

# The Historical Criticism and Causality in The Philosophy of History: Ibn Khaldun's Perspective

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## Abstract

*This study will reveal how Ibn Khaldun's philosophy of history, especially on his historical criticism and the concept of causality. This research is based on literature and qualitative research that uses a philosophical approach to explain the meaning of philosophy of history. As there is theoretical speculation in the writing of history, there are some inaccuracies in historical reports arises from the errors of historians. Ibn Khaldun shows those errors as a historical criticism that historians should avoid them. Ibn Khaldun's main method of history is observing nature and society's laws that control historical events, beside ta'dil and tajrib methods. According to him, the study of history is to explain the things behind an event, not restricted on the question about when what, and how an event occurred, but also explain about why the possibility exists. This method leads to the knowledge of causality. Ibn Khaldun argued that there was no event caused by accident. An event occurred because it was caused by a cause that preceded it. There are four causes make the nature of civilization: 'umrân as material cause, daulah as formal cause, 'ashabiyah as efficient cause, and mashâlih 'âmmah as final cause. Therefore, if any historical information deviates from these laws of causality, then critical reasoning is necessary to assess the validity of the historical facts.*

**Keywords:** *Ibn Khaldun, historical criticism, causality, philosophy of history, methodology*

## Abstrak

*Artikel ini mengungkap filsafat sejarah Ibn Khaldun, terutama pada kritik sejarah dan konsep kausalitas sejarah. Penelitian ini merupakan studi pustaka-kualitatif dan menggunakan pendekatan filosofis untuk menjelaskan makna filsafat sejarah. Berangkat dari*

*asumsi adanya spekulasi teoretis dalam penulisan sejarah, ada beberapa ketidakakuratan dalam laporan sejarah yang muncul dari kesalahan para sejarawan. Ibnu Khaldun menunjukkan kesalahan-kesalahan tersebut sebagai kritik sejarah yang harus dihindari. Metode utama sejarah Ibnu Khaldun adalah mengamati alam dan hukum-hukum masyarakat yang mengatur peristiwa sejarah, di samping penggunaan metode ta'dil dan tajrib. Menurutnya, studi sejarah bertujuan menjelaskan hal-hal yang melatarbelakangi suatu peristiwa, tidak terbatas pada pertanyaan tentang kapan dan bagaimana suatu peristiwa terjadi, tetapi juga menjelaskan tentang mengapa kemungkinan itu ada. Metode ini mengarah pada pengetahuan kausalitas. Ibnu Khaldun berpendapat bahwa tidak ada kejadian yang disebabkan oleh kebetulan belaka. Suatu peristiwa terjadi karena disebabkan oleh adanya sebab yang mendahuluinya. Ada empat sebab yang menjadi karakter peradaban, yaitu: 'umrân sebagai sebab material, daulah sebagai sebab formal, 'ashabiyah sebagai sebab efisien, dan mashâlih 'âmmah sebagai sebab final. Oleh karena itu, jika ada informasi sejarah yang menyimpang dari hukum-hukum kausalitas tersebut, maka diperlukan penalaran kritis untuk menilai keabsahan fakta sejarah.*

**Kata kunci:** Ibnu Khaldun, Kritik Sejarah, Kausalitas, Filsafat Sejarah, Metodologi

## Introduction

In his book *Muqaddimah*, Ibn Khaldun refers to the study of history as *fann al-târîkh*, which contains two meanings. The first meaning is a description of event that occurred in the past, also called narrative history. This kind of narrative history only figures out the history from the external side without any interpretation. Ibn Khaldun criticized the history of this model. He mentioned that this kind of history only presents history without substantive material, criticism, or interpretation. In *Muqaddimah*, Ibn Khaldun also mentions that the history of this model is often misused, its content is susceptible to the content of imaginations, and false stories that are intentionally written. This model of historical writing continues to be followed by some historians. Then they pass on the information they receive to their successors as they receive it, without paying any attention to the causes and conditions and do not reject the story that does not make any sense.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Abd al-Rahman ibn Muhammad Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction To History, Abridge Edition*, translated by Franz Rosenthal, ed. N. J. Dawood (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005), 5–6.

Many sources from the history books are too exaggerated. The historians distort events to make the history books unreasonable, making the content of those books of narrative models not contain the whole truth. Many historians render their lust, political fanaticism, relativism as their background in writing history. Especially, the writings of history are frequently written by the winning country. Then it makes the historians who are on the winning side become biased and reluctant to write about the hideousness of their own country. They are in writing history consciously or unconsciously often to exaggerate mistakes and eliminate the virtues of the defeated country.<sup>2</sup>

Continuation of the second meaning of *fann al-târikh* as knowledge of substance, essence, and causality (*bâthiniyyah*).<sup>3</sup> Unlike the narrative history that only discusses its external side. This history model is what Ibn Khaldun referred to as history in the sense of *bâthiniyyah* that discusses history on the internal side. This study of history attempts to answer how, why, and what happened in history. This model of history is the history that is rooted in philosophy and deserves to be categorized as one of the branches in philosophy.<sup>4</sup>

