BADRANE BENLAHCENE

THE SOCIO-INTELLECTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF **MALEK BENNABI'S APPROACH** *to* **CIVILIZATION**

The Socio-Intellectual Foundations of
Malek Bennabi's Approach to Civilization

I dedicate this work to

MALEK BENNABI
ABDULHAMID BENBADIS
AND ISMAʿIL RAJI AL-FARUQI

THE SOCIO-INTELLECTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF MALEK BENNABI'S APPROACH TO CIVILIZATION

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* (SWT) – *Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*: May He be praised and may His transcendence be affirmed. Said when referring to God.

Last but not least, my heartiest thanks, gratefulness and deep heart-felt expressions of gratitude to the Malaysian people and government for giving me this chance to live among them and to learn some of my enduring lessons from their cultural traditions and heritage.

FOREWORD

Of knowledge, we have none, save what
You have taught us. (The Qur'an 2:32)

THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC THOUGHT (IIIT) has great pleasure in presenting *The Socio-Intellectual Foundations of Malek Bennabi's Approach to Civilization,* originally written and submitted as a PhD thesis by Dr. Badrane Benlahcene.

The center of attention is the work of Malek Bennabi (1905–1973), a prominent Algerian thinker and great Muslim intellectual, intently focused on unravelling the causes of Muslim decline and the success of Western civilization and culture. Bennabi's extensive research led him to the conclusion that the key problem lay not in the Qur'an or Islamic faith but in Muslims themselves, and if a true picture of the effects of colonization as well as factors governing civilization and its movement were to be thoroughly grasped, then the seemingly entrenched problems of the Muslim world could be solved and a new era of Muslim renaissance ushered in.

The author investigates Bennabi's approach to civilization and the principles drawn using metatheorizing methodology (Mu) going beyond available literature to present not only Bennabi's interdisciplinary approach to civilization, but also to analyze in-depth its underlying structure. In doing so he sheds further light on perhaps one of the more intriguing elements of Bennabi's theory, that civilization is governed by internal-external and social-intellectual factors and that an equation can be generated for civilization itself.

This equation of Man+Soil+Time = Civilization and of which religion, according to Bennabi, forms the all-important catalyst, is

explained and studied in careful detail and its significance in terms of the reversal of Muslim decline evaluated. What is clearly apparent is that for Bennabi Man is the central force in any civilizing process and without him the other two elements are of no value.

With regard to outcomes, Bennabi's unerring conviction that unless Muslims changed their spiritual condition they could not effect any far-reaching, meaningful change in society is echoed in the Qur'anic verse: "Verily, never will Allah change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves" (13:11). Bennabi acknowledged that this was the way that leads to civilization.

This study brings new insight to the methodology and philosophy of Bennabi's thought. We hope that the analysis and ideas contained therein, will not only make an important contribution to the subject of civilization, but also generate greater awareness and interest among readers for Bennabi's life and work as a whole.

Where dates are cited according to the Islamic calendar (hijrah) they are labelled AH. Otherwise they follow the Gregorian calendar and labelled CE where necessary. Arabic words are italicized except for those which have entered common usage. Diacritical marks have been added only to those Arabic names not considered contemporary. Where quotes have been cited from foreign-language sources, the translation into English has been that of the author.

The IIIT, established in 1981, has served as a major center to facilitate serious scholarly efforts based on Islamic vision, values and principles. The Institute's programs of research, seminars and conferences during the last thirty years have resulted in the publication of more than four hundred titles in English and Arabic, many of which have been translated into several other languages.

We would like to express our thanks and gratitude to the author, who throughout the various stages of the production process cooperated closely with the IIIT London Office's editorial team. We also wish to thank Emilia Garofalo for the quality of her editorial work and close attention to detail. Her recommendations and suggestions were invaluable to the final production.

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INTRODUCTION

ince the publication of Samuel Huntington's now famous article "The Clash of Civilizations"[1] the concern about civilization has been reintroduced into the debate on the world order in intellectual circles. It has enhanced the previous efforts of philosophers of history and social scientists to establish civilization studies as a distinctive field of research. It paid attention to the importance of the study of civilizations and their importance for an understanding of global change. Furthermore, the end of the so-called Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union brought to the debate the issue of civilization studies and related questions even though the very category of "civilization" and "civilizations" had been avoided by most intellectual and political circles until recently. In this context, many researchers and scholars called for the review and re-examination of the works of those leading civilizationists[2] among the historians, sociologists, anthropologists, and philosophers who explored, at length, issues such as the causes, emergence, rise, interactions, achievements, decline, and fall of civilizations. The list of those leading civilizationists includes among others, Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406), Comte (1798–1857), Spengler (1880–1936), Weber (1864–1920), Durkheim (1858–1917), Toynbee (1889–1975), Sorokin (1889–1968), Kroeber (1876–1960), Braudel (1902–1985), etc.[3] In the Muslim world, since the early 20th century there were efforts to view history from a civilizational perspective. Among the thinkers and leaders of those efforts, Malek Bennabi (1905–1973) a scholar of profound ideas, and leading Muslim Algerian intellectual, is the civilizationist. Some of those who are interested in his thought consider him a writer, thinker, and probably the first social philosopher and social scientist the Muslim world has seen

since the time of Ibn Khaldun.4 Others consider him a "philosopher-visionary for the entire Ummah" whose concern about the decadence of the Muslim civilization led him to analyze the causes of the decay and to provide solutions.

Bennabi was also one of the few original thinkers who have succeeded in making remarkably systematic contributions. He set out to search for universal laws and fundamental principles that govern human societies and civilizations, and determine their destiny in history.

From the 1940's until his death in 1973 he wrote numerous books and articles providing penetrating insights into the philosophy of history, sociology, social and historical change and pressing cultural and civilizational issues, as well as different cultural traditions that have engaged prominent thinkers of all ages.

However, the central theme of Bennabi's thought was the study of civilization in general, and the attempt to provide solutions to the state of Muslim civilization in particular. In other words, Muslim civilization was the starting point for Bennabi to study civilization and to theorize about this issue.

Since his early years, Bennabi was drawn to the stagnation in which Muslims dwelled. Therefore, he was involved in many intellectual and activist movements, in efforts to reactivate the civilizing process in the Muslim world. However, the many attempts made in various quarters seemed fruitless to Bennabi because of the lack of clear vision and a methodology to approach the matter.

As asserted by many, Bennabi directed his efforts to reactivate the dynamism of the Muslim civilization by developing his approach to the study of civilization in general and Muslim civilization, in particular. While many activists and intellectuals tended to resolve the present dilemma of backwardness of the Muslim world in terms of economics, politics or ideology, he emphasized the role of ideas as the catalyst behind the growth of civilization. Civilization, Bennabi maintains, is not an accumulation, rather, a construction and an architecture.5

Drawing upon a deep understanding of Islam, a sound assimilation and insight of the social sciences, and a proper grasp of the dynamics of human society and history, Bennabi adopted an etiological approach

that allowed him to gain considerable knowledge into the performance of human societies and the workings and dynamics of culture and civilization as seen from a universal perspective.[6]

He directed all his efforts to resolve societal problems within the framework of civilization. In other words, he considered civilization as the intelligible unit with which to study socio-historical phenomena. In this regard, he viewed civilization as the core of any study of human conditions in their short term or long term scale. He said:

> The problem of every people, in its essence, is that of its civilization. And it is not possible for any people to comprehend and resolve its problem, if it does not elevate its thought and capacities to the level of the great human affairs and speculate deeply in order to understand the factors which construct and deconstruct the civilizations.[7]

Any reader who becomes acquainted with Bennabi's treatise on civilization will find that the ideas and the vocabulary of his thought are a mixture of and a result of the examination of the works of many leading thinkers and may not be totally new if viewed from a partial perspective. This does not mean, however, that his ideas are drawn from existing sources and put side by side as heterogeneous elements. Bennabi's thought is, indeed, an organized totality, or a system into which all concepts, terms and ideas, whatever their origin, have been integrated with an entirely systematic interpretation.

Compared to other thinkers and civilizationists, Bennabi's approach to civilization still needs to be deeply analyzed and understood. It is still not fully uncovered and implemented. He has especially developed his approach to civilization to present a diagnosis of the phenomena that dominate the contemporary Muslim world, a phenomena of backwardness, explaining their origins, and how to overcome them.[8] The latter suggests that Bennabi's approach to the different issues related to the study of civilization and its course in history has great importance in the intellectual milieu for the diagnosis of the Muslim civilizational crisis.

As mentioned previously, although Bennabi's work has been available in French and Arabic since the late 1950s, his ideas or

methodological approach to the study of the various problems of the Muslim civilization seldom received serious scholarly attention before the 1980s.[9] Rather, in many instances he was misunderstood and even sometimes misrepresented by different and conflicting ideological quarters.[10]

Despite these later acknowledgments of the importance of the aspects mentioned of Bennabi's thought and ideas, it has been those aspects of Bennabi's work which do not reflect the depth of his thought that have caught the attention of his readers. Accordingly, issues of culture, civilization, the cyclical conception of historical development and social change, and the relevance of all these to the present and immediate preoccupations of Muslims have been at the centre of attention for most of the writings about him. However, little heed, if any, has been given to the fundamental theoretical and methodological framework underlying Bennabi's treatment of such issues.

In other words, little and superficial consideration has been given to the roots of his approach to civilization and to the sources from which Bennabi developed his concepts, terms, and approach. To the author's knowledge to date, there has been no such serious attempt to uncover the underlying structure of Bennabi's thought in order to understand the originality, the credibility and the authenticity of his ideas in tackling the malaise of Muslim civilization.

In the same context, Mesawi (1991) and Hassan (1991) asserted that the significance of Bennabi's thought derives from his scientific training combined with a historical, sociological, and philosophical outlook which enabled him to fathom the depths of European civilization and gain a deep understanding of its culture, as well as from his original thinking and analysis of the Ummah's strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, Hassan asserted that Bennabi's scope ranged across social, political, economic, moral and theological speculations.[11]

Thus, the primary concern of this study is to determine the different factors that influenced the formulation and development of Malek Bennabi's approach to civilization, specifically, events and circumstances of his era that motivated this thinker who lived in a critical period of the contemporary Muslim world.

