

The Vulnerability of Muslim States: First Acquaintance

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Abstract



This paper argues that vulnerability within the Muslim states is an observable fact that has appeared in variety of contexts, both to describe what are perceived as facts of former colonies and sometimes as position of weakened states. This paper aims to evaluate some of possible situations dominating how the Muslim states' vulnerability is resistant to progression. The next segment of the paper examines the basis of vulnerability within the Muslim states. The paper also addresses the question of Islamic stand point of view onto phenomena given the influence of globalization, massive use of technology, violence, capitalism, and consumerism in the affairs of Muslim states. Within this context, this paper analyses the causal relationship between the vulnerability of Muslim states and underpinning factors using a qualitative approach. In the end, this paper concludes that the series of issues within the Muslim states added to make it possible to criticize what is adopted now by redefining objectives and its visions.

Keywords

Vulnerability, Muslim States

Introduction

This paper argues that vulnerability within the Muslim states is an observable fact that has appeared in variety of contexts, both to describe what are perceived as facts of former colonies and sometimes as position of weakened states. This paper aims to evaluate some of possible situations dominating how the Muslim states' vulnerability is resistant to progression. The next segment of the paper examines the basis of vulnerability within the Muslim states. The paper also addresses the question of Islamic stand point of view onto phenomena given the influence of globalization, massive use of technology, violence, capitalism, and consumerism in the affairs of Muslim states. Furthermore, it uses the concept of the *Ummah* to analyze how those Muslim states interact one another in establishing an economic, social cultural, politic, and security cooperation. Within this context, this paper analyses the causal relationship between the vulnerability of Muslim states and underpinning factors using a qualitative approach. In the end, this paper concludes that the series of issues within

the Muslim states added to make it possible to criticize what is adopted now by redefining objectives and its visions.

Results and Discussion

Vulnerability: Problem continues

International relations is a self-directed field of scholarship to view how particular state interact with another. It is assumed that what defined by international relations are relations between state governments which according to the modern ideal of the nation-state are supposedly representative of their constitutions (Mandaville 2006). The interaction within the Muslim states is a term widely used by scholars and policy-makers to describe the exchange of technology, resources, and knowledge between Muslim countries.

However, due to capitalism from the first industrial revolution to the expansion of Western states' hegemony, Muslim states have responded to engage in both nationalist movements as well as actor of globalization at the same time for extensive decades. For instance, the recent situation of human security happened in Middle East, Africa, and part of Asia indicates that this tragedy is worsening rapidly every day. Particularly children, they are seriously affected by this unfortunate situation. Research conducted by the UN Refugee Agency at the end of 2015 estimated that there are about 65 million people around the world have left their home country. Among them about 20 million are under the age of 18.

Another is a discussion of globalized issues which evaluated by the aspect of ethnicities, identities, and financial instabilities within the Muslim states that are currently requiring strong cooperation. The cooperation arguably remains politically and economically unstable with its own notable problems. The Muslim states in an age of nation-states now are referred to problematic and conflicted nations. A basic view to explain the issues of Muslim states are the new kind of medieval model of international relations, where the states are governed by authorities, transfer some of its capacities to international institutions to facilitate economic issues and to address local politics in a three level of governance such as state, sub-state and transnational authorities (Bayliss and Smith 2004). Yet, the concern here is some segments may generate domination and exclusion of another segments in the states.

Globalization within the Muslim states itself becomes a process of state transformation in its classical function together with transnational actors as a global partnership (Bayliss and Smith 2006). The question remains; whether Muslim states in contemporary world are able to deal with such a situation. Understanding this situation is very crucial before stepping into promising solutions. The fact that the Northern states' hegemony in technology and Muslim states' consumerism lifestyle continue to rise, it requires a vital answer to respond. It is because the dominant realists in

international relations such as Kenneth Waltz, Hans Morgenthau, Rousseau, Machiavelli, Hugo Grotius, and Thucydides have consistently viewed that power politics is an essential unit of analysis in the community of nations (Bayliss and Smith 2004). Therefore, power politics remains as the dominant policy paradigm for Muslim states' foreign policies by adopting cooperation, regimes and institution to facilitate their capacity interdependence.