Ibn Khaldun's thoughts on the philosophy of history were his original thoughts. His works not only the philosophy of history, but also discuss sociology, anthropology, and political science that any other thinkers have never discussed before his lifetime.<sup>5</sup> Thomas S. Kuhn has mentioned that the characteristics of a person who is considered worthy of a great and original thinker are those who have found some new and important ideas. Those ideas can change the worldview into reality and find solutions to relevant problems and interfere with people's thinking.<sup>6</sup> Based on Kuhn's statement, it is to consider Ibn Khaldun was one of the Islamic thinkers in the middle ages who had a big and spread influence on ideas. Therefore, this study will discuss and explore how Ibn Khaldun's views and ideas towards the philosophy of history, especially on his historical criticism and the concept of causality.

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<sup>2</sup> Yusuf Al-Qaradhawi, *Distorsi Sejarah Islam*, translated by Arif Munandar Riswanto (Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Kautsar, 2005), 235.

<sup>3</sup> Ibnu Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction To History, Abridge Edition*, 59.

<sup>4</sup> Suharto, *Historiografi Ibnu Khaldun Analisis Atas Tiga Karya Sejarah Pendidikan Islam*, 60.

<sup>5</sup> Hafidz Hasyim, *Watak Peradaban Dalam Epistemologi Ibnu Khaldun* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2012), 20.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

## Ibn Khalduns's Historical Criticism

As there is theoretical speculation in the writing of history, there are some inaccuracies in historical reports arises from the errors of historians. Ibn Khaldun summarized these errors into seven.

The *first* error is the partisanship with a particular opinion or school (*tasyayyu'*). Historians doing *tasyayyu'* will receive biased information that is only useful to their opinions or schools' interests. However, if their souls are infected with partisanship for a particular opinion or sect, they accepts the information that is agreeable to it without a moment's hesitation. This act can cause historians reluctantly to be critical, even though the information they obtained contains lies.<sup>7</sup>

The *second* error is an excessive trust in the historical transmitter. In this regard, Ibn Khaldun discussed it in *ta'dîl* and *tajrîh*, a method for assessing the transmitter's personality, whether he is authoritative or not in narrating the hadith.<sup>8</sup> Before the historians refer to the transmitter, they should first do this *ta'dîl* and *tajrîh* method to assess the personality of the transmitter. However, Ibn Khaldun affirmed that *ta'dîl* and *tajrîh* only apply after historians determine whether the information is appropriate with the laws controlling nature and society. When both are appropriate, then *ta'dîl* and *tajrîh* can be used. But, if they do not, the *ta'dîl* and *tajrîh* methods can not be applied.<sup>9</sup> Muhsin Mahdi added that *ta'dîl* and *tajrîh* methods are limited to the critics to transmitter personality and do not include the news passed by the transmitter, because the valuation of history cannot be determined only based on the character from its transmitter, but by observing whether the information is appropriate with its laws or not.

The *third* error of historians is the failure to conclude the motive from a transmitter. Many transmitters do not know the real significance of his observations or the things he has learned about orally, which results in the delivery of historical information based on presumption. Historians with this approach cannot precisely analyze the problem due to the lack of information they receive.<sup>10</sup> The *fourth* error is an unfounded assumption of the thing's truth due to the reliance upon the «truth» derived from the transmitter. Historians with this behavior already consider something wrong as truth, so he no longer hesitates

<sup>7</sup> Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction To History, Abridge Edition*, 7.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>9</sup> Zainab Al-Khudairi, *Falsafah Tarikh 'inda Ibn Khaldun* (Cairo: Dar Tsaqofah li-Nasyr wa at-Tauzi', 2007), p.59-60.

<sup>10</sup> Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction To History, Abridge Edition*, p. 35.

to tell a mistake that he has considered as the truth.<sup>11</sup> The *fifth* error is the inability of historians to put between condition and the context of tangible things due to the ambiguities and artificial distortions, which result in the misuse of historical facts and an accidental delivering false information.<sup>12</sup>

The sixth error is people tend to draw closer to high-ranking persons with praise and accolades by praising and flattering them. As a result, the information made public in such cases is not truthful. Human souls long for recognition, and they pay great attention to this world, and the positions, and wealth they offer. As a rule, they feel no desire for virtue and have no particular interest in virtuous people.

The seventh error is the last cause that Ibn Khaldun says is the most important than all the previously mentioned reasons. The mistake is the ignorance of the nature of the various conditions arising in civilization and social development. Every event, whether the essence of action, must inevitably possess a nature peculiar to its importance and the accidental conditions that may attach themselves to it. Knowledge of this nature can help historians distinguish between truth and false in historical events.<sup>13</sup>

Zainab al-Khudairi mentioned that there are still two more reasons that Ibn Khaldun did not say, but it can be examined in *the Muqaddimah* introduction. The first additional cause is merely reliant on transmission (*isnâd*), regardless of whether the information is true or false, and the second is an absolute analogy between past and present that results in the historian's incomprehension of age evolution.<sup>14</sup>

The presentation of these errors by Ibn Khaldun, even though it was presented in the 14th century, seem still relevant to the present day. With this presentation, it can be said that Ibn Khaldun was a pioneer of scientific history, the term of which was triggered by Leopold von Ranke in the 19th century.<sup>15</sup> History became a rational and factual study in Ibn Khaldun's hands and free from absurd fairy tales. His high objectivity makes him write history honestly and without exaggerating its discussion.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>14</sup> Al-Khudairi, *Falsafah Tarikh 'inda Ibn Khaldun*, p. 49.

