| RESEARCH ARTICLE | **Ibn Khaldun's Methodology between Academic Social Studies and Practical Reality.** |
|---|---|

| Zeyneb Chami | Doctor (PhD) |
|---|---|
| | Djilali Bounaama University – Khemis Miliana |
| | Algeria |
| | Email: z.chami@univ-dbkm.dz |
| Noura Tlidjani | Doctor (PhD) |
| | Djilali Bounaama University – Khemis Miliana |
| | Algeria |
| | Email: noratlidjani09@gmail.com |

**Abstract**

To try to understand and analyze social phenomena, we must know the basic principles in their history that were formed and developed through sites and theories formulated by a group of historians since ancient times in order to establish an acceptable historical method that expresses truth and realism away from subjectivity and imagination, as the beginnings of studying the historical scientific entitlement in the course of human life and its interactions and patterns of formation and change of its phenomena began through the philosophical dialectic that was the starting point of the historians of the ancient Greeks, then the Arab Muslims, and in particular the historical method became mainly linked to the name of the thinker of the fourteenth century, the great Arab historian and philosopher Abd al-Rahman ibn Muhammad ibn Khaldun, who conducted a comprehensive and in-depth study of society that combines logical composition and analysis through induction and deduction of reality and facts in order to understand them and know their nature. This is what allowed for the distinction between general history as a general theory of history and as a science that studies general social laws.

Through this intervention, we aim to highlight the role of Ibn Khaldun in establishing the historical research method and establishing its scientific foundations in sociological fields.

## 1- Definition of Concepts:

Method:

The term "method" is defined as an organized and recognized approach aimed at achieving a specific goal. It is a tried and tested process, used by many, yielding positive results, which subsequently led to its widespread adoption.

The word "historical" is derived from the term "history," which refers to past events that are documented and recorded before the present. The English translation is "Historical."

There are various theories regarding the origin of the term "history." Some trace it back to the Akkadian word "Arakhu," part of the ancient Semitic language family, meaning "moon," which changes in appearance as time passes. Others attribute its derivation to the Hebrew word "Yareah," also meaning "moon." Additionally, some suggest it originates from Yemeni or Persian terms, though there is no definitive proof to substantiate its precise origin. (Mohammed, Al-Badawi, 1998, p. 52)

The Historical Method:

"The historical method involves gathering past evidence, organizing, classifying, and critically analyzing it, then presenting it as documented facts to derive meanings and clues that help in understanding a specific scientific subject or social problem."

Human beings cannot live disconnected from their past. By examining previous events, we can identify and avoid mistakes while exploring new paths that contribute to improving the future.

The historical method is one of the fundamental classifications of scientific research methodologies, alongside the descriptive and experimental methods. A general overview of the historical method reveals its widespread use in conducting research studies and producing significant evidence with strong validity. This makes it a reliable tool for researchers to establish systematic research procedures and ultimately achieve positive outcomes upon completing their research plans.

Research methodologies are employed in scientific studies to follow agreed-upon methods developed by scholars, ensuring that scientific research is organized and fosters systematic thinking. Without these methodologies, researchers would struggle to produce optimal work, resulting in disorganized and random studies that fail to provide benefits or achieve any goals.

Below, we present important information about the historical method in scientific research. (Othman, Hassan, 1980, p. 20)

### 2- Ibn Khaldun's Methodology in the Study of History

The scholar Ibn Khaldun is considered a prominent Islamic historian. His method of addressing historical events was characterized by a spirit of inquiry and verification, which granted his research a distinctive scientific methodology. This approach made his renowned *Muqaddimah* (Prolegomena) a fundamental reference for anyone interested in the era he documented.

