

Considering an Islamic Framework in the Study of Philosophy of History

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Abstract

This article proposes an Islamic framework in the study of philosophy of history, from its object of study, theoretical framework, and its case study of Ibn Khaldun's thought. This research is based on literature and qualitative research, and it uses the descriptive-analytical methods. This article concludes that philosophy of history is identical to the world of civilization ('umrān al-'Ālam), and encompasses a whole human civilization. Civilization means an outcome of the dynamic concept, and the civilization mobilizes a pre-civilizational society to have a part in history and generate an appropriate system and ideas. The main method, then, is observing nature and society's laws that control historical events (Ṭabā'i' al-'Umrān). The study of history, including civilization, can describe things behind an event, not restricted to when, what, and how an event happened, but also explain why it occurred. Therefore, it contains an observation, the effort to find the truth (taḥqīq), and deep knowledge of history's substance, essence, and causality. This meaning is rooted in philosophy and deserves to be accounted for as a branch of philosophy.

Keywords: *The Philosophy of History, Ibn Khaldun, Islamic Framework, Civilization.*

Abstrak

Artikel ini menawarkan satu pengantar framework Islam untuk kajian filsafat sejarah, mulai dari objek kajian, kerangka teori, dan studi kasus pemikiran Ibnu Khaldun. Penelitian ini merupakan kajian pustaka dengan metode kualitatif, dan menggunakan metode deskriptif-analisis. Artikel ini menyimpulkan bahwa filsafat sejarah identik dengan dunia peradaban ('Umrān al-'Ālam) dan mencakup seluruh peradaban manusia. Peradaban berarti hasil dari konsep dinamis, dan peradaban memobilisasi masyarakat pra-peradaban untuk memiliki bagian dalam sejarah dan menghasilkan sistem dan gagasan yang sesuai. Maka, metode utamanya adalah mengamati hukum-hukum alam dan masyarakat yang mengatur peristiwa-peristiwa sejarah (Ṭabā'i' al-'Umrān). Kajian sejarah, termasuk peradaban, dapat menggambarkan hal-hal yang melatarbelakangi suatu peristiwa, tidak terbatas pada kapan, apa, dan bagaimana suatu peristiwa terjadi, tetapi juga menjelaskan mengapa peristiwa itu terjadi. Oleh karena itu, di dalamnya terkandung proses observasi, upaya mencari kebenaran (taḥqīq), dan pengetahuan mendalam tentang substansi, esensi, dan kausalitas sejarah. Makna ini berakar pada filsafat dan patut diperhitungkan sebagai cabang filsafat.

Keywords: *Filsafat Sejarah, Ibn Khaldun, Kerangka/Sudut Pandang Islam, Peradaban.*

Introduction

The study of history and the philosophy of history are two different things that have their objects of discussion. Murtadha Mutahhari, in his book “*Society and History*”, mentions that history is the knowledge of human events and circumstances that occurred in the past that are related to the present. It is concerned with writing biographical records of wars and conquests, which will be dissolved as time goes on. Muthahhari called this kind of history a definitive history.¹ Therefore, the study of history and the philosophy of history are two different things that have their respective objects of discussion.

Meanwhile, the philosophy of history is a study based on gradual social changes that take society from one stage to another. The philosophy of history explores the case or laws that play a role

¹ Murtadha Mutahhari, “*Society and History*,” (Qum: Ansariyan Publications, t.t.), 59.

in these gradual social changes. Alternatively, it can be said that the philosophy of history is the study that discusses the process of becoming a society, not about its form. Therefore, the philosophy of history is not a traditional history but a rational history.² The study of the philosophy of history is needed to minimize and diminish the subjectivity of the historians in reconstructing and writing the results of their research.

In the progress of the philosophy of history, many thinkers have already contributed to its development. For example, G.W.F Hegel, in his book *Introduction of Philosophy of History*, argues that the philosophy of history is a study to understand the history of world development that presents the advancement of the spirit consciousness toward its freedom, which will ultimately lead to the development of history to complete liberation and objective truth.³ Furthermore, there is Auguste Comte, known as the father of Western sociology. Comte was famous for his thoughts on the three stages of development: theological, metaphysical, and positive in his view about the philosophy of history.⁴ Then Karl Marx with his idea of dialectical materialism as a whole process of continuous transformation in history.⁵

As a study that examines the past, the study of history cannot be detached from the subjectivity of history researchers. In reconstructing a historical event, historians are always influenced by their perspective and worldview.⁶ Ali Caksu wrote an article entitled “Ibn Khaldun and Philosophy: Causality in History”, published by John Wiley & Sons in 2017. Ali Caksu discusses the concept of

² Mutahhari, 59–61.

³ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, “The Philosophy of History,” (Kitchener: Batoche Books, 2001), 57.

⁴ F. Budi Hardiman, *Filsafat Modern dari Machiavelli sampai Nietzsche* (Jakarta: PT. Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2004), 206–7.

⁵ Hardiman, 239.

