

IBN KHALDUN'S THEORY, PRINCIPLES AND CONCEPTS ON URBAN PLANNING

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ABSTRACT

Ibn Khaldun was one of the most prominent Islamic scholars from Tunisia. He was very wise and futuristic and whose writings are still applicable to the current world. The objective of this article is to discuss the theories, principles and concepts formulated by Ibn Khaldun. His ideas gave rise to a new branch of science called social science today. Various theories were developed by Ibn Khaldun including urban planning. Other theories that he espoused were economic theory, development theory, concept of *assabiyah*, concept of urbanization, development of culture and civilization.

Keywords: *Ibn Khaldun, urban planning*

INTRODUCTION

“The city is a home that is established by nations when they reach the desired height of luxury and everything related to it; Then they will require a life of peace and quiet as well as a switch to make the house as a home. “

(Ibn Khaldun, Mukadimah [1])

Ibn Khaldun was a prominent sociologist in the Islamic Golden Age who lived between the years 734H (1332M) to 809H (1407M). His wide range of knowledge included politics, history, sociology, economy, languages, science, theology, geography, philosophy, al-Quran and hadith, poetry and fiqh. However, Ibn Khaldun, is better known as the founder of a new science called Social Science or Science of Sociology. Western researchers look at his legacy with respect and regard him as a philosopher, historian, sociologist and political economist [2].

His real name is 'Abd al-Rahman bin Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Muhammad bin al-Hassan bin Muhammad bin Jabir bin Muhammad bin Ibrahim bin 'Abd al-Rahman bin Khaldun. He adopted his 10th ancestor's name as his pen name (Khaldun). He was born in Tunisia in 1332M and died in Egypt in 1406M. As a history writer of the 14th century, he was also named as the founder of modern historiography, sociology and economics. Ibn Khaldun lived in one of the most turbulent centuries. Based on his experience, he

"has developed a philosophy of history which is no doubt the best produced by a brilliant man" [2].

The objective of this article is to discuss the theories, principles and concepts deduced by Ibn Khaldun who created a new scientific branch i.e. the sociology of science and its impact on developing countries and cities. Significant researchers chose Ibn Khaldun as the main reference in this discussion because his urban planning theory is still relevant even after more than 600 years of his death (Zaid Ahmad, 2009) [3]. This is because of his wisdom to see the future from different angles and time and is still relevant to the current world [4].

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ibn Khaldun produced many high-profile works. His most glorious was the *Prolegomena*. This book was an introduction to a larger book entitled *Al-'Ibar*. This book chronicled the turbulent life of Ibn Khaldun. It talked about the effects of competition affecting his political career [2]. Generally, *Prolegomena* concerned on finding the causes of history and analyzed the rise and fall of civilizations and cultures of Muslim communities [5].

1. Ibn Khaldun's book, *Mukadimah*, raised the theme of community, culture and civilization. From this, one new science was introduced by Ibn Khaldun to all readers and researchers. This new subject is called Science of Sociology or Social Science (*'Ilm-al-'Umran*). According to Tawfiq Abu-Hantash [6], the importance of this science came from the Ibn Khaldun's goal to write a book which was meant to criticize the writing of history by historians of the past that was not systematic. It demonstrated how the best history writing was written using basic knowledge and factors that made it. Muhsin Mahdi (2014) stated that historical and cultural sciences study two aspects of the same reality. History covers the external events while culture covers factors and characters of the same event. Therefore, this science (Social Science) is a scientific study that includes other disciplines to achieve goals as required by Ibn Khaldun. The other branches of social science include economics, politics and religions covering human, ecological and geographic knowledge while also representing environmental aspects [6].

In the study of sociological science, Ibn Khaldun stated that the basic concept of this science is moving around from where it started: from primitive to civilized life and going back to primitive life – birth, growth and eventual decay of civilizations. The strength of this movement is the spirit of '*assabiyah*' or social cohesion (social solidarity). Through his observations, this movement was evident in the areas of North Africa and the Middle East: life in the desert as practised by nomads (*badwi*) and sedentary life (*hadhari*) as practised by other groups.

