

**The Muslim world in the 21st century: Space, power and human development. Edited by Samiul Hasan. New York: Springer, 2012, pp. xx+363, ISBN: 978-94-007-2632-1.**

Reviewer: Shafiu Yahya Mika'il, Department of Political Science, Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia. Email: [yusrah0209@gmail.com](mailto:yusrah0209@gmail.com).

The Muslim world is currently characterised by low economic development, chronic poverty, endemic diseases, environmental degradation and poor human development. *The Muslim World in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Space, Power, and Human Development* is an excellent attempt to explore and explain the current state of the Muslim world in terms of space, power and human development.

The editor of the volume, Samiul Hasan, contributed the first three chapters of this book. In these chapters, he outlined the main principles of Islamic jurisprudence and its relationship to human development. He argues that both internal and external factors are responsible for the lack of development in the Muslim Majority Countries (MMCs). The first internal factor that Hasan discusses is the lack of implementation of Islamic strategies of development that encourage the believers to convert their self-interest to public interest, known as *al-maṣāliḥ al-mursalah*. The second internal factor contributing to the lack of development in the Muslim world is the absence of Islamic teachings such as simple living, sense of belongingness, well-being for all and human solidarity. External factors contributing to the lack of development in the Muslim world, according to Hasan, are mainly the IMF and World Bank loan conditionality and policy prescription by foreign experts through technical assistance to the Muslim world without critical assessment of the policies. He, therefore, suggests the MMCs embrace an Islamic framework of development and develop industrial capacity in order to compete with the West.

The fundamental features, issues and realities associated with geography and resources and their possible impact on the economy and human development of the MMCs are dealt with by George Odhiambo, Saif Al Qaydi and Samiul Hasan respectively. The MMCs are spread in six geographic regions, i.e., North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, West

Asia, Central Asia, South Asia and Southeast Asia. The geographical features of MMCs are relatively diverse ranging from deserts, mountains, fertile soil, and arid soil. The variation in climate within each region affects the socio-economic activities. While some MMCs may have good agriculture sectors to ensure food security, others are dependent on food imports. According to the authors, the diversity of biophysical resources in the MMCs, the availability of a skilled labour force and technology could lead to a better use of resources in the future.

In separate chapters, Samiul Hasan, S. M. Abdul Quddus, and M. Moniruzzaman deal with some key issues related to socio-economic, political and human development in MMCs. Their analysis shows that many MMCs, irrespective of the regime type, are dominated by authoritarian forms of government. This type of government is characterised by the dominance of the executive branch and follow patron-client and symbiotic relationships between the military, bureaucracy and business elite. According to Hasan, these factors are responsible for hampering human development in the MMCs. In analysing the important issue of the nature, process and consequences of colonisation on the MMCs, Hasan makes the important argument that the prime motive behind European colonial invasion of the MMCs was not only the accumulation of wealth but also the spiritual conversion of the colonised subjects. Hasan divided the colonial period in MMCs into two eras: the trade-based mercantile period (1500-1800 CE), dominated by the Spanish, Dutch and Portuguese, and the industrial period (1800-1963 CE), dominated mainly by the British and the French. The colonial powers vary in terms of approach and interest. For instance, the Spanish and Portuguese were interested in spiritual conversion of the colonies. The Dutch and the French, on the other hand, were more interested in accumulating wealth by influencing culture and social structure. The French approach was dominated by the policy of assimilation and the withering away of the traditional power structure. The Dutch introduced social and cultural transformation, i.e., introduction of the Roman script to replace the Arabic script. The British were interested exclusively in exploiting and acquiring the wealth of the colonies with a non-interventionist approach.

In their analyses, Quddus and Moniruzzaman argue that since the colonial powers followed different objectives and approaches in colonising, it is therefore expected that these would leave behind different

levels of economic, political, cultural and religious transformation in the colonies. As a result, the MMCs have great diversity in social, economic, political and structure of government ranging from the Islamic Republic of Iran to secular Kazakhstan as well as from absolute monarchy in Saudi Arabia to democracy in Nigeria. The colonial powers transformed local institutions to favour themselves. The British-style of indirect rule used local leaders to collect tax and supply labour to the colonial state that involved minimum staff and expense. In contrast, the French did not regard its colonies as separate territories but as part of France, encouraging the elite in the colonies to evolve as French provincial citizens with allegiance to France. This legacy remains operative in many former French colonies.

Anis Chowdhury, Mohammad Zufan Tadjoeeddin, Abdellaziz El Jaouhari, and Samiul Hasan in four separate chapters assess the human development in the MMCs by examining a number of developmental indicators such as life expectancy, per capita income, educational achievement, and infant mortality. The authors discuss a number of factors, which contribute to the low socio-economic progress in many MMCs. These include deficits in education, lack of infrastructure and the absence of a culture of research and development. The authors also examine the relative achievements in international trade among the MMCs, and provide an overview of MMCs' trade structure and foreign direct investment (FDI). The data shows MMCs are not significant receivers of FDI, except those producing oil. Therefore, the authors suggest that to overcome this disadvantage, the MMCs should expand trade and investment links among themselves. They also recommend that in order to improve the educational and health conditions of MMCs, they need to rethink their priorities and develop inter-MMC cooperation for sharing resources and skills.

Abdul Rashid Moten and Ishtiaq Hossain analyse the MMCs' political integrity and *Umma* solidarity by examining the state of democracy and development in the MMCs and three most vital international organisations formed by the MMCs, i.e., the Arab League, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in promoting peace and development among the member states. Hossain argues that the MMCs conduct their foreign relations by accepting the contemporary international system, dominated by Western-inspired 'secular' norms and values. As a

consequence, all three organisations and their member-states accept the United Nations (UN) Charter and respect sovereignty and the territorial integrity of all states. Moten points out that the explanations of current political realities in the MMCs must take into account the legacies of colonialism and the policies adopted by the post-colonial elites in their nation building process. The colonial powers have succeeded in creating ethnic fragmentation and artificial borders among the MMCs. He argues that the negative effect of colonial legacies had been countered by the political elites. Unfortunately, there was no political commitment from the elites to do that. Moreover, the democratic consolidation in the MMCs is also contingent upon the elites' commitment to democratic rule and to establish civilian control and supremacy.

Hasan and El Jaouhari argue that the disadvantages of geography and climate need to be compensated by economic policy in order to achieve economic growth. However, this does not seem to have happened in the MMCs. As a result, the MMCs have failed to achieve economic development, especially human development. In order to tackle this problem, they have proposed five substances of human development. These include deliberate actions through value creation for economic diversity, distributive justice, community preference, internalising governance, organised cooperation among individuals and state for power enhancement, and ethnical practices for sustained capacity. These five crucial catalysts of human development are likely to increase access to skill-supporting education, productive health manufacturing activities, economic diversity, open and fair markets and international cooperation for economic and political development which would ultimately lead to socio-political, economic and human development.

The book succeeds in addressing the subject matter. It is well-written and presents the subject matter in a simple and clear form with relevant tables, charts and diagrams, where necessary. Moreover, the contributors to this important book have used the Qur'ān, Hadith and historical incidences in order to support their arguments. The book includes questions at the end of each chapter that may be used by students and interested researchers for further study and reflection. Therefore, the book is of great benefit to academicians, professionals and students in the field of developmental studies and international political economy.