⁶ Ajid Thohir dan et. al, “Filsafat Sejarah Profetik, Spekulatif, dan Kritis,” 13, diakses 20 Desember 2022, http://digilib.uinsgd.ac.id/42019/1/Ajid_FilsafatSejarah_compressed.pdf.

causality, consisting of Ibn Khaldun's thoughts on the philosophy of history and how God, causality, and history are interconnected. This article also discusses that Ibn Khaldun believed that God was the creator of all causation, which this causal effect works as human limitations in action. And the law of causality will also form a pattern that organizes all historical events. In his theory on the philosophy of history, Ibn Khaldun sought to detect this historical pattern by making it an object of study in his concept of philosophy of history.⁷

Abdurrahman Kasdi discussed sociology as an element to cooperate in studying the philosophy of history in his article "Pemikiran Ibnu Khaldun dalam Perspektif Sosiologi dan Filsafat Sejarah".⁸ In understanding history and social conditions in society, the progress of social development, and the factors that influence it, the study of sociology is required to understand the things related to history. This journal emphasizes its discourse in sociology. The discussion in this journal is limited to the history of civilizations and their progress and the division of history and human civilization.

While Theguh Saumantri and Abdillah discussed 'ashabiyah or solidarity as a requirement to establish a civilization. 'Ashabiyah have an essential role towards Ibn Khaldun's thought in concept of philosophy of history, especially in the existence of an interrelated civilization. Because, if 'ashabiyah in a civilization becomes fragile, it will cause to the destruction, and there will be a new civilization with a stronger 'ashabiyah as a replacement for the past. The discourse in this journal is focused only on research about 'ashabiyah and not explaining the concept of Ibn Khaldun's view on philosophy of history.⁹

⁷ Ali Caksu, "Ibn Khaldun and Philosophy: Causality in History," *Journal of Historical Philosophy*, 2017, 27–42.

⁸ Abdurrahman Kasdi, "Pemikiran Ibnu Khaldun Dalam Perspektif Sosiologi Dan Filsafat Sejarah," *FIKRAH: Jurnal Ilmu Aqidah Dan Studi Keagamaan* 2, no. 2 (2014): 305, <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.21043/fikrah.v2i2.564>.

⁹ Theguh Saumantri and Abdillah Abdillah, "Teori Ashabiyah Ibnu Khaldun

In addition, the discussion contains the concept of Ibn Khaldun's philosophy of history is also discussed in several books. Like the book written by Hafidz Hashim entitled "Watak Peradaban dalam Epistemologi Ibnu Khaldun". Hafidz Hashim, in his book, examines the thoughts of Ibn Khaldun in terms of epistemology in particular. He believes that Islamic science is left behind from the Western civilization, and the cause of its left is due to the lack of epistemological studies in Islam. Ibn Khaldun's original thoughts on the philosophy of history and sociology were the solution to its lack. And the study of Ibn Khaldun's thought epistemologically is expected to build a new epistemology that can awaken the intellectual spirit of Muslims. In this book, Hafidz Hashim discusses the nature of civilization in the epistemology of Ibn Khaldun and makes it the basis in the study of history. Thus, the history that was only limited to stories about the wars, dynasties, power struggles became a scientific practice based on various assessments. However, this book does not discuss the religious values in Ibn Khaldun's thoughts on the philosophy of history.¹⁰

Afterward, an Iraqi-American orientalist named Muhsin Mahdi wrote a book about Ibn Khaldun's thoughts on the philosophy of history entitled "*Ibn Khaldun's Philosophy of History*", published in 1957 by George Allen & Unwin Ltd. In this book, Muhsin Mahdi explains Ibn Khaldun's thoughts on the philosophy of history complexly. Starting from the biography of Ibn Khaldun, the method of philosophy of history, subjects and problems in the discussion of civilization, and the principles and methods in the science of civilization.¹¹

Sebagai Model Perkembangan Peradaban Manusia," *Jurnal Tamaddun : Jurnal Sejarah Dan Kebudayaan Islam* 8, no. 1 (2020): 159, <https://doi.org/10.24235/tamaddun.v8i1.6326>.

¹⁰ Hafidz Hasyim, *Watak Peradaban dalam Epistemologi Ibnu Khaldun* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2012).

¹¹ Muhsin Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldun's Philosophy of History* (England: Taylor & Francis, 2015).

Further research in the book is the work of Zainab al-Khudairi, entitled “Falsafah al-Tarikh ‘inda Ibn Khaldun”, published by Dar al-Isaqafah li al-Thiba’ah wa al-Nasyr in 1979. In this book, Zainab seeks to widely explain the concept of Ibn Khaldun’s philosophy of history. Starting from the discussion of his life, Ibn Khaldun’s methods in the philosophy of history, the theory of historical development and the factors that influence it, then the discussion of economics, which is one of the main factors that influence a historical event. Later in this book, Zainab also discusses the concept of ‘Ashabiyah and its elements. Zainab al-Khudairi’s discussion of Ibn Khaldun’s philosophy of history does not mention the religiosity value of Ibn Khaldun’s concept on philosophy history. This is necessary because some people consider that Ibn Khaldun’s concept of philosophy of history contains elements of secularism.¹²

From some of the results of the literature survey above, this article specifically proposes an Islamic framework for the study of philosophy of history, from its object of study, theoretical framework, and its case study of Ibn Khaldun’s thought. This research is based on literature and qualitative research. It uses the descriptive-analytical methods to emphasize its natural quality by referring to relevant primary and secondary books.