Vulnerability: Realpolitik

The vulnerability of Muslim states also cannot be separated from the real political situation experienced by Muslim states. Muslim states will be trapped in the Realpolitik situation as described by Thucydides. Realpolitik is a Thucydides argument set forth in a manuscript called Melian Dialogue. Realpolitik stated how Athenian emphasized the overriding importance of power in such a world as quoted: "The strong (Athens) do what they have to the power to do and the weak (Melos) accept what they have to accept (Viotti and Kauppi 2010).

Viewed in a Realpolitic or power politics situation, the conditions and situation of Muslim countries are vulnerable. The majority of Muslim countries are not in a position to decide (what do they will). The majority of Muslim countries are in position to do what they must. Indicators that illustrate this vulnerability are seen through two aspects, namely the military and the economy. Both of these can be seen through the military capabilities and GDP of Muslim countries. These two things can be used as a reference to see the vulnerability of Muslim countries. The following is an illustration of GDP per capita and military capability of Muslim countries (2019 Military Strength Ranking n.d.):

Table 1. Military Strength Ranking in 2019 and GDP per capita

No	States	Military Strength Ranking	GDP per capita
1	Indonesia	16 th	4.12 thousand
2	Pakistan	15 th	1.36 thousand
3	Bangladesh	45 th	1.89 thousand
4	Nigeria	44 th	2.23 thousand
5	Egypt	12 th	3.02 thousand
6	Iran	14 th	5.82 thousand
7	Turkey	9 th	8.51 thousand
8	Algeria	27 th	4.23 thousand
9	Sudan	69 th	728.06
10	Iraq	53 rd	5.76 thousand
11	Morocco	61 st	3.41 thousand
12	Afghanistan	74 th	547.51

No	States	Military Strength Ranking	GDP per capita
13	Saudi Arabia	25 th	22.51 thousand
14	Yemen	73 rd	918.8
15	Uzbekistan	48 th	1.48 thousand
16	Niger	116 th	487.68
17	Mali	99 th	933.88
18	Syria	50 th	-
19	Malaysia	41 st	11.39 thousand
20	Senegal	-	1.51 thousand
21	Uni Emirate Arab	62 nd	39.81 thousand
22	Qatar	106 th	70.29 thousand
23	Jordanian	76 th	4.39 thousand
24	Tunisia	80 th	3.07 thousand
25	Turkmenistan	75 th	8.43 thousand
26	Oman	82 nd	18.08 thousand
27	Kuwait	84 th	29.13 thousand
28	Bahrain	98 th	25.78 thousand
29	Kazakhstan	54 th	8.76 thousand
30	Azerbaijan	52 nd	4.5 thousand

Source: adapted from various sources

Some Muslim countries have good military capabilities but are not accompanied by economic capabilities. Vice versa, there are some countries that have good economic capabilities but do not have good military capabilities. This condition will cause Muslim countries to be trapped in a Realpolitic situation and political vulnerability.

Parag Khanna explains this phenomena:

“The state is not a universally representative. Already, billions of people live in imperial conglomerates such as the European Union, the Greater Chinese Co-Prosperity Sphere, and the emerging North American Union, where state capitalism has become the norm. Even during global financial crisis, multinational corporations heavily populate the list of the world's largest economic entities; the corporations has turned north-south relations widened the gap. An individual can now be a nation himself. Bill Gates, Anil Ambani, George Soros, and Richard Branson are able to run corporate cities and undermine the regimes (Khanna n.d.).”

As mentioned earlier in this paper, the current situation of the Muslim states leads to discussion of globalized issues such as ethnicities, identities, and financial instabilities

that are now interdependent. The overall situation needs to be critically examined as a great discrepancy between Muslim states often occurs.