This study is also concerned with the tools, methods, concepts, and theories used by, Bennabi. Furthermore, it is concerned with the analysis of the process through which Bennabi formulated and developed his approach.

AIMS AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

This study presents an in-depth understanding of the theoretical framework of Bennabi's approach to civilization, and how it affected his theorization of civilization and its course in history. The study also seeks to examine Bennabi's interpretation of the movement of civilization throughout its course in history and the civilizing process. Moreover, it aims to understand contemporary civilization and its consequences on social life, and provides a civilizational framework for decision-makers, so that they can better solve the problems within their respective civilizational framework.

Although there are many studies on the issue of civilization, and a growing number on the historical thinking of Bennabi, the importance of the present work rests upon Bennabi's metatheoretical approach because of the following points:

1. It reflects the various intellectual efforts in the Muslim world, since early 19th century, to formulate a comprehensive approach to resolve the dilemma of backwardness, and to bring back and activate Muslim civilization.
2. It focuses on the development of civilization using an interdisciplinary approach that draws from contributions in the disciplines of philosophy of history and the social sciences, and makes a connection with Ibn Khaldun's heritage.
3. It reflects an uncommon perspective and is therefore essential in diagnosing the different partial dilemmas in the Muslim world as well as in other world civilizations.
4. It analyzes and elaborates some of Bennabi's concepts which are still need to be elaborated, analyzed and understood as an integrated system including, for instance, the concept of civilization, the role and status of humans in history, religion as a catalyst of

civilizational values, the three realms, the three stages, the social relationship web, the idea of orientation, etc.

5. It examines Bennabi's background to find out how he was influenced in developing his approach. On the one hand he had an Islamic background, studied Islamic traditional sciences and adopted Ibn Khaldun's heritage. On the other hand, he enriched his knowledge of western cultural and scientific tradition, during his thirty year stay in France where he studied philosophy and the social and natural sciences.

The points presented above give a raison d'être for the present study, and suggest an adequate methodology to undertake the research on Bennabi's approach and its roots.

SOME NOTES ON METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

There are many approaches that could be applied to research of this nature, that is, to undertake a study that focuses on the socio-intellectual foundations and uncovers the underlying structure of Bennabi's approach to civilization, in addition to the various factors that contributed to its formulation and development. Methodologically speaking, to undertake this study I chose the metatheorizing approach because it incorporates the elements of both the sociology of knowledge and the history of ideas, as will be seen in the following pages.

In this context, I adopt Ritzer's metatheorizing approach – with some adaptations – because of its applicability and usefulness, as well as its distinctiveness which will be demonstrated in the following sections. It provides the theoretical analysis that defines a research problem, and determines how that problem should be tackled.[12]

To allow a better appreciation of Bennabi's concept of civilization, Ritzer's metatheorizing adapts more systematically to the Islamic intellectual and cultural framework which constituted the fundamental sphere in which Bennabi's ideas grew and took their final shape.

A full explanation of this method and its techniques seems to be of great importance. Thus, we are going to discuss the following elements:

(1) Ritzer's Metatheorizing Approach

In recent years there has been an interest in the use of the metatheorizing approach in sociology as well as other related fields of research.[13] In order to legitimate its use in the present study, it is important to give an appropriate explanation of this approach. The author seeks to answer the following questions: (1) What is metatheorizing? (2) Why is it becoming increasingly important? (3) How is it being used in sociology? How will it be implemented in the present study which belongs to philosophy of history on the one hand, and to sociology on the other ?

(a) What is Metatheorizing?

The prefix "meta" has now appeared in many disciplines in the social sciences. In general, it is used to mean "after", "about", and "beyond". As the theoretical sociologist Zhao stated, metatheorizing is a way of practicing meta-study in addition to meta-method and meta-data-analysis.[14] Meta-study refers to studies that involve studies about (or of) other studies. It is occasionally referred to as a second-order study. For instance, while the first-order one analyzes a given phenomenon X, a second-order study analyzes the study of X. Meta-study transcends or goes beyond previous studies.[15]

Metatheorizing is the combination of two words; meta and theorizing. Meta means going beyond or higher, transcending: it is used to form terms designating an area of study whose purpose is to examine the nature, assumptions, structure, etc. of a specified field (metaphysics, metacriticism) while theorizing means to form a theory or theories,[16] or the process of making a theory. Thus, metatheorizing may be defined as going beyond the process of making a theory, to look beyond the theory, to analyze the roots that make the grounds of such a theory. Furthermore, it is to go beyond the theory to examine the nature, assumptions, structure, and surroundings of such a theory or theories.

Metatheorizing is the systematic study of the underlying structure of sociological theory.[17] It is a way of doing a meta-study and a kind of meta-analysis of the structure of theories and the theorists. In other words, it is a theoretical endeavor to uncover the various factors

behind the emergence, shape, development, and use of such a theory. In addition, it is a metatheoretical viewpoint that theoretically deals with the different factors that have contributed to the form of the theory and the theorist.[18]

Since the 1980s, George Ritzer has asserted that metatheorizing is the systematic study of the underlying structure of sociological theory.[19] To make this model adaptable to other disciplines he mentions that sociologists are not the only scientists to do meta-analysis, that is, to reflexively study their own discipline, but philosophers, psychologists, political scientists, a number of other social scientists, and historians as well.

Beside the fact that metatheorists and meta-analysis are found in other fields, what distinguishes other kinds of such analyses from the metatheorizing model are the end products rather than the process of metatheorizing, which all metatheorists share.

In his model, Ritzer states three varieties of metatheorizing, largely defined by differences in the end products.[20] The first type, Metatheorizing as a means of attaining a deeper understanding of theory (Mu), involves the study of theory in order to produce a better, more profound understanding of extant theory. Mu is concerned, more specifically, with the study of theories, theorists, and communities of theorists. The second type, Metatheorizing as a prelude to theory development (Mp), entails the study of extant theory in order to produce new sociological theory. There is also a third type, Metatheorizing as a source of perspectives that overarch sociological theory (Mo), in which the study of theory is oriented toward the goal of producing a perspective, one could say a metatheory, that overarches some part or all sociological theory.

(b) Metatheorizing as a means of understanding Mu

The author is concerned with and will analyze the first type of metatheorizing, (Mu), which is in line with the aim of the present study.

Mu involves the study of theory in order to produce a better, more profound understanding of extant theory, and, more specifically, with the study of theories, theorists, and communities of theorists. According to Ritzer, Mu is composed of four basic dimensions (subtypes), all

of which involve the formal or informal study of theory to attain a deeper understanding of it.

THE FIRST DIMENSION *(internal-social)* looks within the field of study, and focuses on social rather than cognitive factors. The main approach here emphasizes the communal aspects of various theories and includes efforts to identify the major schools in the history of the field of study. It also emphasizes the studies of the theorists themselves that examine their institutional affiliations, their career patterns, their positions within the field of research, and so on.[21] It includes the efforts to identify the major schools in the history of the field of study. In this metatheoretical dimension, the focus is upon the backgrounds of the theorists themselves, that is, the family background and connections, religious ties, intellectual connections with major thinkers, and personal experiences.[22] In Bennabi's case, the focus is upon Bennabi's various personal experiences and interests, his background (family, religious, and educational background), and his intellectual pursuits (activist and intellectual life).

THE SECOND DIMENSION *(external-social)* shifts to a more macro level to look at the larger society (national and socio-cultural settings, etc.) and the nature of its impact on theorizing. In other words, the external social dimension emphasizes the relationships between the theorization process and the various institutions, the structures of society, and other social activities which have direct or indirect relationship with the development of the approach or theory.[23] In Bennabi's case, this dimension will focus upon the relationship between the external social factors and the formulation and development of Bennabi's approach. It at giving more sociological insights to understand the larger socio historical context that directed Bennabi to study civilization and formulate his approach.

Therefore, the main focus of this dimension is on the two processes of colonization and decolonization that formed the larger historical and social context of Bennabi's thought. It enables us to examine the relationship between the two processes and Bennabi's efforts to formulate an approach to the issue of the civilizational backwardness in the Muslim world, and the persistent decline and stagnation of its civilization.

THE THIRD DIMENSION (*internal-intellectual*) focuses on intellectual or cognitive issues that are traditionally internal to the field of study (civilization).[24] It includes attempts to identify the major cognitive paradigms, the schools of thought, the changes in paradigms, and the development of the general metatheoretical tools with which to analyze the existing theories and to develop new theories.[25] In Bennabi's case, the internal-intellectual factors that have an impact upon his theorization are the cognitive (intellectual) ones related to the study of civilization.

It also explores how scholars who had similar concerns approached the same issue, what the main features of their approaches were, as well as their influence on Bennabi's theorization on the issue of civilization. In other words, it focuses on the formation of the intellectual aspect of his personality, on the paradigms of thought, schools, and approaches to the same issues that concerned Bennabi.

THE FOURTH DIMENSION *(external-intellectual)* turns to other academic disciplines for ideas, tools, concepts, and theories that can be used in the study of civilization.[26] In Bennabi's case, this dimension involves the impact of the Qur'an,[27] religious thought in the Muslim World, philosophy, psychology, the natural sciences, and other intellectual activities external to the field of civilization studies and its two dominant paradigms.

These four dimensions help us to focus on what this methodology provides for researchers on theories and theoretical backgrounds.

Mu provides systematic methods of understanding, evaluating, criticizing, and improving existing theories. It is the distinctive responsibility of metatheorizing to deepen the level of understanding of theories. Metatheorists systematically study detailed (often comparative) arrays of sociological theories, and have at their disposal an arsenal of tools that allows them to uncover many things that would not be visible to a more casual student of theory.