The Philosophy of History: An Overview

History and humans are two things that cannot be separated. In the study of history, humans can act as subjects and objects. In their role as subjects, humans are the main actors who can influence how an event occurs in history. While as an object, humans are an aspect that is influenced by situations and conditions in history, or on the contrary, it is humans who are influencing and

¹² Zainab Al-Khudairi, *Falsafah Al-Tarikh ‘inda Ibn Khaldun* (Cairo: Dar Tsaqofah li-Nasyr wa at-Tauzi’, 2007), 15.

can even change the situations and conditions in history.¹³ This tight relationship made humans since ancient times study history. Herodotus and Thucydides are historians from ancient Greece who have argued that history is not a myth or a legend. However, an event and fact that can be observed historically and critically.¹⁴ The conclusion is that history and humans are two things that cannot be separated.

According to Sidi Gazalba, the term history comes from the Greek word *istoria*. While in Arabic, history means *tārīkh*, and in German, history is called *geschichte*. The meaning of history in these various languages generally means about events and facts that occurred in the past that related to humans.¹⁵ Then, the philosophy of history means the philosophical analysis of historical events to determine the essential factors that play a role in controlling historical events. Then it will be determined to fair laws, which leads to the growth of nations and countries in different times and generations. With the assumption that history does not progress randomly but follows a particular framework, and philosophy of history is an attempt to find out the framework.¹⁶

Murtadha Muthahhari, in his book “*Society and History*”, introduces three definitions of history based on three historical disciplines. The first is narrative history which means history as the knowledge of incidents, events, circumstances, and conditions of people living in the past concerning the present. Biographies, battle records, conquests, and chronicles compiled in the past, or at present, by all nations come under this category.¹⁷ The second meaning of history is the knowledge of laws that appear to control

¹³ Thohir dan al, 1–2.

¹⁴ R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, ed. oleh Jan van der Dussen, Revised edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 17–18.

¹⁵ Sidi Gazalba, *Pengantar Sejarah Sebagai Ilmu* (Jakarta: Bhartara Karya Aksara, 1981), 1.

¹⁶ Al-Khudairi, *Falsafah Al-Tarikh 'inda Ibn Khaldun*, 54.

¹⁷ Mutahhari, “Society and History,” 59.

the past, obtained through investigation and analysis of past events. In this analytical endeavour, the historian wishes to uncover the true nature of historical events and their causal relationship and to discover the general and universal laws applicable to all similar events of the past and the present. We shall call history, in this sense, scientific history. The third meaning is that the philosophy of history is based on the knowledge of gradual changes that lead the society from one stage to another. The philosophy of history discusses the laws controlling these transformations and changes. In other words, it is the science of ‘becoming’ of societies, not of their ‘being’ only.¹⁸

W. H. Walsh, in his book *An Introduction to Philosophy of History*, said that philosophy of history is part of metaphysics and describes a reflection and conclusion about the past and the possibilities that can occur in future. The philosopher has to analyze the development stages of history based on past and future predictions. They also have to find their meaning and purpose.¹⁹

Then there is Malik Bennabi, a contemporary Muslim sociologist known as Ibn Khaldun’s successor.²⁰ Bennabi, in his book *“The Question of Ideas in the Muslim World”*, asserts that civilization is an essence of a fundamental idea and a power that encourages people to be able to act in the stage of history. Like Ibn Khaldun’s idea of historical progress, Malik Bennabi divided the structure of civilization into three phases; resurrection, peak, and decline phase. In addition, Bennabi mentioned that morality is the essence of civilization. Several problems will occur if morals and civilization disintegrate.²¹

¹⁸ Mutahhari, 60–62.

¹⁹ H Walsh, *An Introduction to Philosophy of History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), 14–15.

²⁰ Sujiat Zubaidi, M. Kharis Majid, dan Muttaqin Muttaqin, “Relasi Agama dan Ilmu dengan Peradaban Dalam Perspektif Malik Bennabi,” *TSAQAFAH* 16, no. 2 (21 November 2020): 287, <https://doi.org/10.21111/tsaqafah.v16i2.4999>.

²¹ Malik Bennabi, *The Question of Culture* (Malaysia: Islamic Book Trust, The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2003), 22–23.

