

## Faculti Summary

<https://faculti.net/deproblematizing-the-federal/>

This video discusses the politicization and ethnicization of the concepts of federal and unitary states in the context of Afghanistan. It argues that the federal system is often viewed negatively by ethnic groups, particularly by the Pashtun majority, due to fears of disintegration and foreign annexation. Conversely, some minority groups prefer a unitary state for the same reasons, associating it with potential ethno-authoritarian dominance.

The author points out the lack of clear understanding among ethnic groups about federalism and the nuances within decentralization debates. While a growing consensus among scholars favors decentralization as a means of ethnic accommodation, there remains an ongoing debate between segmental and non-segmental federalism designs.

This video highlights recent global trends where the distinctions between unitary and federal systems are becoming blurred, with many unitary states, like Indonesia and Spain, adopting decentralized structures. This video shift calls for a reevaluation of how these concepts are applied in practice.

In a study conducted in Afghanistan with over 2,100 respondents, the research found a strong preference across ethnic groups for elected local governance rather than appointed officials, revealing a consensus on certain political institutions regardless of ethnic identity. Furthermore, common identities—national and religious—are considered more important than ethnic identities, suggesting that decentralization does not necessarily threaten national unity.

The author argues for a focus on concrete, institution-based questions rather than politicized terms, proposing that clear discussions about governance preferences could foster consensus among varied groups. Ultimately, the text suggests prioritizing institutional design over the labels of political systems to better address the diverse needs of Afghan society when designing a constitution.