<sup>15</sup> Ahmad Syafi'i Ma'arif, *Ibn Khaldun Dalam Pandangan Penulis Barat Dan Timur* (Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 1996), p. 26.

<sup>16</sup> Philip K. Hitti, *Makers of Arab History* (New York: Harper & Bow, 1971), p. 251.

## Methodological Aspect of History

As a philosopher who discovered a new field that had not been studied before, many questions arise about whether Ibn Khaldun acquired methodological aspect of history from previous historians. In this case, Buddha Prakash, as cited by 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.<sup>17</sup> 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 the 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 observing nature and society's laws that control historical events.<sup>18</sup>

Regarding to the history method that Ibn Khaldun applied he called it an extraordinary and original method, Ibn Khaldun began by discussing the contents of his *Muqaddimah*. He stated that *Muqaddimah* was written to expose the veil of conditions that arise from various generations. In his book, Ibn Khaldun compiled it with methods of discovering historical facts and reflections and dividing the *Muqaddimah* into several chapters, which is explains on how and why dynasties and civilization established, he further stated:

*...I followed an unusual method of arrangement and division into chapters. From the various possibilities, I chose a unique and original approach. In my work, I commented on civilization, urbanization, and the essential characteristics of human social organization to explain to the reader how and why things are and show him how the men who constituted a dynasty first came upon the historical scene. As a result, he will wash his hands of any blind trust in tradition. He will become aware of the conditions of periods and races before his time, and that will obtain after that.*<sup>19</sup>

From Ibn Khaldun's statement, it is clear that Ibn his historical method contains information about how and why an event occurred in history. Ibn Khaldun's historical method is aligned with the modern historical characteristics explained by William H. Frederick and Soleri

<sup>17</sup> Ahmad Syafi'i Ma'arif, *Ibn Khaldun dalam Pandangan Penulis Barat dan Timur*, p. 33, also Buddha Prakash, *Ibn Khaldun's Philosophy of History*, Islamic Culture, Vol. 28, October, 1954, 493

<sup>18</sup> Zainab al-Khudairi, *Falsafah Tarikh 'inda Ibn Khaldun*, p. 59

<sup>19</sup> Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction To History, Abridge Edition*, p. 7-8.

Soeroto that require the study of history to explain the things behind an event, not restricted on the question about when what, and how an event occurred, but also explain about why the possibility exists.<sup>20</sup> This method leads to the knowledge of causality. Ibn Khaldun argued that there was no event caused by accident. An event occurred because it was caused by a cause that preceded it. Ibn Khaldun revealed that the cause of an event must be natural and straightforward and can be reached by common sense in an orderly form. With this kind of method, history can become a rational discipline.<sup>21</sup>

The rationalist characteristics in Ibn Khaldun's method can also be founded in his approach to assessing the truth of historical information. As explained earlier, assessing the validity of historical knowledge is not enough just by applying *ta'dil* and *tajrîh* methods as hadith scholars do. Ibn Khaldun used the technique to investigate the laws of nature and the society that controls the historical events, which is Ibn Khaldun called the knowledge of *thabâi' al-'umrân*, Ibn Khaldun asserted, "...Only knowledge of the nature of civilization makes critical investigation of the possible. It is the best and most reliable way to investigate historical information critically and distinguish truth from falsehood".<sup>22</sup>

This method attempts to distinguish the truth and false in historical information which the validity value of historical information lies in its conformity with its conditions and laws. Since historical events and directions occurred in the past, to know the agreement between historical information and the law that determines it is by applying critical reason. Hussein 'Aishy argued that Ibn Khaldun tried to use logic (*mantiq*) in his historical methods, and it was a significant contribution in the field of history.<sup>23</sup>

This critical method was later applied in Ibn Khaldun's critics on al-Mas'udi. Ibn Khaldun considers al-Mas'udi's statement in explaining historical information is unreasonable. For example, al-Mas'udi mentioned that the number of prophet Moses' soldiers in the desert of Tih is more than 600.000 soldiers. Egypt and Syria would not be enough to accommodate such a large army. The number of soldiers from each country is undoubtedly following the country's area. With

<sup>20</sup> William H. Frederick and Soeri Soeroto, *Pemahaman Sejarah Indonesia Sebelum Dan Sesudah Revolusi* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1989), p. 8.

<sup>21</sup> Suharto, *Historiografi Ibnu Khaldun Analisis Atas Tiga Karya Sejarah Pendidikan Islam*, 82.

<sup>22</sup> Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction To History, Abridge Edition*, p. 37-38.