Next is Hegel, in his book *Introduction of Philosophy of History*, said that the philosophy of history is an attempt to understand the evolution of world history. World history presents the progress of spirit consciousness from its freedom and the actualization generated by its consciousness. This development is a gradual process, a sequence of freedom determinations, arising from the concept of world history. Hegel divided the history of the world into three major stages, the Chinese world, the Roman world, and the German world.²²

As for the term “philosophy of history”, many researchers believe that Ibn Khaldun uses the term *al-'umrān*, which means human society. ‘Umrān by Ibn Khaldun is characterized as a science and principle that expresses the phenomena of humanity, community, and civilization, which has a similar discourse to the philosophy of history.²³ Ibn Khaldun’s motivation for studying the philosophy of history was from his restlessness to the many historians that mixed between facts, rumors, and false reports. Also, historians only imitate (*taqlid*) from historians before them.²⁴

As a philosopher who discovered a new field that has not been studied before, many questions arise about whether Ibn Khaldun acquired this knowledge from previous historians. In this case, Buddha Prakash, as cited by Ahmad Shafii Maarif in his work “Ibnu Khaldun dalam Pandangan Penulis Barat dan Timur”, mentions that no evidence explains that Ibn Khaldun had been acquainted with the results of previous Greek or Roman historians.²⁵ Likewise, about whether Ibn Khaldun has drawn his

²² Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Introduction to the Philosophy of History* (Library of Alexandria, 2011), 67.

²³ Azmul Fahimi Kamaruzaman and Nabeela Akrasha Surtahman, “Genesis Falsafah Sejarah Islam Dan Perkembangannya Pasca Ibn Khaldun,” *Islamiyyat : Jurnal Antarabangsa Pengajian Islam; International Journal of Islamic Studies* 43, no. 1 (2021): 42.

²⁴ Abdu ar-Rahman bin Muhammad Ibnu Khaldun, *Muqoddimah Ibnu Khaldun* (Damaskus: Daar Ya’rab, 2004), 11.

²⁵ Ahmad Syafi’i Ma’arif, *Ibn Khaldun Dalam Pandangan Penulis Barat Dan Timur* (Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 1996), 33. See also at Muhsin Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldun* n’s

study of the philosophy of history from Muslim historians before his lifetime. The methods used by Muslim historians before Ibn Khaldun's lifetime regarding historical methods were limited to the ta'dil and tajrih methods, which aimed to examine the honesty and truth of hadith transmitter. The ta'dil and tajrih method by Ibn Khaldun was used in his study about observing historical events. However, ta'dil and tajrih is not Ibn Khaldun's primary method. His main method is the observation of nature and society laws that control historical events.²⁶

Object and Theoretical Framework of Study

Regarding what philosophers of history have proposed, we know that studying the philosophy of history is different from history as a narrative or description. The discussion in the philosophy of history is more about reason and argumentation. It has always been concerned with deep thinking around entities and realities that argue about humans' struggle in their space and time.²⁷

Man, time, and space are inseparable objects in studying history and the philosophy of history. Space can be understood as the place or location of a historical event, and it performs as a scope for historical objects. By acknowledging a space, an event will turn into a tangible object. Then the time explains the situation and the chronology that confirms when events occur. Unlike the space that is always identical, the time is always different in every event.²⁸

Moreover, humans in history can appear as objects or subjects. As an object, humans are the aspect that is influenced by situations in history, or on the contrary, it is humans who are affecting and even able to change its situations and conditions.

Philosophy of History A Study in the Philosophic Foundation of the Science of Culture (Routledge, 2017).

²⁶ Al-Khudairi, *Falsafah Al-Tarikh 'inda Ibn Khaldun*, 59.

²⁷ Ajid Thohir and Ahmad Sahidin, *Filsafat Sejarah: Profetik, Spekulatif, Dan Kritis*, 1st ed. (Jakarta: Prenadamedia Group, 2019), 1.

²⁸ Thohir and Sahidin, 2.

While as a subject, humans are the leading actor and capable of determining how an event occur. However, man as a subject in history tends to be subjective and let their beliefs reconstruct a history. The philosophy of history and its methodology try to avoid historian's fallacies that lead to errors and superstition,²⁹ and attempt to guide the historians in doing research.

Concerning the object of historical studies above, Ibn Khaldun revealed that study of history is identical to the world of civilization, or what he called *'umrān al-‘ālam*.³⁰ This study, according to Fuad Baali, encompasses a whole human civilization. It starts from nomadic to sedentary civilizations, about the caliphate, expertise and ways to survive, and the science and how to achieve it.³¹ In essence, Ibn Khaldun's study of the philosophy of history concludes with all of the changes that occur in civilization due to its nature.

Regarding to the object mentioned, the philosophy of history research will adopt a philosophical approach. This kind of research should discuss the aspects of ontology, epistemology, and axiology of history. One of the thinkers who discuss and have a theory about the philosophy of history is Malik Bennabi. His thought on the philosophy of history is about the civilization that renders morals a crucial aspect in its progress. Immorality in civilization will cause society trouble. Civilization, according to Bennabi, is an outcome of the dynamic concept, and the civilization mobilizes a pre-civilizational society to have a part in history and generate an appropriate system and ideas. Malik Bennabi said that a civilization needs to pass through three phases, the first phase is the phase of

²⁹ Toto Suharto, *Historiografi Ibnu Khaldun: Analisis Atas Tiga Karya Sejarah Pendidikan Islam* (Jakarta: Penerbit Kencana, 2020), 110.

