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# Sub-National Governments' Interactions in International Affairs: An Arab Perspective on Paradiplomacy

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## Abstract

In the last years of the twentieth century, scholars solidly focused on paradiplomacy as a study subject, linking it to federalism and decentralised systems. In the Arab world, which has 22 countries, a few states have adopted federalism or decentralisation. Only five countries, i.e., 22.7%, have adopted federalism and decentralised experience. Therefore, limited research and academic work has been conducted regarding paradiplomacy. This paper aims to research the relationship between federalism and paradiplomacy conceptually and practically and then analyse the Arab experiences in federalism and whether they applied paradiplomacy and succeeded in doing so. To explore that, the paper studies and compares the related articles of constitutions of these five countries, which revealed a noticeable differentiation in terms of competencies granted to sub-state actors in these countries. The paper suggests and encourages doing more in-depth research on this issue to clarify why federalism and then paradiplomacy succeeded in some countries and failed in others.

## Keywords

Arab world, Diplomacy, Foreign affairs, International relations, Paradiplomacy, Sub-National units

## Introduction

One of the postulates of international political theory is that managing foreign relations is one of the primary activities of an independent, sovereign state. Accordingly, foreign policy has always been the responsibility of the central authority because it is an essential function of the state that requires presenting unified positions towards other states. Since diplomacy is one of the foreign policy tools, the matter reflects on diplomatic action and external representation, as it is the

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monopoly of the central authority.

Despite the continuation of federal waves and giving federal units broad powers and responsibilities to manage their affairs, the powers of managing foreign affairs and making foreign policy remained a central function par excellence. The last two decades of the twentieth century have witnessed an increasing engagement of decentralised governments in global politics and the management of foreign relations, whether economic or political, with other countries or units of others, which has provided them with extraordinary powers and competencies to promote their own cultural, economic, and political interests. Then, this gave them the power to conclude agreements and treaties with other political entities in any of the fields mentioned above, as these governments established centres for transnational cooperation.

Thus, federalism as a form of the state and decentralisation as a system of government witnessed a new wave of development that globalisation contributed to, which made the constituent units of federal states more involved in international activities and became considered, in one way or another, as players in the global political arena. Scholars and political science researchers have increasingly focused on the phenomenon of sub-entities managing their foreign affairs and practising their diplomatic activities, known as paradiplomacy, which raises theoretical questions about the role played by decentralised governments in international affairs and their competition with the traditional central state in managing internal and external affairs.

There are not many federal and decentralisation applications in the Arab world. On the other hand, Arab states suffer from many crises and conflicts according to ethnic, sectarian, and religious grounds.

By reviewing the constitutions of Arab countries that follow a federal system and/or decentralisation, this study aims to demonstrate the extent to which these constitutions allowed the sub-state units to manage their foreign affairs and whether they were given sufficient powers to do so in an era in which globalisation has brought about transformations in the state's function and scope. This last matter leads us to question whether federalism provides practical solutions to internal crises and conflicts in Arab countries compared to foreign countries.

In light of this, we will use the survey method to verify the aim of the study and answer several questions, such as: How does paradiplomacy affect the nature of inter-relationships within the state? Will paradiplomacy lead to the development of the state model itself? Is the transformation in the extent and power of the state part of a continuous process of growth and development?

To answer these questions, we put a structure that deals, first, with the main terms the paper topic is related to. Then the paper shows the literature that has been written in the Arab world concerning the paradiplomacy. After that, we search for the parallel correlation between sub-national governments and paradiplomacy. Then, through surveying the constitutions of selected Arab states, try how these constitutions dealt with the external competencies of sub-national units.

## **Theoretical Approach: Definition of Study Terms**

Cooper (1978, p. 105) argues that the senior dialectic masters have long perceived the utility accruing from the study's terms definition. He quotes Voltaire's famous expression, "If you would speak with me, first define your terms." As such, defining all terms before joining the discussion is helpful. When the discussion revolves around the unknown, it is a kind of intellectual luxury that is useless, so we must first define for the reader what we mean by the terms of our study to make it easier for us to clarify the influence relationship.

