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Euro-Med: Public Management and Good Local Governance

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Abstract

Public management is not merely a science that includes future visions, innovations, trust, and cost-efficiency in resolving administrative problems; it is the art of managing public wealth and resources. It focuses upon finding effective and long term solutions to handle public, economic, social, psychological, legal, ecological, and educational issues through transparency, strategic planning, commitment, and trust. These public values and achievements cannot materialize in a heavily centralized administrative system where all powers of governing are centered in individual or elite hands generating a long list of problems such as corruption, inefficiency, and mismanagement through ineffective bureaucracy. The research question for this paper revolves around highlighting the significance and value of local governance (decentralization) within a democratic and affective public management system to sustain higher quality of life for citizens. The proposed methodology of research, though complemented by secondary data, will vastly rely on primary sources based on a number of semi structured interviews conducted with experts in the fields that encompass administrators, professors, industrialists etc... Following the data analysis, a conclusion with recommendations will be offered.

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1. Introduction

This topic was chosen based on its importance, merit, and above all, the pressing needs for change and evolution in the Mediterranean basin. In spite of the sweeping trends of globalization in areas of business, technology, tourism, communication, and international political military alliances, each nation-state maintains its geo-political peculiarities. Divisions and conflicts among states are far from ending to provide space for more unity, cooperation, peace, and possibly regional to global federalism. Most worldwide political systems liberated

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themselves from absolute monarchies, yet remain incapable of freeing themselves from totalitarian military or ideological, authoritarian governance. The focal engine is power and its application. Furthermore, in the wake of religious, ethnic, communal, and regional trends, governments in the world have chosen either centralized, decentralized, or a mixture of both as a mode and style of governance. Developed countries' governments are usually divided along the lines of central-national, peripheral-regional, international, or a combination leading to full decentralization or federation. In contrast, in the developing countries, power is often usurped by individuals or groups whose main objective is to consolidate their hold upon resources. They use all available administrative, political, judicial, and economic tools to sustain a centralized monopoly over the three branches of government; consequently, taking full control of natural and human resources in the nation-state they rule. Advocates and promoters of a centralized system advance a variety of reasons to justify its perpetuation. Most importantly they claim that such a system:

Promotes national unity under a sturdy leadership to develop and sustain national interests. The emphasis centers on the undisputed almost divine powers of the leader, often leading to a cult of personality under the pretext of national security and sovereignty. In contrast, under a decentralized system, local governance focuses upon the well-being of citizens and voters, not the leaders through the application of the dichotomy of power theory and national accountability.

Promotes equality among citizens, regions, and organizations (in reality such equality seldom or never exists because certain regions enjoy favorable statuses by the rulers). In the decentralized system, however, each region is given the powers to use its resources and sustain its economic development.

Establishes uniformity in the application of laws and services, taxes, education, and social services throughout the country under a centralized ruling which is definitely inaccurate. In local governance, education, social services, and economic prosperity are highly encouraged and developed when the country is ruled by qualified locally elected leadership. Consequently, sustainable growth may not be equally achieved under both systems, especially when the proper conditions are not met.

The objective of this research is to emphasize the importance of local good governance regardless of the applied centralization, decentralization, or federation systems.

2. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP)

This union, also known as the Barcelona Process, was established in 1995 by the Foreign Ministers of the Mediterranean basin, comprising twenty-seven nation states, twelve Arabs, and fifteen Europeans (Euro-Med Partnership 2009). The partnership members were highly concerned with opening a new era of cooperation and peace in the Med basin through dialogue, exchange of resources and technology, stability, and economic prosperity. This constituted phase one of the partnership (Ibid). On July 13th 2008, the partnership was changed to Union for the Mediterranean (UFM) and launched by forty-three heads of states and governments (EU and UFM, 2013).

2.1 Union for the Mediterranean (UFM)

The UFM had an ambitious program aimed at the adoption of key initiatives for the mutual benefits of all member partners. Its working agenda included:

- Protection of marine life by depolluting the sea and coastal areas.
- Improvement and establishment of transport lines between members through modern highways or maritime lines to facilitate movement and exchange of goods and people.
- Formation of a joint command for the prevention of or response to natural or man-caused disasters.
- Adoption of outsourcing, discovering, and saving energy policies by exploring new technologies and alternatives including solar, air, and water.

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