³⁰ Abd al-Rahman ibn Muhammad Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction To History*, ed. Franz Rosenthal and N. J. Dawood (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005), xxiii.

³¹ Fuad Baali and Ali Wardi, *Ibn Khaldun Dan Pola Pemikiran Islam* (Jakarta: Penerbit Pustaka Firdaus, 2003), 15.

birth (*mīlād*), the peak phase (*anj*), and the collapse phase (*uful*).³²

There are essential components as a requirement in establishing civilization. Those components are human (*insān*), soil (*thurāb*), and time (*waqt*). Human acts as the leading actor in civilization. If humans act, then society will also act and impact history.³³ While the term soil has two meanings, the first is a pronoun of matter (*māddah*) which has sociological-political meaning in ownership, technical control, and social security guarantee. Moreover, the second is nature and its resources, nationalism, and society's welfare.³⁴ Humans interact with space and time to form a historical event in history.³⁵ Besides these three factors, there are other factors proposed by Bennabi, such the religion, that control the last three elements of civilization (humans, soil, and time).³⁶

Humans, as an individual in history, move through three periods. The first is the object period marked by the birth of a human child who has no view of the world; it only performs biological functions on its body and depends on its mother. Next is the character period; during this period, human beings can start interacting with people and developing emotional relationships with others. And the last is the ideas period, when a human being begins to mature and enter the cognitive period.³⁷ Then as a society, humans are divided into three stages. The first stage is a pre-civilization society like the Arab society before Islam. The second is a civilized society characterized by its interaction with

³² Sujiat Zubaidi, M. Kharis Majid, and Muttaqin Muttaqin, "Relasi Agama Dan Ilmu Dengan Peradaban Dalam Perspektif Malik Bennabi," *TSAQFAH* 16, no. 2 (November 21, 2020): 290–92, <https://doi.org/10.21111/TSAQFAH.V16I2.4999>.

³³ Malik Bennabi, *Syuruth Nahdbdah*, ed. Abdus Shobur Syahin (Damaskus: Dar Fikr, 1986), 75.

³⁴ Bennabi, 131.

³⁵ Thohir and Sahidin, *Filsafat Sejarah: Profetik, Spekulatif, Dan Kritis*, 105.

³⁶ Titis Rosowulan, "Teori Peradaban: Kajian Atas Filsafat Sosial Malik Bennabi," in *Proceedings of The International Conference on Muslim Society An Thought* (Surabaya: UINSA Press, 2017), 696.

³⁷ Rosowulan, 691.

history, such as entering Islamic cultures in the Arab world. The last is a post-civilization society that has declined due to a lack of ideas. According to Bennabi, this declined stage occurred in the Islamic world in the middle-ages, where there was a stagnation in the development of science.³⁸

From explanation above, researchers conclude that philosophy of history concerns with deep thinking around entities and realities that argue about humans' struggle in their space and time. It's important to reformulate the methodology that tries to avoid historian's fallacies that lead to errors and attempt to guide the historians in doing research, by investigating the aspects of ontology, epistemology, and axiology of history. Such this study aims to explain the internal aspects of external historical events because history and cultural science examine two aspects of the same fact. When history examines historical events from the outside, while cultural studies examine the nature and causes of these events. For that, in this next discussion researchers will elaborate Ibn Khaldun's thought as a case study and its "why" for a socio-historical context.

Ibn Khaldun's Thought as a Case Study

Regarding the assumption of whether Ibn Khaldun was the initiator of the philosophy of history or not, philosophers are divided into two sides. The philosophers who approve that Ibn Khaldun is the initiator of historical philosophy and the philosopher that does not admit it. The philosopher who agrees with Ibn Khaldun as the initiator of the philosophy of history is Arnold J. Toynbee, an English historian with his work *A Study of History*, which consists of his theory of the philosophy of history. Regarding his admiration for Ibn Khaldun, he said:

³⁸ Rosowulan, 692.

“In the Muqaddima to his Universal History, he has conceived and formulated a philosophy of history which is undoubtedly the greatest work of its kind that has ever yet been created by ant time or place.”³⁹

Then, Robert Flint, a professor at the University of Edinburgh, in his masterpiece *History of The Philosophy of History in France, Belgium, and Switzerland*, and Yves Lacoste in his work *Ibn Khaldun: The Birth of History the Past of the Third World*. And from the Arab thinkers, there is Muhammad ‘Abdullah Enan, in his work *Ibn Khaldun: Hayātuh wa Turātsuh al-Fikr* and Ali Abdulwahid Wafi, in his work *‘Abd Rahman Ibn Khaldūn: Hayātuh wa Atsaruh wa Mazāhiru ‘Abqoriyatih*, and there is many more.