## ***1- Sub-National Governments (SNGs)***

Some scholars use the terms subnational, decentralised, and local governments interchangeably. Others, however, tend to distinguish between these terms according to a hierarchy, starting with sub-national governments, which they consider broader and include other types, and ending with local.

The term “local governments” indicates specific institutions or entities established by national constitutions (e.g., Brazil, Denmark, France, India, Italy, Japan, Sweden), state constitutions (e.g., Australia, the United States), or ordinary legislation of a higher level of central government (e.g., New Zealand, the United Kingdom, most countries), by provincial or state legislation (Canada, Pakistan), or by executive order (e.g., China) to provide a set of specific services to a relatively small geographically defined area (Shah & Shah, 2006).

There are two types of local governments: general-purpose, which includes counties, municipalities, and towns and townships, and performing various government functions. Single-purpose that has a specific purpose and performs one function, e.g., school districts and special districts. The two types usually coexist, covering the same area; e.g., the boundaries of a school district may be coterminous with the county; they may cover smaller portions of the county or even extend over sections of two or more counties (Bowman & Kearney, 2011).

Decentralisation, whose first known use was in 1846, means, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, “the dispersion or distribution of functions and powers and the delegation of power from a central authority to regional and local authorities” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.-a). In such a case, a decentralised system or government refers to an organised political structure where power, functions, and authority are distributed, in different degrees, among local authorities and entities (regions, provinces, or even cities) and are not concentrated in the hands of the central government to make citizens more active in their government’s decision-making process, allowing individuals to exercise more power over their own lives (Hutchcroft, 2001; Lockwood, 2002; Renner, 2018).

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines the “subnational” term, first known in 1840, as “existing or occurring below a national level: relating to or being a group or region within a nation” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.-b). So, the subnational government can be defined as the sum of states, provinces, cities, and local or regional governments (OECD, 2018).

Subnational governments mean all levels of government below the national level (regional and local). It could refer to the second level of government (state or province) or the third level (municipalities). It is also broad because it can include political or financial characteristics (Gutierrez, 2015).

The paper argues that this distinction is useless since all these terms refer to decentralised and sub-national levels, all of them related to decentralisation; the first known use was in 1846, which means, according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, “the dispersion or distribution of functions and powers, and the delegation of power from a central authority to regional and local authorities.” In this case, states remain superior to non-central governments that are not sovereign; they can only exercise the powers conferred upon them by the central authority of the state (Smith & Greenblatt, 2020). Therefore, these terms can be used interchangeably. Here we resort to the use of the term sub-national.

## ***2- Paradiplomacy***

Since its appearance as an academic field, international relations, or the activities of sub-national governments (SNGs), have been described in several terms in the political literature. *Constituent*

*Diplomacy* (Kincaid, 1984, 2003), *Multilayered Diplomacy* (Hocking, 1993a, 1993b). Aldecoa (1999) prefers to call it *Plurinational Diplomacy*.

Paradiplomacy is an abbreviation of the two words parallel-diplomacy. Its emergence as a term dates back to the early 1960s, when the British historian Rohan Butler (1961) mentioned it in a collective book on diplomatic history, where he incorporated paradiplomacy as a term in the literature of social sciences and defined the phenomenon as “the highest level of a personal and parallel diplomacy, complementing or competing with the regular foreign policy of the minister concerned, is thus a recurrent temptation to the chief of the executive, be he premier or president, dictator or monarch” (p. 13).

In the early 1980s, the term first appeared directly and empirically in the comparative political analysis of federal states and the renewed theory of Federalism. Specifically, it was used in North American literature about modern forms of Federalism, also known as “new federalism,” and the problematic activities of federal components, especially concerning relations between federal governments and unitary states on foreign policy matters. Since then, the term paradiplomacy has seen a significant turn in the academic literature on the international involvement of decentralised governments and the new postmodern critical analysis of diplomacy (Aguirre, 1999).