Furthermore, Mu enables a more adequate evaluation and critical analysis of extant theories. When we talk about first-order and second-order inquiry, what distinguishes the two types of research is their relationship with the social world. While the first-order research shows that the primary study deals directly with the social world, the second–order research (metatheory) deals with the primary study.

(c) Why is Metatheorizing important?

Ritzer states that metatheorizing is relevant to theorizing as follows:

> [W]hile metatheoretical work is removed from the social world, it is far from being irrelevant to our understanding of how that world works. Thus in my view, metatheorizing is not only a legitimate undertaking in itself, but it is further legitimized by its utility in enhancing our understanding of sociocultural reality.[28]

Zhao, for his part, assigns great importance to metatheory which is, after all, a tool to be used to deal with certain disciplinary problems. There are situations in which meta-study (metatheory) becomes not only necessary, but also inevitable. Nevertheless, metatheory is particularly important under two conditions: the first involves the sudden occurrence of some fundamental shift in the conception of the subject matter in a discipline. Meta-study (metatheory) is needed in this situation for remapping the cognitive status of a changing discipline. An example is the modern revolution in physics created by Einstein's theory of relativity, which led to the development of the philosophy of science. The second condition under which meta-study (metatheory) is particularly important involves the failure of a discipline to progress.[29]

Furthermore, metatheory may be the source of a new concept that alters or adapts previous theoretical predictions; it may suggest a new problem, focus, or branch; or it may contain an assumption that, upon reflection, leads to a new theoretical claim explaining that the metatheories underlying theories seemingly can yield important benefits to theories which are often formulated with determined avoidance of metatheoretical issues.[30]

Besides, the kind of reflexive work undertaken by metatheorists can be useful in clarifying our theoretical differences and showing us where greater integration is possible. Such a role brings metatheorizing from the realm of abstraction to a very practical place in helping the discipline, as a whole, to overcome its difficulties.[31]

(d) How can Metatheorizing be useful in the present study?

While this model has been developed mainly within the field of sociology, and more precisely in theoretical sociology, it can be applied to

other fields of research. Thus, Ritzer mentioned that the various articles written by many theorists about metatheorizing reflects the booming interest among sociologists and other social scientists involved in meta-analytic work of all types: meta-methodology, meta-data-analysis, and especially metatheorizing.[32]

In the interest of the present study, which is within the domain of socio-historical change, Mu is applicable for many reasons. First, metatheorizing is the systematic study of theories and theorists, and these are present in any scientific enterprise and in any field of research. Second, metatheorizing as a theoretical study provides a precise model for understanding the works of theorists and the structure of the intellectual, social, internal, and external variables (factors) which affect their theorization. In other words, the goal of the present study is to gain a better understanding of Bennabi's theory of civilization by utilizing the four dimensions (internal-social, internal-intellectual, external-intellectual, and external-social) of the subtype of metatheorizing (Mu) oriented toward greater understanding. Third, Mu requires the comparative method to provide a deeper comprehension, more adequate evaluation, and critical analysis of theory and theorist. The comparative method, which will be used in this study, uses the Mu model to gain a deep understanding of the issue of civilization in the thought of Bennabi, and compare his approach with those of the same concern, such as Ibn Khaldun and Toynbee as the master-minds of civilization studies.[33]

(2) Some Techniques

As mentioned previously, the use of metatheorizing in its Mu type requires the use of combined methods or modes of analysis. Therefore, this research uses a mixed-methods approach by combining three methods: 1) historical analysis, 2) comparative analysis, and 3) content analysis. The mixed methods can complement each other and provide a greater understanding of the topic under study.

Historical analysis is to be used for understanding how ideas and historical forces are developed. A careful historical analysis of circumstances and various trends of thought, dominant paradigms during

Bennabi's time, as well as socio-historical processes may provide a ground for the formulation of an alternative approach to the subject of movement of civilization. Historical analysis, in this regard, helps to take into consideration the factor of time, and the past in particular. It helps also to understand the critical processes of societal and intellectual change, and the development of ideas during Bennabi's life.

The comparative method is intended to transform the field (civilizational studies) from an essentially descriptive enterprise that emphasizes the ideographic attributes of socio-historical inquiry and the phenomenon of civilization to an endeavor that could explain and predict such a phenomenon through the formulation of general laws. Through comparison the author intends to understand and discover the differences and similarities between Bennabi's approach and others'. It may help also to draw inferences about why Bennabi's ideas developed in such a way and not in other ways. In other words, the differences help us to discover the causes or the factors behind this process or that of theorization.

The adoption of the content analysis method finds its raison d'être in the nature of the study which is based on the analysis of Bennabi's writings, as well as other writings of the same concern, and relate it to the study of his approach. The content analysis method is used as a technique to deal with concepts, assumptions, and terms used by Bennabi regarding the study of civilization. This mode of analysis is useful where Bennabi's views and roots of approach are limited to documentary sources that attempt to address the meaning of his writings. Thus, the analysis of the content of his writings is applied in order to understand his expressions. In other words, if Bennabi, as the subject of this study, is no longer alive, he can be studied only through the records of his activities, through what his contemporaries mention about him, or through the writings he has left us.[34] Accordingly, this study attempts to uncover the underlying structure of Bennabi's approach, and to look to his various conceptions as a unit or system in order to gain an in-depth understanding based on M*u*. Furthermore, the use of content analysis may help to relate to the various terms used by Bennabi to formulate his approach in tackling the different dimensions of the phenomenon of civilization.

Consequently, the analysis of Bennabi's writings, as well as other sources, will be put in the context of finding the socio-intellectual foundations of his approach to civilization, that is, to limit the analysis to the main issues and the main context of the present study because in content analysis, as mentioned by Krippendorff, the author has to "define the boundaries beyond which its analysis does not extend".[35]

(3) Some Operational Definitions

Some terms and concepts used to deal with the proposed issue are considered key tools to research and develop a clear understanding of its whole body. Therefore, in addition to the terms related directly to Mu, i.e., internal-social, internal-intellectual, external-social and external-intellectual, the author attempts to state other operational definitions which are key terms to be employed in the study. They are as follows:

(a) Paradigm
The term "paradigm" is first introduced by Thomas Kuhn in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. However, according to Masterman, he uses paradigm in no less than twenty-one different senses in his book.[36] The author does not intend to enter the debate around the philosophical status of Kuhn's perspective, or the controversy surrounding its applicability to the present study. The author is of the view that the debate about that issue would take many pages and would be peripheral to the task of the topic of the present study. Accordingly, despite the controversy, the author will simply assume the usefulness of such a concept for this study.

In this regard, the term paradigm will be used as the fundamental image of the subject matter within such a field of research, or the way of looking at things, a shared assumption which governs the outlook of an epoch and its approach to a scientific problem. It serves to define what should be studied, what questions should be asked, how they should be asked, and what rules should be followed in interpreting the answers obtained.

A paradigm is the broadest unit of consensus within a science or field of research and serves to differentiate one scientific community (or sub-community) from another. It subsumes, defines, and inter-relates the exemplars, theories and methods, and instruments that exist within it.[37]

(b) Macro-Micro Continuum

Social reality is divided into levels. There is no hard and fast limit between micro and macro level: they serve as an epistemological device to be able to deal with the complexity of the social world.[38] Therefore, the notion of levels of social reality (macro and micro) does not imply that social reality is really divided into levels. In fact, it is best viewed as a wide range of social entities in constant flux. In order to deal with this enormous complexity, sociologists have abstracted various levels for sociological analysis. Thus, the levels are sociological constructs rather than states really existing in the social world.[39] The continuum of micro-macro starts from individual thought and action at the most micro level, and as it proceeds towards the larger society it becomes macro, such as the organizations, the societies and the world at large.[40]

(c) Schools

The term "school" is widely used in the history and sociology of socio-logical thought. It refers to groupings of academicians and researchers who may or may not constitute an identifiable administrative unit. It takes many forms; a group of contemporaries adopting similar ideas (basic presuppositions, core theories, subject areas, or a combination of these). The notion of school is also used in the sense of a group of the-orists sharing the same philosophy; or of an identifiable theoretical or philosophical perspective to which significant figures in history may be attached; or a general theoretical orientation, a tradition or paradigm. In this regard we can mention the four famous Schools of Islamic Jurisprudence (Hanafi, Shafi'i, Maliki and Hanbali), the Chicago School, the Frankfurt School, Khaldunian School, the Cyclical School of history, etc.[41] The term "school" will be used in the same context in the present study.

(4) The Sources

The main sources of the present study are divided into two categories. First, are the original works of Bennabi who published all his books under one title, *Mushkilat al-Hadarah* (Problems of Civilization), with specific subtitles for each book. The authentic edition which was published in Arabic by Dar al-Fikr will be the principal reference, while translated editions in English will be consulted whenever the need arises.

The second category includes works on sociology and its various branches, philosophy of history, anthropology, history, and other social sciences will be used and consulted in analyzing Bennabi's framework and his approach to civilization.

The author will also use other works as secondary sources, especially works on Bennabi's life or thought, works on the different schools and trends of thought that have a relationship with his works, and history books that recorded the political, social, and cultural events of his time.

Civilization:
Concept and Approaches

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present a general overview of civilization in terms of its concept and approaches. That is, if we are to speak of Bennabi's concept of civilization and his approach to it, we must have at the outset some definition of what we mean by "civilization" as well as what we mean by "being civilized".

Furthermore, the author argues that a clear distinction must be drawn between civilization as a multi-faceted phenomenon, and its partial aspects. In tackling the issue of civilization, in general, it is important also to mention the existence of inadequate approaches to "civilization" founded on one or two aspects of the phenomenon while ignoring the other aspects.

Thus, the body of this chapter is an exposition and discussion of these approaches. The author also argues that an interdisciplinary approach is most productive for both theory and research in civilization because of its ability to cover all aspects of the phenomenon.