<sup>23</sup> Husein 'Aishy, *Ibn Khaldun Mu'arrikhan* (Beirut: Dar Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 1991), p. 96.

the number of soldiers not per the area, as al-Mas'udi explained, the war is impossible because of its narrow terrain.<sup>24</sup>

After knowing about Ibn Khaldun's historical methods, here is an explanation of the methods that Ibn Khaldun applied in composing his works. Ibn Khaldun was divided *al-I'bar* into several books, and each book consisted of several volumes. Then each volume is further divided into several chapters, and each chapter consists of several sections that contain historical events by associating them with an event contained in other sections. Ibn Khaldun precisely investigated every nation's history from its birth period to its collapse by paying attention to its association with other nations. He also has expertise in arranging appropriate titles with his discussion in each section.<sup>25</sup> The method of writings applied by Ibn Khaldun in composing *al-I'bar* in the development of Islamic historiography is called *the maudhû'iyât* (thematic or topical) method.

## The Theory of Historical Progress

Regarding the idea of historic progress, there are several theories that philosophers have presented. These theories attempt to answer how history moves and what patterns are used in its progress. The first theory of historical progress is the theory of linear lines. In this theory, history is linear toward advanced stages, leaving the previous stage.<sup>26</sup> History regarding this theory means a process to perfection, and this theory is also often referred to as the idea of progress.<sup>27</sup> This theory developed significantly during the Renaissance period and was proponents by several philosophers, such as Jean Bodin, Francis Bacon, Machiavelli, Hobbes, John Locke, etc.

The second is the theory of cyclical circular motion over time.<sup>28</sup> This theory argues that history moves cyclically, i.e., revolving from time to time. What has happened in the past will repeat itself, either in the future or present. A well-known figure in the theory of cyclical motion is Oswald Spengler, who argues that all cultures experience

<sup>24</sup> Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction To History, Abridge Edition*, p. 11–12.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>26</sup> Suharto, *Historiografi Ibnu Khaldun Analisis Atas Tiga Karya Sejarah Pendidikan Islam*, p. 67.

<sup>27</sup> Kuntowijoyo, *Identitas Politik Umat Islam* (Indonesia: Mizan, 1997), p. 201.

<sup>28</sup> Suharto, *Historiografi Ibnu Khaldun Analisis Atas Tiga Karya Sejarah Pendidikan Islam*, p. 65.



a similar cyclical development from their birth period to the time of destruction.<sup>29</sup>

The third theory is the theory of spiral motion (a combination of linear theory and cycle theory) which moves repeatedly.<sup>30</sup> In this case, Hegel's statement that considers the world's history is nothing but the development of the spirit consciousness toward its freedom and as an advance that develops under its inevitability.<sup>31</sup>

Then, how is Ibn Khaldun thought about historical progress from these theories of historical progress? Muhsin Mahdi in his book *Ibn Khaldun's Philosophy of History*, states:

"Ibn Khaldun, consequently, rejects two alternative theories of culture, a linear theory and a cyclical, both of which asserted that there is one culture or that all human history is one interrelated whole, and that the movement of culture is necessary and consequently can be determined and foreseen."<sup>32</sup>

According to Mahdi, Ibn Khaldun firmly rejects the theory of linear progress, which assumes that history began from its peak and then straightly moved towards decline. Also the theory of circular motion explains that history moves in a circular pattern and keeps revolving from time to time in an eternal circle.

Ibn Khaldun states that social phenomena follow the laws of historical development as natural phenomena and identifies the age of civilization (about 120 years), which will go through three generations, with each having a biological age of around 40 years.<sup>33</sup> According to Ibn Khaldun, historical progress has a dialectical pattern (leading to definite annihilation). After reaching its peak, a civilization will decline and be replaced by a new civilization that is different from the previous one.<sup>34</sup> This new civilization did not begin from anything. Still, it had taken some relics from the previous civilization and then perfected it, thus creating a more advanced civilization different from

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<sup>29</sup> "Spenglerian," *Merriam-Webster.Com Dictionary*, accessed January 20, 2022, <https://www.Merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Spenglerian>.

<sup>30</sup> Suharto, *Historiografi Ibnu Khaldun Analisis Atas Tiga Karya Sejarah Pendidikan Islam*, p. 68.

<sup>31</sup> Misnal Munir, *Filsafat Sejarah* (Yogyakarta: Gajah Mada University Press, 2016), p. 9.

<sup>32</sup> Muhsin Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldûn's Philosophy of History* (England: Taylor & Francais, 2015), 255.

<sup>33</sup> Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction To History, Abridge Edition*, 136–37.

