, the present book summarizes the historical forms of the State, from which the philosophies of the concept of the State developed, such as those of Law and Order, Power and Societal Institution. On the other hand, the elements of the State are the people, territory, government, sovereignty and international recognition. After that, the investigation moves to the historical progress of the term, bearing in mind the rise of relevant theories, such as those of Theocracy, Power and Social Contract.

The State underwent several stages, from that of the Tribe, City and Empire to the National State, associated with the Westphalia Agreement in Europe of 1648. Then, the State is divided into the Simple and Complex types.

Then, unions in general are discussed in terms of the motives and justifications of establishment. Some of these are the feeling of common, political, economic and cultural interests, the desire to overcome the weaknesses of the State centralization and the avoidance of authoritarianism.

There are forms of unions, mainly federations and confederations. In the former, states aim to gain a unified external representation, along with keeping internal peculiarities agreed upon in the common constitution. A good example of this type is the United States. However, there were cases when the union shifted to a simple centralized one, others with the member parties separated and others when the member parties divided between independence and new unions.

In spite of the advantages of a federation, it has disadvantages, such as paving the way for dual authority as well as the consolidation of sectarian, racial or geographical inclinations. These may contradict the approaches of the union and/or some of its parties.

As for a confederation, the aspects of union are limited based on common interests, but with the member parties enjoying more peculiarities. It does not yield a new state and ends when the reason for its rise no longer exists or when the union turns to a federation.

In Chapter Two, the role of a federation is explored in terms of achieving or

harming the higher interests of the Arab states. It may be a strength that they are divided into 22, but changing them to federal states could carry aspirations of further split and deprivation of their wealth investment. However, it is still necessary to delegate some authorities to the local administrations in the current states.

Upon reviewing the history of the rise of federations as well as their proponents' views, they have undeniable advantages witnessed in many cases. Nevertheless, such a system enjoyed structural features formed under totally different conditions. There were reasons to create or maintain a union, in addition to assigning independent legal or constitutional powers to each region.

It is concluded that a federal state is a product of combining unity with diversity or a balance between the powers of convergence and divergence. Therefore, a federation is believed to be a negative choice for the Arab countries unless all or some of them are joined in one federation. The world is seeing an age of large unions. On the other hand, more separatist tendencies within the already existing entities are the actual barrier to a union of the Arab states in any form.

It seems that the best solution to the Arab World crises, such as the increasing sectarianism and territorialism is further unification, but on true, balanced and durable foundations. Any damage in the near or far future to the general national or to fractional interests would lead people to 'disavow' federalism.

Chapter Three summarizes what has been mentioned on federalism, in terms of concept, old and current models and chances and risks of practice. An attempt is made to apply it to the debated federations in Iraq, Yemen, Libya and Syria, assessing the previous unity initiatives and their future chances.

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