Duchacek (1990) and Soldatos (1990) introduced the term paradiplomacy to express the external contacts, activities, relations, and actions of sub-national governments (e.g., federal units, provinces, cantons, länder) with international actors (national states) and other sub-nationals.

Evidence dating back to the eighteenth century shows the interest of the American states in foreign affairs through their representatives in Congress and their influence on the presidency and the Supreme Court of the United States. During the first fifty years of the Republic, the state governments had a particular interest in developing their economies by exporting their resources and products and attracting foreign capital to build manufacturing facilities and make internal improvements. They were concerned with protecting and developing their economic bases by having the federal government erect barriers to foreign competition and ensuring their ability to attract foreign capital and export products. Immigration was also a constant concern in terms of attracting immigrants from abroad and regulating their entry. The original thirteen colonies took care of these matters. Each pursued measures to advance its economic interests abroad by sending agents to Europe. For example, Benjamin Franklin represented the business interests of Pennsylvania and three other colonies in London and Paris. The colonies desired to protect their commercial interests, both collectively and individually, prompting the 1776 Revolution. Under the Articles of Confederation, the new states retained significant autonomy in foreign affairs, especially international trade. Many provisions of the Constitution recognise states’ roles in foreign affairs or provide them with certain freedoms and protections (Kincaid, 1984).

In the nineteenth century, at the beginning of the federal system, and since 1867, Quebec has developed as a relatively independent province within a decentralised federation (Ouimet, 2015). Under its general powers, the Quebec government has taken steps to represent Quebec abroad and send experts on technical assignments. The executive authority issued decrees or orders to the council for this purpose. In 1872, the executive authority appointed immigration officers in Ireland, England, and Scotland. Following the dissolution of the provincial immigration agencies by a provincial-federal accord, a Quebec official in London joined the federal agency in that city in 1875. When the agreement expired in 1880, Quebec did not renew it, but it continued over the next few years to keep its immigration officer in London (Blondeau, 2001).

In 1882, Hector Fabre, Quebec’s first representative in France, was dispatched to Paris because “the business relations between the province of Quebec and Europe are constantly increasing and that big firms, financial institutions, and other enterprises, created or enhanced by French capital, witnessed a considerable development” (Tavares, 2016, p. 11) He was a member of the

Canadian Senate and a well-known businessman in Franco-Canadian financial circles. Later, he became the federal government's representative with the title of commissioner, reporting to the High Commissioner in London. In the early twentieth century, the federal government appointed general agents from Quebec to London and Belgium. The economic crisis in the early 1930s led to the closure of these offices. However, the onset of World War II led to a renewed interest in international relations, particularly trade relations, on the part of the Quebec government. The Secretary of Industry and Commerce appointed an Agent General in New York City in 1943 (Blondeau, 2001).

In Europe, for example, the Swiss Federal Constitution of 1848 enshrined the diplomatic practice of cantons. At that time, Thürer (2003, p. 28) says, "Our old federal state spoke to the outside world not just with the one voice of the confederation, but with the 26 voices of the confederation and the 25 cantons." To foster international exchanges of local governments, all crown colonies under British rule—Victoria (1857), South Australia (1858), New South Wales (1864), Queensland (1869), Tasmania (1886), and Western Australia (1891)—appointed their agent-generals to either London or Paris (Tavares, 2016). In 1891, Brazilian states also began to enjoy the benefits of decentralised government in the early years of the federal system. At that time, states celebrated financial contracts with international entities, including lending institutions, which increased foreign debt (Fantoni & Avellaneda, 2022).

With the advent of the second half of the twentieth century, the phenomenon witnessed a spread in the United States of America and Europe. According to Kincaid (2003), regional and local governments' international involvement emerged in the 1950s, became widespread since the late 1980s, and is expected to become a feature of almost all nation-states in the 21st century.