Ibn Khaldun explained that the process of social and cultural change was a form of civilization that highlights the evolution of 'itself' which was in line with the evolution of civilization. These aspects were states, cities, economic life, and science. Thus, according to Tawfiq [6], the city, physically and historically, could be said to have a relationship with the legislative power and the decisive process of cultural change. Furthermore, this hypothesis could be tested theoretically and practically from historical data.

Due to a variety of multidiscipline arising from social science, there were so many theories that arose from it. These theories were generated by Ibn Khaldun who drafted the structure of society at that time. Tawfiq [6] said that all of Ibn Khaldun's theories were

contemporary and perpendicular with the development of the majority of Muslims cities such as Fez, Tunis, and Cairo in North Africa and Damascus, Aleppo, Baghdad and Jerusalem in the Middle East. Each city visited by Ibn Khaldun were used as references when writing the *Mukadimah*. The narrative of these cities could be used to explain some of the basic processes of physical and cultural evolution.

According to Muhsin Mahdi [7], Ibn Khaldun chose the Arabic word '*Umran*' which can be translated as 'culture' and this became a strong theoretical foundation in his study. The word '*Umran*' means: (a) for life, inhabit, live, and settling down in any place; (b) to inhabit, rear or grow (with a person, animal or plant), to be in good shape, which is opposed to be isolated, abandoned or damaged; and (c) to develop, build, promote, monitor, or visit a particular area or place. This pointed to the nomadic life of the Bedouin culture. Cultural life was a life settled in a potent place, easily accessible to healthy food and drinking sources and assured with security and safety.

From this general meaning, '*Umran*' means: (a) A good place for habitation, and more specifically, (b) having nourishment, development, decoration, usefulness, rearing, and maintenance [7]. Thus, at the beginning of the life of society, culture means 'living together' and a place to stay close to each other in one city or people to enjoy life together as their natural inclination is to cooperate with each other. Science of Culture or '*Umran*' itself carries a variety of meanings and definitions according to the Arabic language and the understanding of Ibn Khaldun. It is, therefore, not surprising for its vastness. Various theories have been developed and researchers from East to West have been kept busy in thinking and deepening research. Among the theories that came out were economic theory, development theory, concept of *assabiyah*, concept of urbanization, and the development of the concept of culture and civilization, just to name a few.

In discussing the subject matter of culture, the most important in the theory of cultural development was the distinction between primitive culture (*'Umran badawi*) and civilized culture (*'Umran hadhari*) or civilization. This difference covered many aspects that could affect a person's attitude and human groupings of those cultures. Muhsin Mahdi [7] stated that culture was essentially defined as primitive in terms of an economic way of life. This then colored the other aspects of society and was differentiated in terms of civilization. This culture focused on the development of land and/or care about animals either in the area or nomadically in the vast desert (*Mukadimah*).

This type of culture was a simple domination of various aspects of life. It only met the basic needs: community was small and was characterized by self-sufficiency; food was simple and eaten with little process if any; clothing made of animal skin or handmade materials; and humans lived in caves, tents or simple huts. They had nothing except essential tools to manufacture things. There was no city or public work and no source of income or tax. The literacy rate was low and production was inadequate. There were no institutions arising from this limited knowledge (*Mukadimah*). All these were the cultural characteristics of the primitive Bedouin culture.

'Birth, growth and decay' is closely related to civilizations that are dynamic. Compared to the life of primitive cultures, the desire of humans in city life is unlimited and endless. This is the first characteristic that is important to the development of civilization and progressive growth [7]. The second important characteristic of civilization is reaching the summit and a natural limit that cannot be surmounted thereafter. Then civilization begins to fall. The result is the dissolution of the institutions of the city and the destruction of

civilization. Thus, the essential nature of the third and final factor is that civilization cannot avoid the fall and it destructs [7].