<sup>34</sup> Yves Lacoste, *Ibn Khaldun: The Birth of History and the Past of the Third World* (New York: Verso Books, 1984), 209.

the previous one. Thus, the more advanced civilization arose and had its own distinctive compared to previous civilization.<sup>35</sup>

Ibn Khaldun's theory of historical progress also criticized as a pessimistic and fatalist theory. This criticism has to do with his opinion that civilization and all that it contains will inevitably move towards its destruction. In this case, a kind of historical law is inevitable. When the fall has come, no power can prevent a civilization or human society from its destruction.<sup>36</sup>

## The Causality in History

Ibn Khaldun's law of causality is one of the three determinism laws of history. The other two laws are the law of imitation and distinction.<sup>37</sup> In this sub-chapter, the researchers will emphasize on law of causality. Regarding to it, Ibn Khaldun stated, "*This world with all the created things has a certain order and solid construction. It shows nexuses between causes and things caused, combinations of some parts of creation with others, and transformations of some existent things into others, in a remarkable and endless pattern*".<sup>38</sup> The argument clearly states that Ibn Khaldun believed in the law of causality and its relationship with the phenomenon. Ibn Khaldun also believed that the law of causality exists in natural phenomena and social and historical phenomena, such as in economics, politics, and sociology. The science of *'umrân* that he initiated was based on the principles of causality.<sup>39</sup>

Furthermore, Muhsin Mahdi asserted that is to know the nature of civilization, all the needs to do is know the causes, principles, and elements contained in a civilization. These causes then make the nature of civilization has an identity and can be defined and distinguished from others. To find out these causes, Muhsin Mahdi identified and analyzed them into Aristotle's theory of causality, consisting of four causes, e.g., material cause, formal cause, efficient cause, and final cause. In his thoughts on causality, Ibn Khaldun rejected the existence of infinite causes and believed that the law of causality would end with the primary cause. It is also concerned with the science of civilization,

<sup>35</sup> Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction To History, Abridge Edition*, p. 29–30.

<sup>36</sup> Ma'arif, *Ibn Khaldun Dalam Pandangan Penulis Barat Dan Timur*, p. 32.

<sup>37</sup> Al-Khudairi, *Falsafah Tarikh 'inda Ibn Khaldun*, 108.

<sup>38</sup> Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction To History, Abridge Edition*, p. 74.

<sup>39</sup> Emrah Kaya, "A Critical Approach to Causality and Rational Knowledge in Ibn Khaldun," *Ulum: Journal of Religious Inquiries* Vol. 3, no. 2 (December 2020): p. 244.

which is relevant in understanding the philosophy of history.<sup>40</sup>

### 1) Material Cause: Culture ('Umrân)

The material cause is the matter or substratum of a thing. In this case, it's culture. Essential elements in culture, such as economic and urban institutions, make the culture the material cause. The main characteristic of material causes is their potential nature, which means that they cannot be actualized without any other cause, i.e., formal cause.<sup>41</sup> As for the difference between culture and civilization, culture is the extension of human cultivation, which has the form of ideas, behaviors, activities, and objects. In comparison, civilization is a higher and more advanced form of culture. A society or nation must be cultured but not necessarily civilized.<sup>42</sup>

In Ibn Khaldun's view, the culture or civilization is not independent, but it depends on humans. Therefore, in understanding a culture, it is essential to know about the principle nature of humans. As a creature who influences culture's sustainability, humans have different characteristics than other creatures. Ibn Khaldun explained as follows:

*We say that man is distinguished from the other living beings by certain qualities peculiar to him, namely: (1) The sciences and crafts which result from that ability to think which distinguishes man from the other animals and exalts him as a thinking being overall creatures. (2) The need for restraining influence and strong authority, since man, alone of all the animals, cannot exist without them...(3) Man's efforts to make a living and his concern with the various ways of obtaining and acquiring the means of life...(4) Civilization.*"<sup>43</sup>

The dynastic phase according to Bennabi: birth, becoming a figure, and the idea phase (entering the cognitive stage and being able to understand abstract concepts). Bennabi argues that newborns do not have an obvious idea about the world. He cannot understand the objects, figures, and ideas that interact around him. Then the second is the figure phase. This period occurs when humans begin to communicate with people around them and develop social and emotional relationships with others. And the third is the ideas phase,

<sup>40</sup> Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldûn's Philosophy of History*, p. 233.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 234.

<sup>42</sup> Sujat Zubaidi, et.al, *The Relation of Religion, Science and Civilization, Malik Bennabi's Perspective*, n.d., p. 291.

<sup>43</sup> Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction To History, Abridge Edition*, p. 42.

characterized by the human condition that begins to enter the cognitive stage and can understand the abstract concepts.<sup>44</sup>

## 2) Formal Cause: State (*Daulah*)

As mentioned earlier, culture is a material cause. It cannot be actualized without the state as a formal cause, which is the The state is a form of organization of economic elements and institutions.<sup>45</sup> To understand the concept of the state, it is necessary to study social phenomena, because it discusses the rules and norms initiated by the people of society as a basis in regulating the social problems that occur between them, and to strengthen the relationships between individuals, which is a requirement for the state establishment.<sup>46</sup>