## **Arabic Literature Review**

Paradiplomacy is a Western invention linked to the federal system and decentralization. However, the phenomenon has expanded beyond federal systems, leading to much Western literature discussing and theorising it. The primary trend of this literature was an attempt to define the phenomenon and delineate its boundaries as a field of academic research (e.g., Cornago, 2010; Duchacek, 1984, 1990; Hocking, 1993a; Keating, 1999; Kuznetsov, 2015; Soldatos, 1990; Wolff, 2007).

The literature primarily focused on analysing the various aspects of the international action of regional governments. These aspects include the extent to which this phenomenon challenges the traditional monopoly of international relations by the state, the constitutional and political encouragement or restriction of such activities, and the effectiveness of paradiplomacy as a tool to promote the economic, political, and other interests of the regions (e.g., Aldecoa, 1999; Duchacek, 1990; Hocking, 1993b; Lecours, 2002; Mingus, 2006).

In the Arab world, due to the weak experience of the federal system and political decentralisation, paradiplomacy rarely receives research attention. Limited writings appeared by a few researchers whose number hardly exceeds the fingers of one hand. We can trace two methods in Arabic studies dealing with paradiplomacy. The first is theoretical, dealing with the phenomenon theoretically by defining it, tracing its history, standing on its causes, analysing its dimensions, and indicating directions for its study and interpretation (e.g., Ali, 2018, 2020; El-Dessouki, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d, 2020).

The second was related to the case studies. Most of it focused on studying the case of the Iraqi Kurdistan region and its experience, maybe because it is the superior experience in the Arab region, and most of the researchers who wrote about this experience are researchers from the

region itself (e.g., Ababakr, 2020; El-Dessouki, 2010; El-Dessouki & Ababakr, 2019; Hamaamin & Azeez, 2017; Jomany, 2023; Kadhim, 2023; Mustafa & Dadfar, 2022).

Some researchers in the Arab region also wrote their research in English, following the same classification as the works written in Arabic, which were either theoretical or case studies. Of course, the latter focused on studying the experience of the Kurdistan region of Iraq. Two of these works are Ph.D. dissertations, one from Cairo University and one from Duhok University (e.g., Ababakr, 2023; Abbas Zadeh & Kirmanj, 2017; El-Dessouki, 2008e, 2012, 2018; Mohammed & Owtram, 2014; Salih & Najmalddin, 2016; Sharif, 2015).

Based on this brief overview, most Arabic research on paradiplomacy is theoretical and conceptual. Only a few of this research focuses on a case study; the Iraqi Kurdistan region is the most common case study, while other experiments in the Arab world have not received significant attention from researchers.

### **Sub-National Governments and Paradiplomacy: The Parallel Correlation**

Since the 1970s, the contemporary world has faced significant challenges, including reshaping the state's role in ever-changing political, social, and economic conditions (Saito, 2008). Globalisation affected the ability of the state to manage its territory and affiliated affairs, and changes began in the scope of local democracy in most parts of the world. These changes gained momentum in the 1980s, accelerated after 1990, and represented an increase in the transfer of political, economic, and administrative power to decentralised governments; this significantly reduced the authority of national governments over economic policy. This phenomenon spread geographically to Latin America, Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe (Bardhan & Mookherjee, 2006).

Since the end of the Cold War, domestic political shifts within the nation-state have strengthened the powers of local and regional administrations. Decentralization processes, which have resulted in a greater recognition of the autonomy of subnational units from strict state centralization, have driven these changes. However, this has also changed the nature of democracy in those nations, as responding to citizens' needs, interests, and desires has become a crucial agent at various state government levels (Oddone, 2023).