In any civilization, national interests and political institutions are important components. Countries build cities and municipalities consonant to the level of the nation's security (*Mukadimah*). The state is the cause of economic development and institutional arrangements: it is the buyer of the greatest amount, spend the most money, and has the biggest monopolies. Her economic prosperity depends on her defense and national policies (*Mukadimah*). Finally, the state causes the advancement of knowledge, directly through its support of science institutions and indirectly causes other aspects of civilization to grow (*Mukadimah*). Life and civilization occur together. Civilization follows the rise of a powerful nation. It is limited in terms of space by national borders and it breaks up with the destruction of the nation (*Mukadimah*). According to Muhsin Mahdi [7], Ibn Khaldun's study is essentially the study of the development of civilized countries and observations of the interactions of other aspects of those countries.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses qualitative methods i.e. content analysis where the main source is from *Mukadimah* and legal law books i.e. *Global Planning and Development Guidelines* (GPPPS), and *Global Planning and Development Philosophy* (FPPS). According to Vahid Ahmadi [8], literature review analysis is one of the practical ways to study municipal space by looking at the character of physical identity. Other sources were also drawn from academic writings such as articles, journals, videos and urban planning experts. Each type of content was analysed through readings regarding town planning by Ibn Khaldun and other sources stated above.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Urban development is part of a civilization's development and Muslims cannot build a civilization to greatness without implementation of *Syariah Islamiah* [9]. Yusuf al-Qaradawi ([10] said: "But we want to emphasize from the outset that *hadharah* (civilization) that Muslims want to build is not like other civilizations that are more concerned about matters in life which is materialism and lust". Although Ibn Khaldun was a famous Muslim philosopher, he also contributed ideas on urban planning at that time, using the theory of town development. The idea of a city by Ibn Khaldun could be understood through his perceptions and experiences of civilization and the power of the royal dynasty [5]. The political influence of royalty (that he understood from teenage years until the end of his life) led him to really understand the intricacies of palace politics in detail i.e. how royal power was able to build and ruin a city, state, country and dynasty.

Growth of economic activities closely relates to the growth of civilized countries. Ibn Khaldun described an economic theory of development based on the interaction of demand and supply and further, the utilization and formation of human capital. A country's demand leads to higher prices of luxury goods and services. Hope for higher reward attracts talented people, specialists and merchants to come to town to develop skills and techniques in the production of goods and provide services that are required. The increase in urban population and the increase in wages with better benefits lead to increased demand (*Mukadimah*). Higher demand leads to a further specialization of cities and among different cities. Specialization shapes the demand for services and traders and middlemen who offer to transfer goods from one place to another. Additionally, the basic principles that underlie the growing economy consist of legal, economic and psychological motivation [7].

When the state, which is the single largest consumer, plunges financially then declining demand and falling prices force many manufacturers to go out of the business (Mukadimah). The effects on humans with the fall of country and economic activity and the decline of the manufacturing sector cause cities to be less populated and cities make their way back to primitivity (Mukadimah). As a result, the decline of the state and the destruction of institutions that shape social life is accompanied by a dangerous situation. These are the limitations that exist in civilized life. The life cycle then comes to an end.

Ibn Khaldun in the Mukadimah described the characteristics of a city. A village is developed by its inhabitants and its progress is tabi'i (natural need). From conducting agriculture for a living (al-darudah), it increases to a level that meets needs (al-hajah). Subsequently, this increases to a level of perfection (al-kamalat) and luxury (al-taraf). At this stage, the appearance of a city begins [11]. The community will have their own organizations and institutions and a leader to lead them. They belong to each other and have their own skills and handiwork.

Urban planning is a manifestation of human life and the environment. The book, Falsafah Perancangan dan Pembangunan Sejahtera (FPPS) argues that planning and development need to maintain the five basic pillars of human life: soul, religion, intellect, lineage and property. In Islam, these five basic tenets are called maqasid syariah. Integration of spiritual values, civilization and prosperity in planning and development is paramount and this translates into and interlock of relationships: (1) The human relationship with the Creator, (2) The relationship between humans, and (3) the relationship between man and environment. Therefore, a person who plans an urban development should be concerned with these five tenets and integrate these three aspects.