For the purpose of the present study, whose main concern is to undertake a metatheoretical journey, it is important to have a somewhat more exact definition of the term in order to provide a framework for analyzing Bennabi's conception of civilization. In fact, he developed his approach in relation to internal/external and intellectual/social factors. An investigation into the development of the concept of

"civilization" and the development of approaches to its issues through-out history seems to be of great importance. It can help to identify the dominant paradigms and schools that have had a leading role in estab-lishing the field of civilization studies. However, to undertake such a task two difficulties arise.

First, there is a problem in determining the concept of civilization which arises from the diversity of cultural and linguistic traditions in various civilizations, especially those of Western and Muslim tradi-tions. In line with the metatheoretical approach applied to the present study, the author finds it useful to discuss the concept of civilization in both traditions. In fact, there are two reasons for doing so; on the one hand, Bennabi wrote both in Arabic and French, a matter that makes his work relevant to both the cultural and scientific traditions of the Islamic and Western languages. On the other hand, the term civiliza-tion has other synonyms used in different languages of the Muslim world.[1] Therefore, to put Bennabi's concept of civilization in its con-text, it seems necessary to examine the different meanings and evalu-ations assigned to the concept of "civilization" in both traditions.

The second difficulty lies in the controversy between the various definitions assigned to civilization by different writers. For instance, historians, sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists, and others define civilization in different ways with respect to their areas of con-centration.[2] They differ on the concept, the essential ingredients of civilization, and its course in history. Hence, it is useful to provide a general overview of the different perspectives used to approach civi-lization in different fields of research.[3]

The following sections elaborate on both the changing vocabulary of the concept of civilization and the various approaches to it.

THE CONCEPT OF CIVILIZATION: A CHANGING VOCABULARY

It would be pleasant, as Braudel asserts, to be able to define the word "civilization" simply and precisely, as one defines a straight line, a tri-angle or a chemical element. The term "civilization" is widely used by historians, anthropologists, and other workers in the social sciences,

but has no single, fixed meaning. Thus, any discussion of the concept must begin with the question of definition.

Unfortunately, the humanities and the social sciences have yet to define their terms and concepts as precisely as the natural sciences because of the complexity of the social phenomena which the social sciences, in particular, take as the subject matter for their investigation[4]. Furthermore, within the social sciences there are frequent variations in the meaning of the simplest words, according to the thought that uses and informs them.

The previous passage suggests what is generally meant by the term civilization, but the meaning assigned to "civilization" within Western and Muslim scientific traditions may contribute to specify what is generally meant by civilization.

(1) Civilization in the Western Scientific Tradition

(a) The Literal Definition of Civilization

Literally speaking, the root of the term "civilization" in Greek is to lie outstretched, and to be located. Thus, a city lies, and the citizen makes his/her bed on which s/he must lie down. The term also derives from the Latin word *civites* which means a city, and *Civis* who is the inhabitant of a city, or *Civilis* that means civility or what is related to the inhabitant of a city. It also means a citizen.[5]

Despite its literal Greek-Latin origins, the word "civilization" is relatively new. It emerged late, and unobtrusively, in 18th century France. It was formed from "civilized" and "to civilize", which had long existed and were in general use in 16th century Europe.[6]

In modern English, it derived its meanings from its Greek-Latin roots as well as the cultural traditions of the West. In this regard, *The Oxford English Dictionary* gives a wide range of meanings for the term "civilization" and its derivations: "a developed or advanced state of human society; a particular stage or a particular type of this". It is also the humanization of humans in society … to civilize is to bring out of a state of barbarism, to instruct in the arts of life and thus elevate in the scale of humanity; to enlighten, refine, and polish. In another instance, to civilize is to domesticate. It is the act of domestication. Furthermore, civilization is the action or process of civilizing or being civilized.

Another term which is derived from civilization is "civility." The latter has many meanings such as conformity to the principles of social order, behavior befitting a citizen, good citizenship. Civility also means behavior proper to the interaction of civilized people, ordinary courtesy or politeness, as opposed to rudeness of behavior.[7]

The Oxford Thesaurus helps to clarify the meanings of "civilization" in English. Five terms are interlinked: the "city" which is the metropolis, the municipality, the town; the "citizen" who is the resident, the inhabitant and the dweller of the city or the town; "civility" which means courtesy, politeness, respect, urbanity, amiability; "civilization" which has the meaning of refinement, cultivation, enlightenment, edification, sophistication, polished, culture, mores, and customs; finally "civilize" which means enlightened, refined, polished, edified, educated and cultured, and includes the verbs to tame, to domesticate, to broaden, to elevate, and to acculturate.[8]

The various meanings revolve around a few concepts such as city, dwelling, politeness and refinement, cultured and the elevation of the human condition, as well as the existence of a group of people who are involved in acquiring such characteristics to enable them to be at a higher stage of development, according to social order or customs.

The inherited meanings were, however, joined by others. Indeed, since the 18th century the term civilization has been accompanied by different and broader connotations acquired throughout the last two centuries in the civilizational history of the West, and have influenced peoples' concept of civilization in Europe, in particular, and in the West, in general.[9]

(b) The Terminological Definition of Civilization
From the number of definitions that have been given to "civilization" in *The Oxford English Dictionary* and *The Oxford Thesaurus*, it is obvious that they reflect the impact of cultural traditions and the civilizational history of the West. A historical conceptual analysis may help us to understand the historical development of the term within European history.

(1b) Civilization as possession of good manners and advanced stage of growth

The idea of civilization was first conceived and developed by 18th century French writers such as Voltaire (1694–1778) and Mirabeau (1749–1791), and then borrowed by English writers[10] to oppose the concept of barbarity or "barbarism."[11] A civilized society is the society that possesses good manners and an advanced stage of development. The idea of civilization here refers to the state of being civilized, that is, to possess good manners, politeness courtesy and mores which are signs of an advanced stage of the human condition. This is opposite to barbarity or barbarism.

It was during the zeal of European worldwide expansion in the 18th and 19th centuries that Western powers promoted the civilization of the West as the standard of human development. In this context, civilization used to refer to achievements in such aesthetic and intellectual pursuits as architecture, painting, literature, sculpture, music, philosophy, and science, and to the success which a people has in establishing control over their human and physical environment.[12]

However, the degree of civilization, according to Clough, is related to the extent to which a group of people provides physical and social security for its members. If a group of people produces aesthetic and intellectual works of high merit and provides physical and social security for its members, then they can be considered civilized. Conversely, the less a group of people realizes either quality or quantity as tenets of civilization, the less civilized it is.[13] Clough introduces the concept of physical and social security as two main factors playing an important role in the civilizing process.

In mentioning the 19th century vocabulary regarding the use of civilization, Huntington writes:

> The concept of civilization provided a standard by which to judge societies, and during the 19th century, Europeans devoted much intellectual, diplomatic, and political energy to elaborating the criteria by which non-European societies might be judged.[14]

In line with the previous definitions, Tylor defined civilization as a "degree of advanced culture, in which the arts and sciences, as well as political life are well developed."[15] In Tylor's definition, "civilization" is accompanied by another word, "culture", which was first introduced to the English language by Tylor who used "culture" and "civilization" as equivalent terms.[16]

Childe was among modernist anthropologists who conceptualizes civilization according to the progressive thought of the 19th century. He sees the essential characteristics of civilization as internal social hierarchies, specialization, cities and large populations and the growth of mathematics and writing.[17]

The 18th and 19th century thought in Europe confined civilization to Europe, and conceived it as "the ideal" rather than "an ideal" for human development. In line with this, Europe promoted itself as the civilization in contrast to pre-civilized societies outside Europe. Therefore, civilization was used in its singular form because in the European modernist thought of that time Europe was synonymous with civilization and vice versa.[18]

Aware of their bias, Western intellectuals tried to avoid the use of "civilization" in its singular form, especially after the development of cultural anthropological studies on various peoples and societies of the world outside Europe. Hence, the singular use of civilization gave way to the plural use of the term.

Accordingly, as Chandler writes, civilization lost its prestige, and the recognition of the existence of many civilizations paved the way for two notions regarding the understanding of civilization. First, Europe moved from "the ideal" to being "an ideal" among many ideals, a civilization side by side with other civilizations. Second, the use of civilization as an advanced stage of human development gave way to the concept of civilization as a cultural identity, which distinguishes such society from another and denotes a way of organizing that soci-ety. In other words, civilization acquired two meanings: a specific way to organize human society, a socioeconomic system, and. a way of thinking about reality, a cognitive structure.[19]

The assumption provided by Chandler was the hallmark of the debate of the late 19th century upon the realization that Europe was

not the ideal civilization, rather, one of the civilizations of the world. Therefore, civilization began to be understood on two levels: if used in its singular sense, it denotes the concept of a universal framework for understanding human conditions, and the course of historical transformations witnessed by humankind since the dawn of history. When used in its plural sense, it denotes the identities of various societies or cultures.[20]

The 18th and 19th century concept of civilization in Europe was partly due to the development of cultural anthropological studies on various societies outside Europe by European scientists. It was partly also due to German intellectual tradition and German intellectuals who contributed to the development of the term "civilization", and the following section is a discussion of the German contribution to the development of the concept of civilization in Western cultural traditions.

(2b) The German influence on the development of the concept

While French and English writers developed the concept of civilization to mean an advanced stage of development and a standard for other societies to follow, German thinkers distinguished between civilization and *Kultur* (culture). In fact, German writers and thinkers, as well as philosophers and historians, stressed the uniqueness of German culture; they considered that every nation has its own civilization and culture. Therefore, from their input, civilization becomes plural.[21]

Many German, Roman, Hebrew, American, Japanese, Chinese, Arab, or Egyptian writers began to write about the course of different civilizations instead of talking about the universal process of civilization as in the French and English tradition of the 18th century.