Decentralisation is often viewed as a "panacea" and a policy that is normatively justified. It is highly desirable since decentralised governments are very close to the people and are therefore in a better position than the central government to provide the public services that the people desire; it also aims to expand opportunities for citizens to participate in local decision-making processes (Saito, 2008), as it works to transfer powers and competencies from the higher central levels to the lower local levels (Obaid & Aziz, 2019). Therefore, scholars see the justification behind decentralisation as avoiding dictatorship and making governments more responsive (Al-Rikabi, 2022). Also, it can be considered a strategy to mitigate conflicts about power distribution.

Politically speaking, decentralization is usually considered a crucial component of participatory democracy, as it allows subjects to express their opinions and preferences to elected officials, who are subsequently held accountable by the general public. Popular participation is desired for many reasons, independent of policy goals, specific execution, and effects on economic well-being. It can restrict separatist impulses from various areas or ethnic groups, strengthen social order by bolstering the state's legitimacy, and encourage citizens' sense of autonomy (Bardhan & Mookherjee, 2006).

As decentralisation is the response to the problems linked to a centralised government, most federal constitutions have adopted decentralisation due to its idealism and its ability to

meet the desire of decentralised governments to maintain the most significant measure of their autonomy. In addition, decentralisation offers several benefits, including the recognition and respect for the diversity of ethnicities and cultures, the promotion of political innovation and motivation, the encouragement of economic growth, the reduction of the dangers associated with excessive concentration of power, the guarantee of more expansive political participation, and the facilitation of the development of regulations tailored to specific areas (Hutchcroft, 2001; Lockwood, 2002).

As a result of the political and economic developments within the regions themselves, the participation of local governments in the international arena has increased with economic, cultural, and political motives (Keating, 1999). Federalism as a form of the state and decentralisation as a system of government witnessed a new wave of development that globalisation contributed to the advancement, which made the constituent units of the federal states more involved in international activities and became considered, in one way or another, as players in the global political arena, and its role in foreign policy has grown.

Kuznetsov (2015) attributed this growth to radical political changes in the international system, such as the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990 and the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. The latter, in particular, laid the groundwork for a new supranational politics in Europe, allowing European territories such as Catalonia, Flanders, and the Basque Country to develop diplomatic activities of their own. On the other hand, the growth of regional paradiplomacy was primarily linked to other phenomena and changes in the 1990s, particularly globalisation and the decline of state sovereignty.

Subnational governments have articulated their international expectations from two perspectives: first, as a domestically rooted political mobilisation to meet the demands of a denser civil society, with a critical mass of citizens connected globally through information and communication technologies that demand more incredible innovation and efficiency. Public policies that, in some cases, require the transfer of international best practices. Secondly, as a “regional” reaction to the fragmentation of the global economy that forced them to link productively within the framework of new schemes and logics to build dynamic comparative advantages of access to global markets and participation in value chains while still pursuing the reduction of structural heterogeneities that characterised national economies and resolving inequalities other (Oddone, 2023).

In sum, the status of sub-national units depends on whether the state has a federal or a unitary system. In a federal system, such as the United States, Mexico, and Canada, the central government shares some power and competencies with the regions, states, or provinces. Foreign affairs, in particular, are subservient to the central government. Sub-national governments may have a margin of freedom to set their own laws within the boundaries established by a national constitution. In unitary states, all power comes from the central government, which delegates some of that power to local governments to carry out the local business of governing (Sell, 2014).

## **Paradiplomacy in the Arab World**

The federal system includes a form of pluralism as well as the availability of special arrangements for the representation of the sub-units in a way that allows them to participate in central decision-making through procedures and institutions that facilitate and coordinate relationships between the central government and these units. The federal system distributes powers according to two levels. Given that these tasks require one central government, the central government assumes the competencies of defence, foreign affairs, finance, and immigration. In contrast, the tasks assigned

to the units are determined by those that have a direct relationship to the lives of citizens. The degree of competencies and powers granted to the central government and the units can vary depending on the nature of the state itself and what the constitution determines (Abd, 2019).