Economic Interdependence

Due to constant level of the Muslim states with regard to dependency and consumerism to multinational corporations (MNCs) goods and services which predominantly associated by the Northern states, these phenomena also lead to MNCs influence in Muslim state economic decision making. According to the UNCTAD, there are over 10,000 MNCs worldwide with an extensive amount of subsidiaries located at the Muslim states (UNCTAD 2018). Due to internet, radical revolution occurred in information. Internet had truly made every state connected to other states. The Muslim states in particular are widely affected from this new phenomenon. The technology has become cheaper who have access to and it has made the states borderless. The MNCs now enjoys a massive and fast mobilization of customers through commercial avenues such as Whatsapp, Facebook, Twitter and video sharing of YouTube. The MNCs in the industry as a result of this massive digitization and online transaction are able to manipulate, create, control, and influence state actors without reservation. Indonesia itself is obtaining a significant rise of employment of MNCs. A light data is described in the table as below:

Table 2. MNCs in Indonesian Sectoral Composition of Primary and Manufacturing Employment (in percent)

Sector	2000	2014
Agriculture	58.61	54.08
Forestry	6.63	3.70
Fishing	7.38	12.19
Mining	1.44	1.87
Food manufacture	5.70	3.49
Textile manufacture	3.67	5.21
Wood	3.25	3.41
Paper	0.76	1.03
Printing	0.03	0.04
Petroleum	0.19	0.36
Chemicals	0.28	0.46
Pharmaceuticals	0.10	0.17
Rubber	1.84	2.66
Nonmetallic minerals	1.26	2.22

Sector	2000	2014
Basic metals	1.12	2.02
Fabricated metal	1.09	1.99
Computing	0.18	0.19
Electrical equipment	0.14	0.15
Machinery and equipment	0.35	0.18
Motor vehicles	0.50	0.74
Other transport	0.03	0.04
Furniture and other	1.52	1.12

Source: ADB and Bappenas, 2019.

The table of Indonesian Sectoral Composition of Primary and Manufacturing Employment above shows that although there are some units reduces its dependency yet, almost all units are incapable to obtain a self-sufficient period in producing goods and services.

Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this paper is to correlate the factors influencing cooperation among Muslim states. Inspired from Emre Torus framework on refugee issues, this paper frames the relationship between Muslim states' cooperation with four major factors. They are formation, legal, value-based, and impact-related.

Formation: It refers to membership structure, diversity and funding. As the number of Muslim states increase in helping others, it is likely that these states will develop diverse purposes and agendas in the society. For instance, how large the states in terms of membership, institutions, and networks; what is the level of concentration and which resources do they command?

Legal: It refers to operational environment, threats and opportunities, political context, and international dimension. There is a need for clear and coherent regulations, which support states and do not create obstacles to their freedom of operations. The laws must exercise freedoms through legal entities. For instance, what is the legal space within the regulatory environment in which states operate; and what laws enable or constrain its development?

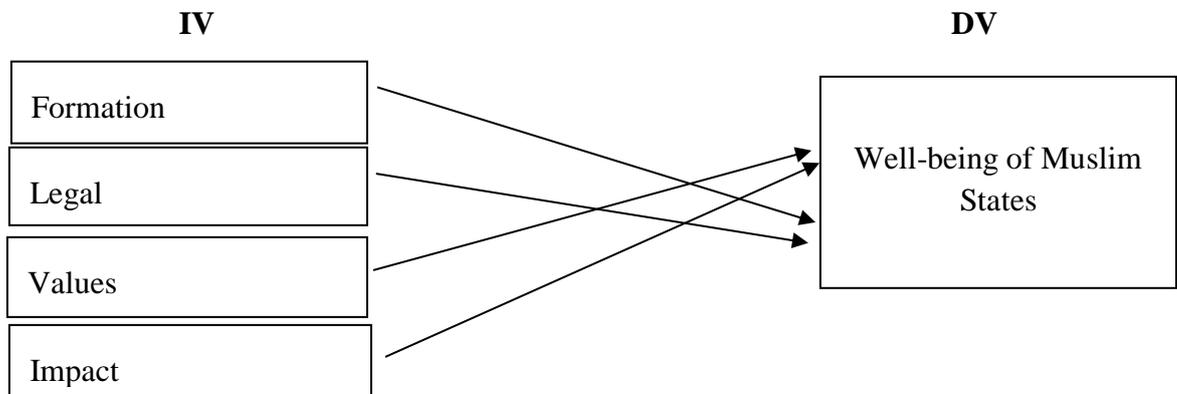
Value: It refers to inclusiveness. As a part of activity, help of states indicates sympathy to the others and raises consciousness about Islamic system. The more often that states have the opportunity to develop the capacity to advance their goals, protect their interests, and preserve their values, the more secure their commitment will be to that