Norbert Elias, in *The Civilizing Process*, stood as one of the most prominent thinkers who undertook an investigation of the concept of civilization within the Western scientific tradition. For Elias, "civilization" refers to a wide variety of facts. It includes the level of technology, the type of manners, the development of scientific knowledge, and religious ideas and customs. It can refer to the type of dwelling, or the manner in which men and women live together, to the form of judicial punishment, or to the way in which food is prepared.[22]

In other words, for Elias, it is somewhat difficult to summarize everything that can be described as civilization. Although he developed his concept of civilization through his study of French society during the age of the revolution, he examined the genesis of the term and undertook a comparative study in both the German and the French-English traditions.

The German concept of *Kultur*, according to Elias, refers essentially to intellectual, artistic, and religious "facts", and has a tendency to draw a sharp dividing line between facts of this sort, on the one hand, and political, economic, and social "facts", on the other. Civilization in French and English usage describes a process, or at least the result of a process. It refers to something which is constantly in motion, constantly moving forward. The German concept of *Kultur* has a different relationship to motion. It refers to human products which are like "flowers of the field," to works of art, books, religious or philosophical systems, in which the individuality of a people expresses itself.[23]

There is common meaning which indicates the social dimension of both concepts. Both bear the stamp, not of sects or families but of whole populations, or perhaps only of certain classes of people.[24] This denotes that civilization is the accomplishment of a society, while *Kultur* refers to the dynamic character of civilization and intellectuality.

In line with Elias's notion of civilization, Huntington, in his article *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order,* sees a civilization as a cultural entity on a higher level. He considers that civilization is the highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity people have short of that which distinguishes humans from other species.[25] Not only that, but throughout history, civilizations have provided the broadest identifications for people.[26]

An expert in international politics with close connections to the United States Department of Foreign Affairs, his aim seems to be the shift of international relations into the use of civilizations as units of analysis and entities instead of nation-states and ideological blocks.

He speaks of "levels of identity" because, as he claims, villages, regions, ethnic groups, nationalities, religious groups, all have distinct cultures at different levels of cultural heterogeneity. But a civilization is the broadest cultural entity.[27] The nation-state seems to be outdated

according to Huntington, and there must be a shift in the concern to a broad concept that can help policy makers to deal with it.

For Huntington, there is a broad agreement among students of civilization about the existence of central propositions concerning the nature, identity, and dynamics of civilizations. Thus, most researchers agree that civilizations are the broadest cultural entities. They are comprehensive, that is, none of their constituent units can be fully understood without reference to the encompassing civilization. Civilizations are mortal but also long-lived; they evolve, adapt, and are the most enduring of human associations. They are dynamic; they rise and fall; they merge and divide; they also disappear. Finally, scholars generally agree on the identification of major civilizations in history and on those that exist in the modern world.[28]

What is important in Huntington's conception is that he puts civilization in the context of history and development throughout time. He also combines civilization with religion, a central defining characteristic of civilization:[29]

> [O]f all the objective elements which define civilizations, however, the most important usually is religion … to a very large degree, the major civilizations in human history have been closely identified with the world's great religions.[30]

On the distinctive place religion plays in the formation and development of civilizations, he shares the views of Ibn Khaldun, Toynbee, Bennabi, and other scholars of civilization. To sum up Huntington's notion, civilization is a cultural entity based mainly on religion, historical process, and has space-time location. The latter helps distinguish between many civilizations throughout history.

Before concluding the discussion of the various connotations of the term "civilization" in Western traditions, it is important to mention that there are a number of meanings in common use today. Diversity in meanings shows the dynamism of civilization, the complexity of the phenomenon, and the wide range of connotations which civilization may have within one cultural tradition.

(2) Civilization in the Muslim Scientific Tradition

After discussing the changing vocabulary of "civilization" in the West, a discussion of the term in the Islamic scientific tradition (Muslim) may help to understand it from another point of view. In this context, literal and terminological definitions are discussed in order to follow the line of development.

(a) The Literal Meaning of Civilization

In Arabic, the current term *Hadarah* is used as a synonym of the English word "civilization". In the famous traditional dictionary of the Arabic language *Lisan al-'Arab* it means presence as opposed to absence…sedentary vis-a-vis nomadic Bedouin. It has a relationship with the term *Hadirah* which means a city or big community.[31] It also means staying in a city as opposed to nomadic Bedouin, also the inhabitant of the cities and villages.[32]

In *An Arabic English Lexicon*, Lane mentions that the Arabic term *Hadari* is used to mean a land or house inhabited, peopled, and well peopled. It means a land in a flourishing state, in a state contrary to desolation, waste or ruin. Another meaning is a land colonized and cultivated, or well cultivated. In addition, it means a house in a state of repair.[33] This definition denotes two aspects of civilization in the Arabic context: first, stabilizing or settling in a place or land or house, and second, civilization is a state of development and richness.

Hadarah also means "a building, a structure, an edifice; or perhaps the act of building."[34] This definition emphasizes the significance of structure and the act of building. In other words, civilization can be a construction process … and the act of establishing a prosperous life for humankind.

When humans no longer have to submit to brute necessity but begin instead to dominate their environment, they are at last in a position to remold their patterns of living, and to transmit a common social heritage. When this process continues to the point where men exert a wide control over nature and have developed a highly complex culture pattern – including an urban structure superimposed upon an agricultural base – they can be said to possess a civilization.

In the *Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, the reader finds a thorough analysis of the word *Hadarah* and its related derived words.[35] In this book, six terms are interlinked and may help to clarify the meanings of civilization in Arabic usage. First, there is *hadara* (verb) which means to be present or be in the presence. The second term is *hadarah* (noun) which means to be settled, sedentary (in a civilized region, as opposed to leading a nomadic existence). Third, *hadar* (noun) which means a civilized region with towns and villages and a settled population (as opposed to desert, steppe), settled population, town dwellers. Fourth is *hadari* (adj.) which means settled, sedentary, resident, not nomadic, non-Bedouin, urban, and town dweller. Fifth is *hadirah* (noun) which means a civilization, culture, settledness, sedentariness. Sixth is *hadirah* (noun), which means a capital city, metropolis, city (as a center of civilization).[36]

Other terms which have close links with *hadrah* are *madaniyyah, tamaddun* and *tamdin*. In fact, the word *tamaddun* is derived from the Arabic word Madinah (literally, "city" or "town") and *tamaddun* (literally, urbanization). Close to the latter terms, there is also the term *madaniyyah* which literally means urbanism.[37] The three interrelated terms of city, urbanization, and urbanism denote that the city is the starting point of the urbanization process to achieve the state of urbanism. In the same context, *madinah* and *hadirah* are identical, and both mean a city and a town.

However, regarding the modern use of the terms in the Muslim tradition, there are some differences. Since the late 19th century, modern thinkers and writers in the Muslim world have been using certain terms in contrast with the term civilization used by the Europeans. They used a variety of terms such as '*Umran, hadarah, madaniyyah, nahdah*, *tamaddun*, and *madaniyat*.[38] Despite the different terms used to denote the English-French term of civilization, the most famous and popularly used term in Arabic is *hadarah*. Beg notes that the popular term for civilization in some Muslim countries is not *hadarah* but *tamaddun* or *tamadun*. The latter is widely used in Malay culture and language.[39]

The first changes were brought to the Arab society by the coming of Islam, especially by the migration (hijrah) of the Prophet Muhammad

(SAAS)[40] from Makkah to Madinah. He changed the name of the city of Yathrib to Madinah (a city). Furthermore, he made changes in the foundations of social relationships. Instead of tribal-based, relationships were now based on the religious idea of brotherhood that brought together different people from different social strata and different ethnic groups to form a new web of social relationships. These changes in the social relationships transformed the culture of people from tribal paganism into an ideas-based civil Islamic culture, which was input for a new civilizing process and a new Islamic entity.

The city is the starting point of any civilizing process, and there are arguments amongst archaeologists, pre-historians, ancient historians and sociologists over the origins of civilization and the place of cities within the civilizing process.[41] Thus, the Prophet, as the founder of a new society and a new civilization, realized that there must be some development of urban society so that the culture is not nomadic, tribal, dispersed, and unable to leave significant physical evidence of its presence. In this regard, he established the city of Madinah on the first day of his migration because it was meant to be the nucleus of the transformation of civilization that took place after the advent of Islam.

In terms of culture, it is evident that the notion of "city", indicative of a discrete way of life, was available throughout the history of the Muslim world since the establishment of Madinah. All civilizations have developed significant central places in which key social functions are located, and where populations have congregated. We can mention the establishment of Kufah, Basrah, Damascus, Baghdad, Cairo, Bukhara and other cities in the Muslim world as centers of civilized sedentary life. Many Islamic traditions focus on the city (or *madinah*) with its mosque, bathhouse, and markets as the locality wherein a devout life can be achieved.[42]

(b) The Terminological Definition of Civilization

The definition of the term "civilization" within the Muslim cultural traditions witnessed two stages. It was first conceived by Ibn Khaldun in the early 14th century, and the late 19th century witnessed the second stage. The following two sections are a discussion of both stages.

(1b) The first stage

The term civilization was first conceived in the Muslim world as early as the 14th century CE, 8th century of the Muslim era by Ibn Khaldun. He introduced three terms: the first two are *hadarah* and *'umran,* comparable with the western term civilization, and the third is *'Ilm al-'Umran* which could be translated as "the science of civilization". He considered civilization as a quality peculiar to humans. This means that human beings have to dwell and settle together in cities and hamlets for the comfort of companionship and for the satisfaction of human needs.[43] He also gave another meaning to the term civilization as "the necessary character of human social organization."[44] With this definition, Ibn Khaldun focused on the social dimension of the term, while in the previous definition he focused on the collective settlement in cities. Ibn Khaldun's concept underlies the social dimension as well as the dynamic character of the phenomenon of civilization in the course of human development.