From the aspect of rules, social phenomena can be divided into several parts. As stated by Wafi, Ibn Khaldun explained that social phenomenon is not static but evolutionary and different in every time and place. They start from the family's rules, such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance. Then the political rules encompass government affairs, sovereignty, citizens' rights, and diplomatic relations with other states. Other rules include economy, such as wealth, employment, distribution, etc. Then the moral controls discuss good and bad things. And the other rules, i.e., religion, language, education, and aesthetics. These social phenomena are then realized in state laws that become a part of society.<sup>47</sup> Ibn Khaldun added that these social phenomena are not static but move evolutive towards development. Social phenomena can change and differ from society in different times and places.<sup>48</sup>

## 3) Efficient Cause: Solidarity (*'Ashabiyah*)

The next is the efficient cause, which operates to integrate between material (*culture*) and formal (*state*) causes. Without an efficient cause, culture as a material cause will still exist in its potential form, while the state as a formal cause will never exist. Ibn Khaldun refers to the efficient cause as solidarity (*'ashabiyah*).<sup>49</sup> Muhsin Mahdi asserted that the efficient cause is different from the material and formal cause, he said:

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 691–92.

<sup>45</sup> Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldûn's Philosophy of History*, 232.

<sup>46</sup> Wafi, *'Abd Rahman Ibn Khaldun: Hayatuh Wa Atsaruh Wa Mazahiru 'Abqariyatih*, 86.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 86–87.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>49</sup> Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldûn's Philosophy of History*, 253.

*“Unlike the material and formal causes, the efficient cause is not a part of the effect and is often described as irrelevant. But since dynamism and change are inherent in the essence of a natural thing, and since the efficient cause is the primary source of change and the primary moving cause, the relation between the efficient cause and its effect is not accidental. The efficient cause is that a thing owes its actual existence, which includes its generation and the subsequent changes through which it is progressively actualized; it is an existential cause that explains the actual existence at the various stages of its development. It answers the question: How does a thing come to exist actually?”<sup>50</sup>*

And for its position, *‘ashabiyah* has a role in the political and social realm. In the political realm, Yves Lacoste argues that *‘ashabiyah* requires a leader who has gathered the backing of his colleagues. As Ibn Khaldun put forth, *‘ashabiyah* was a political force that led to a state or kingdom. Thus, leadership is a requirement to the existence of *‘ashabiyah*, and strong *ashabiyah* is a power that dominates the various *‘ashabiyah*.<sup>51</sup> While in his position in the social realm, Mahmud Rabie’ in his book *The Political Theory of Ibn Khaldun*, mentions that *‘ashabiyah* is a social guarantee that can build the unity of a country, regardless of *‘ashabiyah* it arises from family relationship or allies. Rabie’ adds that in the social realm, *‘ashabiyah* has two functions; first is a growth of solidarity and strength in the society. And also as a unifier of the various opposed *‘ashabiyah* and become a consolidated group of people.<sup>52</sup> Ibn Khaldun stated that *‘ashabiyah* greatly determines the establishment of a state of civilization. Without *‘ashabiyah*, the sustainability and existence of a state will be difficult to manifest.<sup>53</sup>

Ibn Khaldun divided *‘ashabiyah* into two aspects. The first meaning is the positive aspect, it leads to brotherhood and social harmony and negative *ashabiyah* leads to blind fanaticism that obscures the values of truth. This aspect then encourages the creation of social harmony and becomes a powerful strength in sustaining the rise and development of civilization. In contrast, the second meaning is the negative aspect, which intends to a blind fanaticism that is not based on the truth. This negative meaning of *‘ashabiyah* is not desirable in the Islamic government because it will obscure the values of the

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 254.

<sup>51</sup> Al-Khudairi, *Falsafah Tarikh ‘inda Ibn Khaldun*, 152.

<sup>52</sup> Muhammad Mahmud Rabie’, *The Political Theory of Ibnu Khaldun* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), 165.

<sup>53</sup> Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction To History, Abridge Edition*, 123–24.

religious truth.<sup>54</sup>

Dynasty according to Ibn Khaldun has a period of about 120 years with three generations, although the age of each generation is relative.<sup>55</sup> The first generation preserved the solidarity between them. Its members are used to deprivation and sharing their glory. They are brave and rapacious. They are sharp and greatly feared. Therefore, the strength of solidarity continues to be preserved among them.<sup>56</sup> The second generation reduces solidarity due to sedentary culture. Thus, the vigor of solidarity is broken to some extent. People become used to lowliness and obedience. But many of the old virtues remain in them because they had direct personal contact with the first generation and its conditions and had observed with their own eyes its prowess and striving for glory and its intention to protect and defend. Although a good deal may go, they cannot give all of it up at once. They live in the hope that the conditions that existed in the first generation may come back, or they live under the illusion that those conditions still exist.

The third generation is losing solidarity due to increasing individualism and other causes of egoism. They have lost the sweetness of fame and solidarity because they are dominated by force, and luxury reaches its peak among them. They become dependent on the dynasty, and people forget to protect and defend themselves and press their claims.<sup>57</sup>

Was the existence of a dynasty more influenced by 'ashabiyah or religion? Before, we had known that the Arabs before Islam were a society with its vigorous 'ashabiyah. However, this case did not make them establish a dynasty. After Islam came with all its teachings, Arabs became a strong dynasty with a large territory, such as the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties.<sup>58</sup>

Malik Bennabi said that as a catalyst for humans (al-insân), land (al-turâb), and time (al-waqt), religion is the most important factor in building civilization.<sup>59</sup> Ali Caksu doubted the idea of 'ashabiyah as the

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<sup>54</sup> Muh. Ilham, "Konsep 'Ashabiyah Dalam Pemikiran Politik Ibn Khaldun," *Jurnal Politik Profetik* Vol. 4, no. 1 (2016): p. 5.