environment. For instance, which values inspire the states; what sort of norms and practices does it represent and transmit; how inclusive are they?

Impact: It refers to effect, responding social interests and empowering states. Through vocalizing the problems and needs, states can produce warnings for the majors and highlight the problems related to shortages. Hence, by sensing these gaps and trying to require changes, state can contribute its capacities to maximum level of distribution. For instance, what is the contribution of states to specific Yemen’s problems?

The independent variables or the determinants presented in figure below serve an important role in influencing the well-being of Muslim states.

Figure 1. Determinants of Muslim States’ Well-Being



Source: Adapted from Emre Torus Framework of Refugee Learning Centers

Cooperation among Muslim Nations through Concept of the Ummah

This paper also examines how those Muslim states interact one another in establishing an economic, social cultural, politic, and security cooperation through concept of the *Ummah*. Ejaz Akram, Islamic Research Institute (IRI) Researcher, International Islamic University, Islamabad, proposed efforts to build cooperation among Muslim world community through the concept of the “*Ummah*” (Akram 2007). The concept of the *Ummah* will established well if it is supported by cohesion and socio-cultural ties within the Islamic community itself which in Ibn Khaldun's concept is called “*ashabiyah*.”

‘*Ashabiyah*’ will have a positive meaning as a form of social solidarity in the Islamic community in conducting cooperation, prioritizing collective interests over personal interests (self interest), and being aware of rights and obligations. This positive spirit will sustain the unity and sustainability of a country's existence and build domestic economic prosperity. This effort is rarely implemented by government or regimes in the Muslim world, especially in the Middle East region which has become the world's attention because of various humanitarian issues that have not been resolved until now. On the contrary, ‘*ashabiyah*’ actually has a negative impact if it is manifested in blind

fanaticism that creates segregation between nations, strengthens solidarity mechanic in groups, widens social distance and deepens differences with other groups outside their group.

So, efforts to carry out internal development within the country through the concept of *'ashabiyah* become important to come to the economic, social, political and security cooperation between Muslim countries as a manifestation of the *Islamic Ummatic Spirit* that Muslims are a single *Ummah* (Qur'an verse 21:92).

The Qur'an is both a guideline and a way of life, so the Qur'an becomes the highest spirit in realizing unity and cooperation between Muslim countries. The Qur'an mentions at least sixty-two times the word "*Ummah*" (referring to Islam). This shows that unity and cooperation between Muslim countries is very important. In a Western perspective, Muslims are considered to have and teach radical doctrines as adhered to *jihadis* and terrorism groups who call themselves Muslims. In fact, Islam teaches its people (*ummat*) to be a moderate group (*ummatan wasatan*) as stated in the Qur'an verse 2:143. This is a feature of Islamic teachings that "*khairul umuri ausathuha*" which means the "middle path" to avoid understanding and actions of extremism (Akram 2007).