While the philosopher disapproves of Ibn Khaldun as an initiator of philosophy of history, among them is Thaha Hussein, in his work *Ibn Khaldun’s Philosophy*. However, Zainab al-Khudairi refuted this and stated that Thaha Hussein unconsciously confirmed that fact even though he did not admit it.⁴⁰ As for the term “philosophy of history,” if we trace the whole of Ibn Khaldun’s works, we will indeed not find the time. Nevertheless, among the philosophers, many believe that Ibn Khaldun uses the term “*al-’umrān*”, which means human society. *Umrān* by Ibn Khaldun is characterized as a science and principle that expresses the phenomena of humanity, community, and civilization, which has a similar discourse to the philosophy of history.⁴¹ Ibn Khaldun’s motivation for studying the philosophy of history was from his restlessness to the many historians who mixed facts, rumors, and false reports. Also, historians only imitate (*taqlīd*) from historians before them.⁴²

³⁹ Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 322.

⁴⁰ Al-Khudairi, *Falsafah Al-Tarikh ‘inda Ibn Khaldun*, 56–57.

⁴¹ Kamaruzaman and Surtahman, “Genesis Falsafah Sejarah Islam Dan Perkembangannya Pasca Ibn Khaldun,” 42.

⁴² Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction To History*, 11. See also at Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldun’s Philosophy of History A Study in the Philosophic Foundation of the Science of Culture*, 493.

As a philosopher who discovered a new field that had not been studied before, many questions arise about whether Ibn Khaldun acquired this knowledge from previous historians. In this case, Buddha Prakash, as cited by Ahmad Syafi Maarif in his work *Ibnu Khaldun Dalam Pandangan Penulis Barat dan Timur*, mentions that no evidence explains that Ibn Khaldun had been acquainted with the results of previous Greek or Roman historians.⁴³

The methods used by Muslim historians before Ibn Khaldun's lifetime regarding historical methods were limited to the *ta'dīl* and *tajrīb* methods, which aimed to examine the honesty and truth of the hadith transmitter. The *ta'dīl* and *tajrīb* method by Ibn Khaldun was used in his study about observing historical events. However, *ta'dīl* and *tajrīb* is not Ibn Khaldun's primary method. His main method is observing nature and society's laws that control historical events.⁴⁴

Ibn Khaldun's history method contains historical information about how and why an event occurred in history. The study of history can describe things behind an event, not restricted to when, what, and how an event happened, but also explain why it occurred. In assessing the validity of historical information, Ibn Khaldun used the method of investigating the laws of nature and society that control history, which Ibn Khaldun called the knowledge of *ṭhabāi' al-'umrān*. Regarding the stages of society, Ibn Khaldun divided it into two stages: a pre-civilization society (*badāwah*) synonymous with its powerful *'ashabiyah*, which can arise from hereditary relationships, alliances, friendships, and social interactions. Then the second stage is civilized society (*badārah*), a manifestation of a sedentary society and synonymous with complex civilizations, settling, and cities living.

Ibn Khaldun's involvement in his political career and his direct observation of the social life of the tribes in Maghrib, and

⁴³ Ma'arif, *Ibn Khaldun Dalam Pandangan Penulis Barat Dan Timur*, 33.

⁴⁴ Al-Khudairi, *Falsafah Al-Tarikh 'inda Ibn Khaldun*, 59.

the dynamics of the growth and fall of the dynasties, can be said to be a source that plays a role in Ibn Khaldun's analysis of the philosophy of history.⁴⁵ This case is Ibn Khaldun's differentiation from the previous Muslim historians.

In short, in discussing the case study of the urgency of discussing Muslim thinker, one important question can be raised; what is Ibn Khaldun's concept of Philosophy of History? In the preface of *muqaddimah*, Ibn Khaldun begins by understanding history. He states that history is part of knowledge widely cultivated by various nations and generations. Therefore, the interest in studying history is immense; ordinary people, leaders, and kings are enthusiastic about studying history. This kind of history, referred to by Ibn Khaldun, is the history from its surface (*lahiriyah*) means. It is nothing more than information containing political events, dynasties, and events in the past. Ibn Khaldun further stated:

“It serves to entertain large, crowded gatherings and gives us an understanding of human affairs. It shows how changing conditions affected (human affairs), how certain dynasties came to occupy an ever broader space in the world, and how they settled the earth until they heard the call and their time was up. The inner meaning of history, on the other hand, involves speculation and an attempt to get at the truth, subtle explanation of the causes and origins of existing things, and deep knowledge of the how and why of events. History, therefore, is firmly rooted in philosophy. It deserves to be accounted a branch of it.”⁴⁶

History, from its surface, is nothing more than news about past events, which only seeks to answer what, who and when in historical events. So, it is true that Ibn Khaldun stated that both educated people and ordinary people could understand it.⁴⁷ While, in its inner means, history is not just an expression of past events but the historical writing that involves critical speculation and

⁴⁵ Abdullah Thalib, “Geneologi Dan Epistemologi Pemikiran Ibnu Khaldun,” *Sulesana: Jurnal Wawasan Keislaman* 14, no. 1 (2020): 117, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.24252/sulesana.v14i1.16818>.