<sup>55</sup> Nurul Huda, "Pemikiran Ibn Khaldun Tentang 'Ashabiyah," *Jurnal Suhuf* Vol. 20, no. 1 (Mei 2008): 47.

<sup>56</sup> Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction To History, Abridge Edition*, 137.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Kaya, "A Critical Approach to Causality and Rational Knowledge in Ibn Khaldūn," 250.

<sup>59</sup> Zubaidi, et.al, *The Relation of Religion, Science and Civilization, Malik Bennabi's Perspective*, 297.

only efficient cause for Ibn Khaldun other than the State. The content of this paragraph is part of the previous paragraph, so it deserves to be combined.<sup>60</sup>

### **Final Cause: Common Good (*Mashâlih 'Âmmah*)**

Like an efficient cause, the final is not part of its effect. The final cause or the end is usually described as irrelevant to it. Yet, upon close observation, the final cause is more related to the being of a thing than all other causes. The philosophers said that the final cause could be identified as the purpose of a thing. Thus, the actual existence of the final cause coincides with the achievement of its effect. The final cause precedes the existence of other causes and explains how the other cause derives its simple predicate. In other words, the final cause is the primary cause.<sup>61</sup>

According to Ibn Khaldun, the final cause of the actual groups is usually expressed as the common good and particular virtues such as moderate attitude (*qashd*) and justice (*al-'adl*). However, Ibn Khaldun distinguished the means of the common good according to each group of regimes because the meaning of the common good of each group must be different. The groups are divided into three: the *first* is the primitive culture, which aims to preserve life. According to the primitive culture, a common good was the ability to survive, which includes the individual or group's defence, the essentials of economic intercourse like the production and exchange of necessary foodstuffs and household articles, and standard agreement relating to disputes within the group.<sup>62</sup>

The second group is the civilized, rational regime. According to this group, simply surviving is not their primary goal. Their goal is to enjoy the full benefits of social life progress called civilized culture. In its quest to achieve a social life, the civilized regime aims to create and preserve the indispensable conditions that make an entire social life possible. These conditions include; a civilized state under wise government, a broad population and business in the field of trade and cities where people can live peacefully in carrying out business

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<sup>60</sup> Ali Caksu, *Ibn Khaldun and Philosophy: Causality in History*, *Journal of Historical Philosophy*, 2017, 35.

<sup>61</sup> Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldûn's Philosophy of History*, 270.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 276.

activities, and the development of practical arts and sciences that are seen as mandatory for the arrangement of affairs in society.<sup>63</sup>

Then the third group is the civilized regimes of law. This regime aims to preserve life and enjoyment according to the rules of social benefits, including enjoying the goodness and happiness of life in the hereafter. Ibn Khaldun indicates the particular meaning of “the world to come.” Contrasted with “this world” of external. Ibn Khaldun described “this world” as a physical and sensory apparition. Then, “the world to come” is the internal, the hidden, the permanent, the actual end, and the truth. In short, the good of the world to come is a religious expression whose philosophy equivalent and meaning is the good of the soul, man’s true happiness, and fortune.<sup>64</sup>

A subtitle in Ibn Khaldun’s *Muqaddimah* reads as follows: “*Sedentary culture is the goal of civilization. It means the end of its life span and brings about its corruption*”. In this subtitle, the characteristic of the final cause, according to Ibn Khaldun, can be observed. The first characteristic, in contrast to Aristotle, Ibn Khaldun argued that the end is not something perfect. On the contrary, it can be something destructive. Second, the final cause, according to Ibn Khaldun, is not something final. According to Ibn Khaldun, history moves in a spiral motion as explained earlier in the theory of historical progress. The gradual process of development that occurs in nature does not stop at the final cause but will continue to develop. Therefore, the final cause in Ibn Khaldun’s theory is not static. The things that end at one stage are the beginning of another stage.<sup>65</sup> Ibn Khaldun stressed that the most efficient “final cause” is solidarity and the state. Therefore, in Ibn Khaldun’s theory of history, there is no historical pattern that leads to the final goal.<sup>66</sup>

Badâwah society represents a nomadic civilization with its powerful ‘ashabiyah, which can arise from hereditary relationships, alliances, friendships, and social interactions. Among the social impacts of this ‘ashabiyah relationship are social control, protection, defense, and various social relationships. Furthermore, the impact of ‘ashabiyah is not limited to defense and military power, but also on various human activities, such as prophethood, the establishment of royal authority,

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 277–80.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 280.