Cooperation in the Islamic economic system that supports the *Ummah* concept, for example, Iraj Toutouchian, a Tehran University Economics Professor said that Islamic economics has three pillars called the "Trinity Criteria" as follows: 1) social justice is the highest goal in Islamic economics; 2) demand cooperation of all individuals; 3) when there is a conflict between two interests, personal and social interests, then social interests must take precedence over self interest (Toutouchian n.d.). Unlike the Islamic economic system, the capitalist economic system puts individual interests above all else and economic activity is only seen as an attempt to increase individual profit as much as possible (zero sum game).

Conclusion: An Islamic Perspective

Burhanuddin Helmy, a Malayan Islamic scholar during the colonial times has proposed an idea that the State should correspond to the Divine in dealing its statehood affairs; internal and external. In addition, human dignity is widely discussed in the Islamic texts; Qur'an and *Sunnah*. Prophet Muhammad was also a weak; by force he had to leave Mecca and migrated to Medina as a result of tyrannical rule at that time. People of Medina welcomed the Prophet and his people with a high hospitality.

Burhanuddin added that, Islam is sent by God for the complete guidance of one's life and to maintain peaceful relationship among human beings with God at its centre. Politics and laws in Islam should be directed to achieve justice, to differentiate between the right and wrong, to lead new civilisation, to strengthen the good relationship among all nations, and to ensure equal rights. Although these alarming issues have been

known for long, numbers of crucial initiatives have not been realized. This may due to barriers of Muslim states in their foreign policies, financial means, and people attitude toward this very unfortunate situation. A state not only has a right, but also is responsible to maintain public institutions and processes which it benefits from (Rudini 1994, 1997). A state is assumed to be aware of going-ons in its surrounding. It promotes the spirit of empowering individuals who are less fortunate. The Muslim states cooperation is practiced in different times and places yet seemingly possess an almost immediate and consistent likeliness, this paper argues. On one level, the states are brought together providing communication and common identity but on another level, emphasize its own internal interests and produce conflicts to their cooperation. Another, state agencies such as large companies are seen primarily as groups who influence and change a critical decision of public sphere of Muslim states. They remain weak and marginalized. Normatively, the central principle of Islam in governing the states cooperation lies but not limited to, responds in the form of protecting people as supported in the *dharuriyat of Maqasid*. Cooperation has to be pure, sincere, and accommodate the large affairs of public in beautiful manner.

In dealing with other Muslim states, state interest has to conform with another unit of analysis such as way of dealing, conditions, and other form of cooperation rather than exclusively material needs. As a matter of fact, Islam has described consistently for any cooperation has to reach beyond materialism. A strong solidarity with other states irrespective of nations has to prevail. Cooperation is richly mirrored in the verse of the Qur'an. A value and benefit are enjoined upon cooperation as the Qur'an states:

Mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, And made you into Nations and tribes, that ye may know each other. Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...

Al-Hujurat: 13

And:

To each is a goal to which Allah turns him...

Al-Baqarah: 148

And:

Verily, this Ummah of yours is a single ummah.

Al-Anbiya: 92

And: ...to each among you have we prescribed a Law and an open way. If Allah had so willed, he would have made you a single people...

Al-Maidah: 48

In driving states to carry out this responsibility, the Maqasid reveals its direction. The importance of preserving Maqasid has been described clearly in the Quran as a custodian of human welfare by creating benefits to them and avoiding harms as stated in Surah al-Baqarah, verse 185, meaning: “(With this decree), Allah desires your wellbeing, not your discomfort.”

For Muslim states, however, the cooperation union is arguably still a long process and the process of good cooperation will be gradual, this paper believes. Therefore, this conclusion has several implications for the Muslim states to respond. First of all, the Muslim states have to facilitate consolidation in the soonest possible way such as formulating the best roadmap in both politic and economic needs. This is to ensure all mechanisms are applied with a just and considerable manner. Second, the Muslim states have to expand level of coordination and responsible to the outcome of their capacities; and finally, some of major powers within the Muslim states have to unite and enjoin their capacities to help the minors.

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