⁴⁶ Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction To History*, 5.

⁴⁷ Khaldun, 5.

efforts to find the truth and detailed explanation of the causes and origins of all historical events.⁴⁸ The inner means of history is trying to answer how, why, and what happened in history. So, it will deliver a historical statement that concerns a problem of causality, which is the culmination of studying history.⁴⁹ Since this history contains in-depth knowledge of how and why an event occurs, Ibn Khaldun argues that history is rooted in philosophy and deserves to be accounted as a branch of it.⁵⁰

Like Ibn Khaldun, Malik Bennabi, who pays attention to the study of history and civilization, also states that the phenomenon of society must be studied analytically. To lead us to the laws that control a culture. The study of civilization is not just about the events and historical stories related to us.⁵¹

Ibn Khaldun's work *al-I'bar* illustrates the explanation of history from its surface, which discusses the history of the Arabs and the history of the Berber dynasty. While, *Muqaddimah* is Ibn Khaldun's explanation of history from its inner means, which is included in the study of the philosophy of history.⁵² Abderrahman Lakhsassi added that the focus of Ibn Khaldun's historical discussion is an explanation of the interaction between natural and non-physical factors underlying human culture, which, in turn, presupposes political and social organizations centered on state power.⁵³

According to Ibn Khaldun, the essential thing in studying history is a critical reason, and observation for truth is called the critical study of history. Through critical history, Ibn Khaldun

⁴⁸ Khaldun, 5.

⁴⁹ Suharto, *Historiografi Ibnu Khaldun: Analisis Atas Tiga Karya Sejarah Pendidikan Islam*, 60.

⁵⁰ Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction To History*, 5.

⁵¹ Rosowulan, "Teori Peradaban: Kajian Atas Filsafat Sosial Malik Bennabi," 687.

⁵² Syed Farid Al-Attas, *Applying Ibn Khaldun: The Recovery of a Lost Tradition in Sociology* (United Kingdom: Routledge, 2015), 35.

⁵³ Abderrahman Lakhsassi, "Ibn Khaldun," in *Ensiklopedia Tematis Filsafat Islam* (Mizan Media Utama, 2003), 446.

criticized some earlier historians who did not discuss the beginning of a dynasty and gave no interpretation of historical development in their works.⁵⁴ Those historians are Muhammad bin Ishaq (w. 767/768 AD) in his *Sīrah Muhammad*, then Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari (839-923 AD) who wrote *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa al-mulk*, and ‘Ali Ibn Husain al-Mas’udi (w. 956/957 AD) author of *Murūj al-Zahab wa al-Ma’ādin wa al-Jauhar*.

Why Ibn Khaldun? a Socio-Historical Context

Ibn Khaldun lived in the 14th century when the Islamic world was in decline and disintegration. In contrast, Europe was the emerging era of Renaissance ideas in this century.⁵⁵ In both the political and intellectual fields, numerous chaos occurred in the Islamic world during ibn Khaldun’s lifetime.

After the collapse of the al-Muwahhidun dynasty, minor dynasties such as Bani Hafs in Tunisia, Bani’ Abd Wad in Tilmisan, and Bani Marin in Fez, contending each other for dominion, so dissension and political rebellion are inevitable. As a result, no dynasty was able to last long. This unstable political situation also resulted in Ibn Khaldun’s behavior, who inconsistently favored a Sultan.⁵⁶ With this attitude, many people accuse him of being unpatriotic. The allegations, according to Talbi, are untrue. In his book *Ibn Khaldun, The Encyclopedia of Islam*, Talbi mentions that the accusation can apply if there is an idea of state loyalty. According to Talbi, the idea had not appeared during ibn Khaldun’s lifetime. Thus, in Talbi’s opinion, the only concept of betrayal in Islam that occurred at that time is only an apostasy.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction To History*, 7.

⁵⁵ Khaldun, 26.

⁵⁶ Eugene A. Myers, *Arabic Thought and The Western World in The Golden Age of Islam* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publisher Co, 1964), 54.

⁵⁷ M. Talbi, “Ibn Khaldun,” in *The Encyclopedia of Islam* (E. J. Brill, 1971), 828.