Only five out of the 22 Arab countries, i.e., 22.7%, have federal states and decentralised experiences. They are the United Arab Emirates, Sudan, the Union of Comoros, the Republic of Iraq, and the Federal Republic of Somalia. Concerning the external powers granted by the constitutions of these countries to their states or regions, they are almost limited and range from the lowest limit, as in the case of the Comoros Islands, to the maximum extent, as in the case of Iraq.

The 2003 Union of Comoros Constitution, art. 1, specifically states that the Union of Comoros is a republic consisting of four autonomous islands. The powers and competencies of international affairs are limited, if not nonexistent, in the Constitution of Comoros, as art. 9 of it entrusts the competence of external relations to the Union. Art. 12 authorises the president of the Union to assume the highest representation of the Union in international relations, to determine and lead foreign policy, and to negotiate and ratify treaties. It did not mention any external powers for the constituent islands of the federation.

In the 1988 Constitution, “art. 2 and art. 108” designated Sudan as a federal republic that governs with supreme authority based on a federal system divided into states, each with its own capital. Then, in the 2005 Interim Constitution, art. 1 cl. 1 indicated that “The Republic of the Sudan is an independent, sovereign state.” It is “a democratic, decentralised, multi-cultural, multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multi-lingual country where such diversities co-exist.” As well, art. 177 cl. 1 states that “the Republic of Sudan shall be decentralised and composed of states.” art. 24 sets the decentralised system as consisting of four levels of government: the national level, the Southern Sudan level, the state level, and the local level. Finally, Sudan’s Constitution of 2019, entitled the Constitutional Charter for the Transitional Period of 2019, according to art. 1, asserts in art. 4 cl. 1 that “The Republic of Sudan is an independent, sovereign, democratic, parliamentary, pluralistic, decentralised state, .....”. Likewise, art. 9 cl. 1 states that the Republic of Sudan is a decentralised state consisting of three levels of government: the federal level, the regional or state level, and the local level.

The Sudan Interim Constitution of 2005 limited Sudan’s powers to manage foreign policy and international representation at the national level, as stated in Schedule A attached to the Constitution. The states’ powers listed in Schedule C are all related to interstate itself and intrastate competencies. The Constitutional Charter for the Transitional Period of 2019 did not give the levels of government, except the federal one, any powers or competencies. Art. 12 cl. 1 Sovereignty Council exercises many competencies and powers, among them the ability to sign international and regional agreements after ratification by the Transitional Legislative Council. The ratification of bilateral, regional, and international agreements and treaties by the Transitional Legislative Council listed in art. 25 cl. 1 within many competencies and powers. Art. 76 entrusted the Sovereignty Council and the Cabinet with the task of representing the state abroad in accordance with the powers of each body.

The Federal Republic of Somalia Provisional Constitution of 2012 refers to Somalia in art. 1 cl. 1 as a federal republic. Art. 48 cl. 1 asserts that the republic’s structure comprises two levels of government: the Federal Government Level and the Federal Member States Level. The Constitution gives little flexibility to the states concerning their powers in foreign affairs. Although art. 54 provided for the possibility of negotiation between the federal government and the member states of the Union regarding the sharing of political powers and excluded some powers, including foreign affairs, art. 53 approved in cl. 1 that “In the spirit of inter-governmental cooperation, the Federal Government shall consult the Federal Member States on negotiations



relating to foreign aid, trade, treaties, or other major issues related to international agreements.” Cl. 2 of the same article stipulates that if the negotiations affect “Federal Member State interests, the negotiating delegation of the Federal Government shall be supplemented by representatives of the Federal Member States governments.” However, cl. 3 made the federal government the guardian of the interests of the federal member states when conducting negotiations.