In mentioning Ibn Khaldun, one must not neglect the contributions of other Muslim historians and philosophers who came both before and after him. Names like al-Farabi (259–339 AH / 872–950 CE), al-Tabari (224–310 AH / 838–922 CE), al-Mas'udi (d. 346 AH / 957 CE), Ibn Hazm (d. 456 AH / 1063 CE), and others were of great importance for Ibn Khaldun in developing his theory of civilization, but unlike him they did not develop particular theories in this regard. Indeed, Ibn Khaldun is an outstanding figure in the rise and fall of civilization, and can be classified as representing the first stage in the development of the Islamic concept of civilization.[45]

(2b) The second stage

The second stage in the development of the concept of civilization among Muslim scientists, scholars, academicians, activists, and intellectuals in general began in the late 19th century with the first confrontations with modern Europe, and the emergence of the Islamic revival.

In this stage, two trends emerged in the Arab world to interpret the term "civilization". In the first, we find writers like Rifaah al-Tahtawi (1801–1873), Muhammad Abduh (1849–1905) and Rashid Reda

(1865–1935) translating it into the Arabic term *madaniyyah,* and its synonym *tamaddun* to mean civilization.[46] In the second trend, in the second quarter of the 20th century, the term *hadarah* was used to mean civilization. It became popular among scientific and intellectual circles in the Arab world, and Bennabi was a pioneer in choosing it to denote "civilization" since the early days of his intellectual career begun with the publication of *Le phénomène coranique* (The Qur'anic Phenomenon) in 1947. Furthermore, Bennabi gave the series the title *Mushkilat al-Hadarah* (Problems of Civilization) with a specific title for each book of the series.

In other languages of the Muslim world, the term used is *madaniyyah* or its derivations. Beg notes that:

> The Persian intellectuals have coined two terms for civilization, namely, *madaniyah* and *tamadun*… the Turks, on the other hand, use the term *medeniyet* and also *medeniyeti* in the meaning of civilization… in East Africa, the speakers of the Swahili language have been using the term *Utamaduni* (derived from Arabic *tamadun*) as the term for civilization… in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh there is no universally accepted term for civilization. The speakers of Urdu and Bengali have been using two words (sometimes interchangeably) to express the sense of culture and civilization, viz., *tahzib* (*tahdhib*) and *tamadun*. Some Pakistani Urdu lexicographers use the term *tahzib* in the dual sense of culture and civilization, but they restrict the use of *tamadun* in the sense of civilization… Bangali Muslim intellectuals have used the word *tamadun* in the sense of culture. They also use the word *tahzib* in the sense of civilization… on the other hand, the Malays of Malaysia and Indonesia unanimously use the word *tamaddun* (popularly spelt as *tamadun*) as the term for civilization.[47]

Taking into consideration the different terms used to mean civilization in the Muslim cultural traditions, it is important to mention that all the terms used are derived from Arabic. However, despite the differences in the use of the terms, their meanings tend to converge to denote civilization, with a specific focus for each term on certain aspects of civilization.

It is also worth mentioning that at first the modern use was *tamadun* and *madaniyat*, but after rediscovering Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah* and influenced by him, Arabs preferred the term *hadarah* while non-Arab Muslims preferred the use of *madaniyat* and *tamadun* which are close in meaning.

In the quest for an appropriate term for civilization in the Muslim scientific and cultural tradition, *hadarah*, *tamaddun* or *tamadun* are the terms used. However, Ibn Khaldun's term *hadarah* is the most appropriate one to express the concept of civilization in its modern sense. Linguistically, *hadarah* is related to the civilizing and urbanization processes. It is also related to the city and its spirit. It has social content, as well as connotations of presence, the sedentary and the inhabited where social relationships and interchange will develop. People cooperate, organize themselves, and build cities and institutions. Thus, *hadarah*, in its linguistic meaning, focuses upon the social aspect. Civilization cannot emerge unless there are social relationships among people resulting in cooperation, organization, and order in a specific place.

Both the Muslim and the Western use agree on certain rudimentary elements of civilization which are the presence of the city, order or organization, and the sedentary life of its inhabitants. This is because the human being, using Ibn Khaldun's words, is a social being by nature.[48] In other words, he has the desire to live in an organized and orderly community. This is part of the human instinct that governs behavior in its social and civilizational sphere, and has always been an objective throughout the history of humankind.

(3) Conclusion

To sum up the different definitions attributed to the term "civilization," it is important to mention that they agree on certain fundamental elements, such as the presence of several (though not necessarily all) conditions within a society or groups of independent societies, and some that could be used as criteria for any society to be called a "civilization."[49] The following conditions can be deduced:

First, there will be some development of urban society, that is, of city life, so that the culture is not nomadic, dispersed, and thus able to leave significant physical evidence of its presence.

Second, there will be some form of government by which people administer their political needs and responsibilities.

Third, a form of literacy will develop, so that one group may communicate with another, and more importantly, one generation may communicate with another in writing.

Fourth, human beings will become toolmakers, able to transform, however modestly, their physical environment, their social, intellectual, economic, political, moral, as well as spiritual lives.

Fifth, some degree of specialization of functions will have begun, usually at the work place, so that pride, place, and purpose function as cohesive elements in the society.

Sixth, a network of social relationships will have emerged to transform spiritual values into social values.

Last, there will be a belief system and concept of God or a higher being, though not necessarily through revealed religion, from which people obtain the authenticity and the raison d'être for their existence, as well as the vision which leads them beyond everyday life. In other words, there will be an outlook based on religious ideas in its broadest sense.

APPROACHES TO CIVILIZATION

The previous section denotes that throughout history the study of civilization attracted many researchers and fields of research. Therefore, the causes, emergence, rise, interactions, achievements, decline, and fall of civilizations have been explored at length by distinguished historians, sociologists, anthropologists, philosophers, and others.

Although there is broad agreement on key propositions concerning the nature, identity, and dynamics of civilizations, there exist differences in perspective, methodology, focus, and concepts which pervade the various approaches.

In the following sections the author will discuss various approaches to civilization within the two dominant paradigms of philosophy of

history and social sciences with their two sub paradigms, or broad perspectives of anthropology and sociology.

The presentation will be more general to provide a framework for understanding the issue of civilization in general, and Bennabi's conception in particular. (For a specific analysis of the paradigms, the schools of thought and their approaches to civilization with a comparative analysis of Bennabi's approach, see Chapter Seven).

(1) The Approach of Philosophy of History

Philosophy of History was born out of the human endeavor to give rational explanations to events. It is an attempt to discover the law that regulates them, and to trace a meaning in their operation that introduces logical order into events of the past, illuminates the present, and casts some light into the future.[50] In other words, while history is a "first order" study of past actions, events and situations, philosophy of history is a "second order" study, the study of the study of these topics. It can be considered a "meta" study, which means it does not deal directly with events, actions, and situations; rather, it is an indirect study that seeks to explain and elaborate answers about the past. Therefore, philosophers of history typically aim to arrive at comprehensive views of the process of history as a whole. They view themselves as synthesizing or generalizing on the basis of detailed data supplied by more "workaday" historians.[51]

Although there is an academic distinction between the subject matter of historians and philosophers of history, it is difficult to find a historian who does not have a sort of philosophy about his/her historical writings. Thus, there is no sharp border between the subject matter of the two disciplines. It is difficult to treat history without taking into consideration some philosophical questions regarding the causes of events, the course of history, the process of change, and the forces behind the movement of history.

Historians seek to describe not only what happened in the past but also why society changes. Any research of this kind raises a number of fundamental questions. The first, pertains to the actors of history in terms of the role of providence, the individual, and the group in history.

The second deals with the presence of universal patterns in historical movements, the extent to which historical events are unique or fit into patterns. The third addresses the problem of whether there is progress in human affairs, a decline, or a cyclical movement of ups and downs.

The answers to these questions vary with different philosophical views of humankind, and give rise to many schools of thought, which in turn may vary in their approaches.

There are many schools of thought and views on the question of the actors in history. Some emphasize the presence of divine will, such as St. Augustine (354–430) in his *City of God,* in which he maintained that God's purpose is revealed in the unfolding of historical events. Beginning with the Old Testament and up to his own time, he traced the working of divine providence.

Others minimized the role of providence while exalting the role of the individual in the historical process. The latter was the case of Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881) who considered that "the decisive and constructive forces in history are its great men and heroes."[52]

Some schools discounted this generalization by emphasizing the impact of economic and other impersonal forces (environment, economic products). The best example is the Marxist thought which emphasizes the pre-eminence of economic factors in historical change.

Some philosophers see history as progressive. For example, Plato, Herder, Hegel, and many other European thinkers tried in different ways to combine the Judeo-Christian views of time and history as progress in a straight line with the classical notion of historical cycles.[53]

Cyclical views, too, have frequently been maintained, both in antiquity and later. Vico (1668–1744), who is regarded by Renaissance scholars as the pioneer of new science, took this line, as did Toynbee, who tended to apply the empirical method to history, in so far as he holds that civilization, even though it does not exactly have a fixed life span, nevertheless exhibits a common pattern of development and decay.[54]

Answers also vary according to which units to adopt to analyze and write history. Although the products of historical scholarship have become increasingly sophisticated and numerous, the problem of how

to write world history, and which unit of analysis is the most accept-able have remained unresolved. The need to find a solution, however, has grown increasingly toward a global history.

Consequently, in the absence of a generally accepted conceptual scheme which could provide a framework of unity, those who have attempted to write world history have so far used three approaches. They used the model of series (sequence) of cultures or civilizations in which all cultures (civilizations) are subject to the same developmental pattern; the progress model; and the simple side-by-side histories of humankind's diverse peoples.[55]

As a matter of fact, the second and the third approach were domi-nant since the beginning of historiography. The works of Plato, St. Augustine, and the early Christian historians can be mentioned for the second approach, and Hegelians and Marxists, who considered history to be either linear retrogressive or linear progressive, belong to the same model. The third is an ancient approach to historiography, yet it is still supported by historians who focus on national and regional, as well as racial and ethnic histories.