Ibn Khaldun explained widely about the conditions that are necessary for the planning of cities and its consequences if we ignore them. According to him, after the completion of town development (according to human interests and needs and in concordance with the elements and site geography), the age of the city begins (Mukadimah, 387). The development of a town or city is the symbol of a civilization's glory. It gives an overview of the progress of a country's riches, sovereignty and greatness including the development of the people's soul and intellectual level [11].

Although the development of a city is dynamic and should be in line with current technology, urban planning should be aligned to the population's needs and to repair shortcomings. If it is not designed properly, it will cause evil which results in hardships to the public [9]. It will damage society and the city itself. It will also create homelessness. This is because, according to Ibn Khaldun, the city is a home set up by nations to reach the summit of life with everything related to it. The denizens require a life of peace and tranquillity as well as making houses homes. Urban planning is not something that should be taken lightly. ALLAH the Almighty says in Surah Al-Nahl, Verse 80 (translated):

"And ALLAH made for you the houses (which thou hast set up) residence, and He has made for you of the skins of cattle, tents (shelter), which you find so light (portable) when you wander and when you stop and (He has given you) of various kinds of fur animals, rich stuff and articles of convenience (to want to use it) to a time."

The aim of city development is to establish urban settlements and give shelter to people. Thus, it is fair to note that all dangerous enterprises must be located away from the city and must provide useful facilities in urban spaces (Mukadimah). Urban planning is one of the ways to make this world prosperous. Without good urban planning development,

it will cause destruction and harm to human life [9]. Recent news, such as flash floods that occurred in northern Malaysia and high-rise building collapse, is testament to this.

In addition to functioning as a residence, effective urban planning is also a field of knowledge. According to Mahmoud Hamdy Zaqazouq [12], the main cause of Islamic civilization's decline is the neglect of the importance of science and development of civilization. If people ignore these two things, the effect is, the progress achieved by Muslims is the result of Western or fictitious inventions of Muslims themselves. Islamic civilization built, in its glorious history, towns as gathering places and havens for those who have knowledge and are thirsty for knowledge. Most famous Islamic cities of yesteryears had scientific centres like in Cordova, Kairouan, Cairo, Medina, Fez and Bukhara. Similarly, a smart city serves as a trigger and catalyst for the development of science at the global level because education and science should not be stifled by administrative boundaries and geographical factors. [11].

Ismail Zen [13] states that unity lies in the sustainability of dynamic equilibrium in human relationship with nature that ultimately sustains human civilization whilst the obligation of a Muslim is to seek knowledge (Ibn Khaldun). A leader's trust, therefore, is to give people all the necessary equipment, chiefly knowledge. ALLAH says in Surah al-Baqarah, Verse 31 (translated):

"And He taught Adam all the names (of everything) and then presented them to the angels and said: "Tell me the names of these if ye are truthful!"

According to Wan Mohamad [11], humans have a role as a builder, beautifier, and environmental saviour. Humans do not damage nature because the effects not only threaten humans but also destroy the natural systems of the universe. ALLAH says in Surah al-Rum, Verse 41 (translated):

"Mischief has appeared and a plague on land and sea because of what has been done by human hands; (Incidentally so) because ALLAH let them taste part of a response to bad deeds they have done, so they come back (from Evil)."

Furthermore, planning and development based on sustainable development will ensure that all-natural resources such as hills, mountains, rivers, lakes, air, flora, and fauna will be preserved as best as possible and its stability can be enjoyed by all human beings and future generations [11]. FPPS states that the consequences of not protecting the environment will bring about response in the form of danger, disaster and destruction to people and property, as is happening today. In this context, levelling hills, cutting slopes, and shaving land for development will lead to massive disaster. It occurs as a result of man's own hands.

CONCLUSION

According to the chapter, *Amalan Perancangan Era Tamadun Islam* in the book, *Garis Panduan Perancangan dan Pembangunan Sejagat* [14], planning in Islamic civilization is about development with artistry and beauty in design and with physical arrangement showing unity. The utility of mosques, schools, universities and libraries is to be focal points and is the aim of urban design. Preservation of nature is an effort to remember and honour the Creator's creation. For urban planning, the best plan is the one that considers time, people, location, culture, and geography of the site chosen in sync with the environment.

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