The United Arab Emirates is the latest in its establishment and the oldest in following the federal system according to the 1971 constitution. Art. 1 states, “The United Arab Emirates is an independent, sovereign, and federal state...,” and the UAE consists of seven Emirates. It also gives the right to any other independent Arab state to join the UAE, subject to the unanimous approval of the Federal Supreme Council.

We notice more flexibility in the 1971 Constitution of the United Arab Emirates. Arts. 116 and 122 stipulate that “An Emirate exercises all the powers not conferred by the Constitution upon the UAE, participates in the UAE’s structure, and benefits from its existence, services, and protection” and that “The Emirates shall have jurisdiction in all the matters not conferred exclusively upon the federal authorities as provided in the two preceding articles”, and art. 120 gave the federation exclusivity in legislation and executive jurisdiction of some affairs, including foreign affairs. Except for art. 123, which stipulates that “by way of exception from Article 120, paragraph (1), which provides that the UAE has exclusive jurisdiction in matters of foreign policy and international relations, a member Emirate of the UAE may conclude limited conventions of a local and administrative nature with the neighbouring countries, provided that such conventions must not be in conflict with the interests of the UAE or the federal laws and that the Federal Supreme Council be so notified in advance. If the Supreme Council objects to the conclusion of these conventions, the matter must be put on hold until the Federal Court decides as quickly as possible on that objection,” and “An Emirate may retain its membership in, or join, the OPEC organisation and the Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries.”

Furthermore, art. 124 obligates the competent federal authorities to consult with an emirate before concluding any international treaty or convention that may affect its status. In case of disagreement, the matter is submitted to the Federal Supreme Court to rule on such a dispute.

After 2003, the year of the overthrow of Saddam Hussein’s regime and the occupation of Iraq, the form of the Iraqi state changed from a unified state to a federal state. According to art. 1 of the 2005 Permanent Iraqi Constitution, “The Republic of Iraq is a single federal, independent, and fully sovereign state...” Art. 116 also stipulates that the federal system in the Republic of Iraq consists of “a decentralised capital, regions, and governorates, as well as local administrations.” The Constitution recognises in art. 117 cl. 1 “..... the region of Kurdistan, along with its existing authorities, as a federal region.” It also affirmed in cl. 2 of the same article that “..., new regions established in accordance with its provisions.” Art. 119 gave the right to one or more governorates “... to organise into a region based on a request to be voted on in a referendum...”

The 2005 Iraqi Constitution exclusives all matters related to foreign affairs to the federal government as stipulated in art. 110 cl. 1; “Formulating foreign policy and diplomatic representation; negotiating, signing, and ratifying international treaties and agreements; negotiating, signing, and ratifying debt policies; and formulating foreign sovereign economic and trade policy.” Art. 115 gives the governorates not organised in a region all powers not stipulated as exclusive to the federal government. Concerning shared powers between the federal and regional governments, in case of dispute, priority goes to the law of the regions and governorates not organised in a region. Also, the constitution in art. 120 approved the right of each region to “adopt a constitution of its own that defines the structure of powers of the region, its authorities, and the mechanisms for exercising such authorities,” on the condition that it does not contradict the federal constitution.

However, in contrast to the other constitutions of Arab federal states, the Iraqi constitution allows regions and governorates to establish offices “in embassies and diplomatic missions in order to follow cultural, social, and developmental affairs,” art. 121 cl. 4.

## Results and Conclusion

Interstate relations have a long history, but the laws governing these relations renew constantly, given developments taking place on the international scene and states’ functions, specifically diplomatic ones. Although diplomacy practice itself is considered an inherent right of the state as the principal member of the international order, international relations since the 1970s have highlighted the increased external activity of regions.

As cross-border connections became more vital for local communities, diplomacy became less centralized. Some states formally recognised their units’ political and administrative interests in foreign affairs and then set up the necessary legal basis at the constitutional level. Studies argue that there is a complementarity between state diplomacy in its general framework and sub-state diplomacy. Paradiplomacy could support and complement the central government’s diplomacy, which may sometimes conflict or compete with it.