The most developed approach is the first one, which is based on the sequence model. If compared with the other two, it is an attempt to break new ground in writing world history, and finding the raison d'être for its course. It has emerged as a result of efforts by the great scholars of civilizations such as Ibn Khaldun, Vico, Spengler, Toynbee, Elias, Braudel, and others.

Ibn Khaldun, for example, developed his cyclical view of history by studying the history of various dynasties in the Muslim world, Europe, and Asia both during and before his time. His concern about under-standing the mechanisms of the rise and fall of states and dynasties led him first to detect in the history of those states and dynasties a pattern of conquest from the desert, followed by the corruption of the rulers as a result of luxury. After three generations, corruption prepared the way for a fresh conquest from the desert, to begin the cycle anew. Second, in the case of his society, he developed his theory of cycles which considers the cycle of rise and fall as the pattern of historical change at the level of states and dynasties.[56]

Three centuries after Ibn Khaldun, Vico, in *The New Science*, presented a cyclical theory of history of all nations. Influenced by the Platonic ideal state, he sees that the real history is the "ideal, eternal history" which has three stages: the "age of the gods," to which belong the earliest institutions such as religion, family, and burial; the "age of the heroes," in which heads of families united against the class of serfs; and the "age of men," in which the plebe finally established its human rights and the legal principle of equity. The affirmation of private interests led to a decay of public spirit and the consequent breakdown of institutions, until finally there was a return to the barbarism of the state of nature, and the cycle began again on a higher level with the dawn of Christianity.[57]

Vico's most important contribution to the study of history is his attempt to discover a general pattern in world history. He addressed certain methodological rules to study historical change.

Vico held the view that certain periods of history had a general character that reappeared in other periods, so two different periods may have the same general character, and it is possible to argue analogically from one to the other.

Those periods tended to recur in the same order. The age of gods is followed by the age of heroes, which in turn is followed by the age of men. This is then followed by a decline into new barbarism and the age of gods. Vico explained his cycle in the following way: first, the guiding principle of history is brute strength; then valiant or heroic strength; then valiant justice; then brilliant originality; then constructive reflection; and lastly, a kind of wastrel.

This cyclical movement is not a mere rotation of history through a cycle of fixed phases; it is not a circle but a spiral.[58] Therefore, one may agree that Vico is a progressivist, and a cyclical thinker at the same time because he sees the cyclical movement not in circular form but in spiral form. That is to say, although it is circular, it is progressing in a spiral way and not returning to the same point that it started from.

Spengler presented world history as the story of "high" cultures (civilizations), of which so far there have been eight: Indian, Babylonian, Chinese, Egyptian, Islamic, Mexican, Classical, and Western. Based on his view that civilizations or cultures are an organic entity

with a life cycle of a determined length and with no purpose beyond their unfolding, he saw that high cultures were those among the many cultures that, because of their special dynamics, brought forth outstanding achievements. After their creative careers ended, they remained in a static state.[59] To explain the rise and fall of civilizations, he used terms such as "souls of cultures," "uniform cultural life spans," and organicist "organicist parallels." Spengler preferred the use of the term "culture" for civilization in the German tradition.[60]

For his part, Toynbee, the English historian and philosopher of civilization, viewed world history as a sequence of civilizations. The intelligible units of historical study are not nations or periods but civilizations.[61] He also considered civilizations to be the result of a dialectic relationship between a challenge and a response. He applied his theory to the civilizations of the world. So, he identified, analyzed, described, and examined the rise and fall of more than twenty civilizations in the course of human history.[62] Lastly, he was of the opinion that the religions of the world provided the soil from which civilizations grew.[63]

(2) The Approach of the Social Sciences

Compared with the traditional paradigm of Philosophy of History with its various approaches to civilization, the paradigm of social sciences is a newly emerging paradigm. Within the social sciences' paradigm, there are different sub-paradigms, approaches, and schools that are interrelated, like anthropology and sociology. Sociology includes historical sociology, macro-sociology, and the sociology of change. There is no fixed boundary between them, inasmuch as they deal with the same phenomena (cultural as well as social phenomena),[64] and they are from the same family, that is the social sciences. Nonetheless, it is important to analyze them with respect to the issue of civilization in order to examine their contributions to its study.

(a) The Approach of Anthropology
The first social science to address the study of human civilization and culture was Anthropology.

The British anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor (1832–1917) was the first scholar in modern times to contribute to the establishment

of anthropology as a discipline. Influenced by the intellectual debates of the late 19th century which had been sparked by Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, he profoundly influenced the very beginnings of anthropology and its subject matter.[65] Central to Tylor's contribution was his definition of culture. For him:

> culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.[66]

For Tylor, the founding father of anthropology, civilization and culture are synonymous, especially in the ethnological sense which is anthropology's most important addition to the social sciences, and the translation of other cultures' experiences are anthropology's lasting contribution to intellectual life.[67] This culture consciousness is the focal point of anthropology, as Kroeber asserts:

> Of all the social sciences, anthropology is perhaps the most distinctively culture-conscious. It aims to investigate human culture as such: at all times, everywhere, in all its parts and aspects and workings. It looks for generalized findings as to how culture operates – literally, how human beings behave under given cultural conditions – and for the major developments of the history of culture.[68]

In the context of Tylor's concept and ethnographic framework, culture revolves around the preliterate and the prehistoric. However, the scope and subject matter of anthropology, according to Kroeber, cover respectively all times (the whole history of humanity) and cultures.

While Kroeber's claim about the subject matter of anthropology holds true throughout its history, he mentions that in its early stages, in terms of scope, it seemed preoccupied with ancient, savage, exotic and extinct peoples. It was also bounded by the spirit of 19th century Europe that was under the spell of the concept of evolution in its first flush, and of the postulate of progress at its strongest.[69]

During the 19th century, Europeans devoted much intellectual, diplomatic, and political energy to elaborating the criteria by which non-European societies might be judged sufficiently "civilized" to be accepted by the European-dominated international system.[70]

However, between the early and later stages of anthropology there have been huge developments in its concepts, methodologies, and scope. Furthermore, there have emerged many branches of anthropology, such as cultural, social, and physical anthropology. Each one of them concentrates on different typical characteristics of societies.[71]

Kroeber asserts that this is the reason for the special development of those subdivisions of anthropology known as archaeology, "the science of what is old" in the career of humanity, and ethnology, "the science of peoples" and their cultures, and life histories as groups, irrespective of their degree of advancement.[72]

Thus, when Kroeber analyzed these developments he found the reason behind this in the desire to arrive at a better understanding of all civilizations, irrespective of time and place, in the abstract, or as generalized principles, if possible.[73]

In the same context, Huntington and Brinton mention the developing idea of civilization by early anthropologists as being the opposite of the concept of "barbarism", and the bias inherited in the term. Civilized society differed from primitive society because it was settled, urban, and literate. The concept of "civilization" provided a standard by which to judge societies.

Although there have been some developments in the concept which have been applied in different ways, anthropologists have preserved the classic definition of culture given by Tylor. Therefore, the anthropological approach to civilization is included in the study of culture.

In other words, civilization, in the anthropological tradition, is the highest state of culture, or a degree of advanced culture.[74] It is also the broadest cultural identity.[75] Therefore, anthropologists in general, have approached civilization from the perspective of culture.

(b) The Approach of Sociology
Sociologists approach history from different angles, some by analyzing the origins, institutions, and functions of groups, and some attach

special importance to population factors as the criteria for judging the evolution of a given society. Others analyze societies in terms of the division of labor within them (Durkheim), or in terms of the relationships between various forces such as the spirit of Protestantism and the ethics of early modern capitalism (Weber) – or the irresistible economic forces that govern humans and determine trends in history (Marx).

Some eschew any single "theory of history". They attribute importance to the effects of the environment on social organizations and institutions, the powerful roles played not only by economic, but also by political and religious factors, and the impact exerted upon events by various outstanding personalities occupying key positions in history.

There are many sub-fields of sociology that address the study of socio-historical phenomena. Among those sub-fields are historical sociology, macrosociology, and the sociology of change.

(1b) The approach of historical sociology

It is useful to draw a distinction between two types of historical sociology. The first may be simply called the "sociology of the past". In this kind of research, the historical sociologist uses sociological concepts and theories to investigate groups of people living in a specific society during a specific period in the past. It does not differ fundamentally from research into groups living in the present; it is, simply, that documents form a larger part of the evidence than they would generally do in research into groups living in the present.[76]

The instances of the "sociology of the past" can be categorized into micro and macro levels. Norbert Elias's *The Court Society* (1983) is the best example of the sociology of the past of its micro level because it deals with a relatively closely defined place and period (France and its royal court in the century before the French revolution). For the macro level, Braudel's *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (1976) is the clearest instance.

What distinguishes the sociology of the past from the sociology of the longer-term developmental processes is that the former does not set out primarily to build developmental models of the structured processes of change.

The best example of the latter type is also Norbert Elias in *The Civilizing Process* (1994). He advances a theory of state formation based on the study of Western Europe during the last millennium. He links the formation of Western Europe to the changes in the psychological makeup undergone by individuals over time, as they become gradually more subject to the social constraints imposed by the monopolization of the means of violence by the state apparatus.[77]

Historical sociology, which focuses upon history while examining the social aspects of historical events, facts or institutions, has contributed to the study of civilization from the sociological point of view.