In response to Talbi's statement, Syed Farid al-Attas explains that it can be understood if it is meant not to judge Ibn Khaldun's attitude based on the concept of loyalty in the modern context. The leaders who had betrayed were many who forgave Ibn Khaldun and accepted him back to cooperate, indicating the difference between the concept of loyalty in the 14th century and modern times. However, Farid still assesses that Ibn Khaldun's attitude is unethical according to the concept of religion.⁵⁸

While in the intellectual realm, the Islamic world in the 14th century experienced the stagnation of thought and ideas. At that time, the works of Muslim scholars were limited to syarh or explanations of the works of earlier scholars or the syarh of the syarh of the books in the golden age of Islam. This period was called by *al-syurūh wa al-hawāsyi* period. Only Ibn Khaldun, the scholar at that time, had original works. Its original work is his book *Muqaddimah*. It is no wonder why Muhsin Mahdi claimed that Ibn Khaldun was born at the wrong time and place.⁵⁹ However, it is precisely in such an age that Islam needs someone who can make them realize, and Ibn Khaldun would be able to do this difficult task.

The fundamental thing that distinguishes Ibn Khaldun's thought from his predecessor is the nuances of his realist thinking in understanding social phenomena. Realism intends to express social phenomena according to what is happening, in contrast to idealism which requires social phenomena to conform to the ideas of their initiators.⁶⁰ Regarding realism and idealism, Ibn Khaldun considered both equally important. Ibn Khaldun argued that what happens (realism) is equivalent to what must happen (idealism) but must be separated. Realism and idealism should not be blended

⁵⁸ Al-Attas, *Applying Ibn Khaldun: The Recovery of a Lost Tradition in Sociology*, 36.

⁵⁹ Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldun's Philosophy of History A Study in the Philosophic Foundation of the Science of Culture*, 26.

⁶⁰ Hasyim Hafidz, "Watak Peradaban Dalam Epistemologi Ibnu Khaldun," *Humaniora* 22, no. 3 (2010): 77–78.

and placed in their place.⁶¹

In his historical theory, Ibn Khaldun emphasized the empirical investigation and realistic experience in understanding a social reality by knowing deeply about the nature of civilization.⁶² As what he applied in response to the conflict between Ali and Mu'awiyah. According to him, the clash between them is not a matter of right or wrong. The stronger *ashabiyah* on Mu'awiyah's side was a factor in their triumph over Ali's side. Ibn Khaldun still considered Mu'awiyah as a king, not as a caliph. Ibn Khaldun did not consider the kingdom a problem but a relative thing. Shari'ah denounced its terrible consequences, such as tyranny, solidarity, and hedonism, and supported a kingdom that positively impacts humankind.⁶³

In addition, Fuad Baali and Ali Wardi mentioned that Ibn Khaldun had a sufistic tendency.⁶⁴ Even according to Iqbal, Ibn Khaldun is the only Muslim who has entered the spirited scientific worlds of sufism.⁶⁵ It is reinforced by Ibn Khaldun's supreme court justice of Maliki school in Egypt. In his thoughts on the philosophy of history, Ibn Khaldun also contains the value of religiosity, where he describes that the concept of causality and explains how God, causality, and history are interconnected. In writing *Muqaddimah*, Ibn Khaldun always mentioned the name of Allah and some verses from the Qur'an that are relevant to his discussion. The sufistic aspects and value of religiosity of Ibn Khaldun's thought were a refute to Ilyas Ba-Yunus and Farid Ahmad's opinion. They mentioned that Ibn Khaldun was a secularist because he explained a sociological format free of values.⁶⁶ Such is the characteristic of Ibn

⁶¹ Baali and Wardi, *Ibn Khaldun Dan Pola Pemikiran Islam*, 49.

⁶² Hasyim Hafidz, "Watak Peradaban Dalam Epistemologi Ibnu Khaldun," 79.

⁶³ Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction To History*, 238.

⁶⁴ Baali and Wardi, *Ibn Khaldun Dan Pola Pemikiran Islam*, 81.

⁶⁵ Muhammad Iqbal, *Kembali Pikiran Agama Dalam Islam*, ed. Ali Audah (Jakarta: Tintamas, 1966), 139.

⁶⁶ Ilyas Ba-Yunus and Farid Ahmad, *Sosiologi Islam*, ed. Hamid Basyaib (Bandung:

Khaldun's thought formed from the socio-historic conditions in his time. His empirical, rationalistic, and sufistic characteristics were greatly influenced and became the foundation of Ibn constructing his historical theories.

Conclusion

Ibn Khaldun divided the study of history into two meanings; The first is history as a description of events that occurred in the past, which only understand history from its surface, without interpretation. In comparison, the second meaning is the study of history. It contains an observation, the effort to find the truth (*tabqīq*), and deep knowledge of history's substance, essence, and causality. This meaning is rooted in philosophy and deserves to be accounted for as a branch of philosophy.

Understanding history and civilization is noteworthy. It's because the aspects of history influence the social problems that occur nowadays, the solutions to current problems cannot be applied to the solution applied by people from the different phases of history. For example, adopting Western solutions to be applied in the Islamic world is a recklessness because the two societies are at two different stages of historical progress. Therefore, the author suggests the reader read many other references related to Ibn Khaldun's thoughts on the philosophy of history or civilization. His study of history and civilization philosophy is a universal study that includes general human civilization. It covers all progress that occurs in civilization due to the nature of civilization. []

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