Most Arab states are non-federal, and their governments are central governments that may not fulfil all their local communities’ economic, political, and cultural requirements due to various reasons, including the country’s poverty, the lack of expertise in the central government to understand the complexities of local communities, or particular reasons that differ from one country to another, which makes these local communities work to pursue their own interests in various ways that may not be peaceful at times and generates many conflicts.

It is clear from the models mentioned in the paper that the application of paradiplomacy in these models is slight, except in the case of Iraq, which has characteristics different from other models in Arab countries. In addition, its application in Iraq was from the region towards the centre, not vice versa. It is logical to evaluate the experience of federalism in Arab countries before studying their practice of paradiplomacy. The models studied in this paper have shown that each has its own circumstances and reality.

Except for the UAE, there are some ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversities in these models, such as Iraq, Sudan, Somalia, and Comoros, so the potential for ethnic conflicts and tensions in the community is high. However, the emergence and occurrence of such conflicts depend on the policies of these states to manage or suppress the variations. While federalism is considered one of the most vital mechanisms governments adopt to manage ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversities, the function of federalism in reducing ethnic conflicts has not always been positive; it has led, in Sudan and Somalia, for example, to the escalation of ethnic conflicts.

Political history serves as an agent for knowing the established traditions that can affect the adoption of federalism. For instance, since independence from France in 1975, the Comoros have witnessed more than twenty coups or attempted coups, which necessitates considering the equilibrium between domestic and international pressures during the formation of a country’s system of administration. An in-depth examination of the political landscape of any single model, including its cultural, societal, and historical aspects, is essential to understanding the complicated political dynamics of each one. Therefore, when examining the reasons for adopting or not adopting federalism by a specific country or group of countries, it is necessary to look beyond the federal theory concepts and institutional design.

Where there is a profound consensus on liberal democratic values, federalism works better because it is connected to democracy. As most of the models chosen are newly democratising

countries, federalism is unlikely to work well due to its need for power sharing and somewhat self-governing regional entities. Suppose there are militaristic or one-party regimes among the studied models. In that case, federalism is unlikely to succeed, as such regimes are living in perpetual readiness to face various threats and problems, among them ethnic minorities' demands.

Federalism provides a respected and high level of power-sharing, which is supposed to charter an effective economic non-governmental activity. In turn, paradiplomacy provides opportunities for the regions to benefit from external relations with each other or states in various development fields. Therefore, federal Arab countries can benefit from external relations to exchange experiences. It is also necessary for these countries to focus on cross-border links in particular, as these relations contribute to solving many problems, such as those related to the environment, shared resources, and the movement of individuals, especially the movement of pastoral tribes in Africa, which enter into armed conflicts from time to time with agricultural groups.

Thus, paradiplomacy boosts the possibility of contributing to defusing crises and conflicts between the central government and minorities in the state and regulating the movement of individuals and border trade. Such external cross-border relations contribute to addressing contentious issues that invoke conflicts. Even more, paradiplomacy works on decreasing the separatist ambitions of some of the particular nature regions. Direct communication between similar ethnic groups reduces the appetite for secession. Paradiplomacy is important because isolated ethnic minorities often seek connections with similar groups abroad when they lack political and economic power in their own country. Paradiplomacy meets the aspirations of the residents of regions within countries to play an influential role in the foreign policy of their central governments, with the latter reserving the right to reject any foreign activity that may not be consistent with the constitution and state public policy.

Arab countries have witnessed an increase in the emergence of issues like cultural, religious, and sectarian rights of minorities, especially for those who are non-Arab or non-Muslim. Without fair and permanent solutions, these urgent issues could lead to deeper problems amidst the current changes. We suggest doing more in-depth research about federalism and paradiplomacy in the Arab world for each one of the cases mentioned in this paper and comparing it with those non-federal states for more specific conclusions about whether paradiplomacy is a successful solution to the economic, social, and political crises.

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