(2b) The approach of macrosociology

Traditionally, sociology, as defined by its proponents, is a social science concerned with the systematic study of human society. Therefore, much of the work of sociologists is devoted to the study of one or another of the many different component parts of societies (e.g., individuals, families, communities, and classes) and to specific features and problems (e.g., crime, race relations, religion, politics). However, sociologists are involved in more than these topics. They also focus on human societies themselves.[78]

The study of these components and features of societies is sometimes called microsociology, while the study of societies themselves is macrosociology.[79] For the latter Borgatta & Borgatta assert that:

> The term macro denotes large; thus, macrosociology refers to the study of large scale phenomena. This covers a broad range of topics that includes groups and collectives of varying sizes, the major organizations and institutions of one or more societies, cross-sectional or historical studies of a single society, and both comparative and historical analysis of multiple societies. At the grandest level, it may cover all human society and history.[80]

Although macrosociology is also concerned with individuals, families, classes, social problems, and all of the other parts and features of societies, it analyzes them in relation to the larger social systems – the societies of which they are part.[81] In this context, theories such as

Marxism, functionalism, and the systems theory are considered as macrosociological.[82]

In other words, macrosociology is a level of sociological analysis concerned with the analysis of whole societies, social structures at large, the global and historical processes of social life and social systems.[83] It uses, as its units of analysis, structural-level units or cases that are larger than observations of individual action and interaction.[84] In this context, civilization, as a large-scale phenomenon and historical and evolutionary long-term structured process of development, belongs to macrosociology, with its approach to the study of human societies over an extended period of time in order to understand the critical process of societal change and development.[85]

Macrosociologists include history in their subject matter. Like historians and philosophers of history, they consider that the broader the span of time they consider, the better they can understand the most basic processes of change in human life. That is why there is a "revival of interest" in macrosociology, as Nolan and Lenski have asserted. They see many reasons for this revival.

First, there is a growing recognition that the most pressing problems of our time (e.g., war, the distress of developing and underdeveloped nations, the problem of poverty, and environmental degradation) are all macrosociological problems that require macrosociological theory and research if solutions are to be found.

Second, there is a growing recognition that many microsociological problems and developments (e.g., the changing role of women, the changing nature of the family, the growing incidence of crime) cannot be understood adequately, or dealt with effectively, unless they are viewed within the context of broader societal trends.[86]

In this context, macrosociology, with its focus on units of analysis, has contributed to the study of the large-scale phenomena. It has contributed sociologically by analyzing the long-term processes, cultural systems, societies and civilization as a whole.[87]

(3b) The approach of sociology of change

Social change, as Lauer asserts, is an inclusive concept that refers to alterations in social phenomena at various levels of human life from

the individual to the global. According to Lauer, social change at the civilizational level is similar to social change at the cultural, societal, communal, institutional, organizational, interactional, and individual levels.[88]

The change at the level of civilization is socio-historical because it is social as well as taking place over an extended period of time, and it is socio-cultural because civilization, according to many scholars, is a social as well as a cultural phenomenon.[89] The civilizational phenomenon takes in consideration society, culture and history.

Therefore, many approaches within Sociology of Change have risen to tackle the issue of change, and they differ according to the aspect of civilization to be studied.

Although there is agreement about the hypothesis that social change follows a privileged, even exclusive pattern, sociologists have produced a wide range of theories about the force behind its initiation and continuity.[90] But generally, as mentioned by Lauer, Sociology of Change is concerned with the explanation of social change by means of answering pivotal questions related to change, such as what causes change? What is the pattern of change? Why does change occur in the particular direction we observe, rather than in some other equally reasonable, alternative way?[91]

Finally, sociology of change has contributed to the study of civilization and historical change through its categorization of the various levels of change based on one variable : the size (family, society, culture, civilization, globe) or the period (historical, long-term, short-term) or its aspect (cultural, intellectual, and civilizational). It also categorizes change based on the combination of two variables: socio-historical, and socio-cultural change.

In this regard, the sociology of change makes a distinctive contribution to the study of civilizational change, although its study of a phenomenon like civilization is one sided. This is due to its adherence to the traditional outlook (paradigm) of sociology that avoids the theoretical and philosophical questions that may arise.

Summing up the discussion of the approaches to civilization within the paradigm of the social sciences, it is important to mention that this paradigm, in its attempt to perform the empirical study of social

phenomena, established its legacy by avoiding the more theoretical and philosophical questions that arise.

Avoiding the speculations of philosophy, the approach of the social sciences cannot explain some questions that go beyond the positivistic, empirical, and physical factors. In fact, they lack the aperture that theoretical research may provide for the study of such complex phenomena as civilization, and suffer the drawback of having a one-sided perspective.

CONCLUSION:
THE NEED FOR AN INTERDISCIPLINARY
APPROACH TO CIVILIZATION

The foregoing discussion of the different concepts of and the various approaches to civilization has led to certain questions about what approach should be adopted to study civilization if all are partial and not able to comprehensively study it.

The available literature has raised a methodological need for what could be called an interdisciplinary approach to the study of civilization. The latter, in turn, leads to another methodological need to systematically examine its complexity and the arguments for an interdisciplinary approach.

(1) The Complexity of the Phenomenon of Civilization

The various concepts of "civilization" could assist in considering its multi-faceted character and in mentioning the inadequacy of the approaches to tackle the issue at hand.

The discussion shows that the term civilization covers a vast idea, and that it is an interdisciplinary subject.[92] In addition, the complexity of civilization as a socio-cultural as well as a socio-historical phenomenon entails the need for an approach that takes into consideration its complexity from one side, and considers its multi-variability from the other. Lastly, the study of civilization is the business and the subject matter of many sciences, each of which approaches it from a different perspective in respect to its scope, methodology, concepts, and objectives or field of study.

None of the approaches discussed are able to provide a comprehensive study of civilization, either inclusively or beneficially. We have a phenomenon of many variables on which each of the mentioned sciences focuses on one or two variables, and assumes that it can go ahead by treating the other variables as if they were constants.[93]

Therefore, there is a need to use either "*'Ilm al-'Umran,*" the term "science of civilization" given by Ibn Khaldun to the study of human organization and civilization,[94] or the "interdisciplinary approach."[95] The latter term has proven to be the most popular among scientists and scholars, especially since an interdisciplinary approach to theory, culture, and society was born out of the works of several 20th century writers like Marc Bloch, Fernand Braudel, Immanuel Wallerstein, Michel Foucoult, Jurgen Hebermas, Norbert Elias, Antony Giddens, Michael Mann, Roland Robertson, and Benjamin Nelson.[96]

Ibn Khaldun's term *'Ilm al-'Umran* has yet to be appreciated, recognized, and used by researchers. Although many studies have asserted that he was a pioneer in using the term and the science in studying the issues of civilization, history, sociology, and culture that emerged as early as the 14th century.[97]

In this context, Ritzer questions why researchers do not use Ibn Khaldun's term, and he sees that the answer lies in the fact that his work did not lead to the development of the field of sociology in the 14th and 15th centuries in the Middle East. His work and ideas were lost to the Christianized west but not to the Muslim world, and are only now being rediscovered by western scholars interested in the early sources of sociology.[98]

(2) The Arguments for an Interdisciplinary Approach

Many thinkers and scholars have shown a concern over an interdisciplinary approach. They acknowledge the failure of the existing approaches to study civilization because of their limitations and their single-sided perspectives and call for an approach which is more appropriate for its study.

Sorokin for example questioned the feasibility of the perspective and the approach of the philosophers of history in studying civilizations

from their long-term socio-historical changes. From his sociological perspective, he did not acknowledge the possibility of the internal links of such huge and vast geographical and historical units such as civilization as conceptualized by Toynbee, Spengler and other philosophers of history.[99]

Therefore, he put civilizations on the category of systems and "congeries," thus doubting the presence of "one unified whole, living and changing in togetherness" which is necessary to be considered as units to be studied from the sociological point of view.[100]

Moreover, he questioned the lack of methodological tools to study comprehensively the socio-cultural phenomena because the causes of change go beyond the phenomena themselves.[101]

The diversity in the approaches is also mentioned by many writers. Burns[102] saw that the complexity of the phenomenon of civilization led some researchers to focus on its long-term development, while others focused on its economic aspect. Others emphasized the social or geographic expansion. Therefore, many approaches and theories have been formed to study each aspect without giving a comprehensive understanding of all its parts.

Braudel was one of the prominent thinkers and historians who expressed his criticism of the available approaches to civilization. In *A History of Civilizations*, he stressed that to define the idea of civilization requires the combined efforts of all the social sciences. They include history, geography, sociology, economics and all collective psychology.[103]

Others mentioned the methodological problems involved in the study of civilization among the social sciences. Edwards asserts that there is a fundamental theoretical dispute over the restriction of the social sciences to the short span of time and the avoidance of the history of the phenomena. That is to say, the isolation of the "complex whole" at a particular point in time is only partially possible.[104]

The failure of various approaches to manage the study of civilization comprehensively may lead to the conclusion that civilization, with its many aspects, cannot be adequately studied at the various levels in an isolated manner. Instead, it needs to be conceptualized in terms of a global perspective.

Therefore, the debate continues as to which approach is more comprehensive to study civilization. The argument of this chapter stresses that much of the literature on civilization is confusing because not all who use the term distinguish it clearly enough from other phenomena, and some writers even appear to use it interchangeably with other socio-historical and socio-cultural phenomena.

Since the publication of Samuel Huntington's "The Clash of Civilizations" concern about civilization has been reintroduced into the debate on the world order. Malek Bennabi (1905–1973), prominent Algerian thinker and great Muslim intellectual, intently focused on unravelling the causes of Muslim decline and the success of Western civilization and culture. The key problem he theorized lay not in the Qur'an or Islamic faith but in Muslims themselves. The author investigates Bennabi's approach to civilization and the fundamental principles drawn, using metatheorizing methodology. In doing so he sheds further light on perhaps one of the more intriguing elements of Bennabi's theory, that civilization is governed by internal-external and social-intellectual factors and that an equation can be generated for civilization itself. This equation of Man+Soil+Time = Civilization and of which religion, according to Bennabi, forms the all-important catalyst, is explained and its significance in terms of the reversal of Muslim decline evaluated. What is clearly apparent is that for Bennabi, Man is the central force in any civilizing process and without him the other two elements are of no value.

With regard to outcomes, Bennabi's unerring conviction that unless Muslims changed their spiritual condition they could not effect any far-reaching, meaningful change in society is echoed in the Qur'anic verse: "Verily, never will Allah change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves" (13:11).

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