<sup>65</sup> Caksu, *Ibn Khaldun and Philosophy: Causality in History*, *Journal of Historical Philosophy*, 36.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 37.



or as propaganda for a purpose. 'Ashabiyah is a factor that prevents conflicts and is the source of association. On the other hand, religion is also a factor that has a role in strengthening 'ashabiyah.

The connection of each cause can be seen from the historical development of civilization which ibn Khaldun divided into two stages, namely nomadic civilization (*badâwah*) and a sedentary civilization (*hadhârah*). The background of this division lies in the difference between these two civilizations in seeking a livelihood. According to Ibn Khaldun, this difference will affect each civilization's physical and moral condition.<sup>67</sup>

Meanwhile, *hadhârah* manifests a sedentary society with its complex civilization.<sup>68</sup> As a dynasty grows more robust, the 'ashabiyah in that dynasty decline due to the people's trust in the sovereign authority. With the strengthening of sovereign authority, the cities emerged, then continued with the construction of walls to protect cities, protection of trade routes, and the regulation of economic life, all of which require enormous financial resources. With the growth and expansion of the city, tranquillity and luxury became widespread, trade flourished, and prosperity grew. Thus, gradually the sedentary civilization arises. The military, the laws, private property, trade, education, scientific life, and the arts emerged and flourished in this civilization so that people could enjoy all the results of civilization.<sup>69</sup>

The division of civilization into *badâwah* and *hadhârah* is based on the quality of 'ashabiyah. *Badâwah* civilization has a society with a strong 'ashabiyah, while *hadhârah* tends to have a weak level of 'ashabiyah. This different level of 'ashabiyah, affects each civilization's development, physical condition, and morals. *Badâwah* society with its vigorous 'ashabiyah tends to be modest, nomad, and uncivilized. But they have the same feelings, the basis of norms, the values of trust, and are physically healthier compared to *hadharah* people who have an individualistic society. Individual strives to satisfy their own needs. So this affects the weakness of 'ashabiyah in this society.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Kaya, "A Critical Approach to Causality and Rational Knowledge in Ibn Khaldûn," 247.

<sup>68</sup> Khairul Amin, "Badawah & Hadarah: Konsep Sosiologi Ibn Khaldun," *Jurnal Sosiologi Agama* Vol. 12, no. 1 (June 2018): p. 92.

<sup>69</sup> Caksu, *Ibn Khaldun and Philosophy: Causality in History, Journal of Historical Philosophy*, 40.

<sup>70</sup> Fuad Baali and Ali Wardi, *Ibn Khaldun Dan Pola Pemikiran Islam* (Jakarta: Penerbit Pustaka Firdaus, 2003), 173–75.

According to Ibn Khaldun, the weakness of *'ashabiyah* in the *hadhârah* society is the luxurious life that causes people to be satisfied with lust, resulting in bad morals. This bad moral then impacts the kindness that is difficult to come by, so that common violations of moral values and basic norms in society, such as corruption, are common. So, in the end, they are stuck in luxury and pleasure without observing the cause or effect that will occur. Then, the possibility of a multidimensional crisis arises and causes a civilization to its destruction. While, in *badâwah* society, their needs are just the fulfillment of primary needs and far from a luxurious life. *Badâwah* society, with its vigorous *'ashabiyah*, makes them much easier to control, so things like violations of values and norms rarely happen.<sup>71</sup>

Ibn Khaldun's style of thought in understanding social phenomena is realist, i.e., expressing social phenomena appropriate with what happened. In his historical theory, Ibn Khaldun emphasized empirical investigation and realistic experience in understanding social reality by knowing deeply about the nature of civilization. In the theory of historical progress, Ibn Khaldun believed that social phenomena were subject to the laws of progression. Ibn Khaldun proposed his theory of historical progress by calling the age of a country with human life. According to Ibn Khaldun, historical progress has a dialectical pattern. Since its beginning, civilization has been embedded by the seeds of destruction and development that cannot be stopped and will lead to a definite annihilation.

## Conclusion

The universe had a rational structure that could be understood as a law of causality, because in every event the universe shows the relationship between the cause and its effect. Ibn Khaldun believed that the law of causality existed in social and historical phenomena. Regarding the stages of society, Ibn Khaldun divided it into two stages: a pre-civilization society (*badâwah*) synonymous with its powerful *'ashabiyah*, which can arise from hereditary relationships, alliances, friendships, and social interactions. Then the second stage is civilized society (*hadhârah*), a manifestation of a sedentary society and synonymous with complex civilizations, settling, and cities living.

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<sup>71</sup> Amin, "Badawah & Hadarah: Konsep Sosiologi Ibn Khaldun," 93.

The concept of Ibn Khaldun's philosophy of history presented in this research is expected to be a reference for readers to understand and interpret history with critical reasoning. And also understand more deeply about civilization, from its formation to its destruction. The suggestion to the readers is to pay more attention to something that is observed from the realm of reality. As Ibn Khaldun said, the universe is subject to its laws and has a rational structure that can be understood as the law of causality. Therefore, if any historical information deviates from these laws, then critical reasoning is necessary to assess the validity of the historical facts.

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