Ibn Khaldun's historical method is based on several principles, including viewing history as an independent science governed by its own laws. History, in his view, is a blend of economic, political, and social factors that collectively shape it. To Ibn Khaldun, history comprises accounts of past days, states, and events of earlier centuries. It involves investigation, analysis, and explanation of events and their principles, as well as understanding their nature and causes. *(Fawzi, Adham, 2016, p. 16)*

### Characteristics of Ibn Khaldun's Historical Research:

1. Observing social phenomena among the peoples he interacted with and lived among.

2. Tracing these phenomena in the history of the same peoples in periods prior to his own.

3. Tracing similar phenomena in the history of other nations he did not directly interact with.

4. Comparing all these phenomena.

5. Reflecting on these phenomena to identify their intrinsic properties, incidental traits, and the laws governing them in political thought, historical philosophy, and sociology.

## Role of the Historical Method in Ibn Khaldun's "Muqaddimah"

The historical method significantly contributed to uncovering truths and analyzing events by studying human conditions and the factors influencing societal stability.

### Key Contributions:

1. The study of history is essential for understanding the conditions of nations and their evolution under political, economic, and social factors.

2. Ibn Khaldun emphasized the subject of tyranny and oppression by rulers and its effects on their subjects.

3. He explained how some rulers compete with their people in earning and trade, misuse laws to serve their personal interests, seize public wealth, and allow soldiers to plunder public funds, which fosters a sense of injustice and resentment among the population.

4. Ibn Khaldun pointed out that internal factors often disrupt a state's conditions more than external factors. A society suffering from internal decay cannot effectively confront external enemies.

5. He precisely connected economic factors, predating European thinkers by several centuries.

6. He absorbed earlier contributions to political thought from figures like Al-Farabi, Al-Mawardi, Al-Ghazali, the Ikhwan al-Safa, Al-Tartushi, and Miskawayh, synthesizing these ideas into his theory of political thought, historical philosophy, and sociology.

### Three Core Aspects of Ibn Khaldun's Philosophy of History:

1. History is a science, not just a narration of events without scrutiny and analysis.

2. This science is interconnected with other fields, such as politics, economics, religion, literature, and art.

3. This science is governed by laws that regulate the conditions of states, from strength to weakness, prosperity to decline. Ibn Khaldun applied this theory in his book "Al-Ibar", narrating events, commenting on them, and analyzing their outcomes.

### Key Observations from "Muqaddimah"

1.Oppression Leads to Ruin:Ibn Khaldun highlighted that oppression is a precursor to societal collapse. Forms of oppression include violating people's rights, restricting their freedoms, confiscating their wealth, and undermining their livelihoods. Corruption erodes civilization, ultimately leading to destruction.

2. Decay of States:Corruption results in the aging and eventual decline of states, a process analogous to the natural aging of individuals and societies. (Ibn Khaldun, Muqaddimah, p. 3)

### Pioneers of the Historical Method

The credit for highlighting the importance of the historical method goes to several social thinkers who advocated its use in social research. These include the Arab scholar Ibn Khaldun, the Italian philosopher Giovanni Battista Vico, the French philosopher Saint-Simon, and Auguste Comte.

### Ibn Khaldun

The Arab historian Ibn Khaldun is credited with laying the foundations of social history. He provided a social definition of history, stating:

"History aims to make us understand the social condition of humans, namely civilization. It also seeks to teach us about the phenomena associated with this civilization, primitive life, moral refinement, family and tribal spirit, and

the divergence in why some nations excel over others, leading to the emergence of empires, ruling dynasties, class distinctions, and interests that people dedicate their efforts to, such as profitable professions, industries that aid in livelihood, sciences, and arts. Finally, it examines all the changes that the nature of things imposes on the behavior of society. The science of human civilization will study social history in this way."

The social study of history in Ibn Khaldun's methodology is necessarily dynamic, keeping pace with the movement of history and encompassing the evolution of social life as it transitions from one state to another. Ibn Khaldun identified the stages of human civilization as follows:

1. Nomadism: Marked by harsh living conditions, limited to necessities, and the presence of tribal solidarity.

2. Kingship: A transition from nomadism to civilization, characterized by luxury and the concentration of authority in the hands of one individual.

3. Civilization: A stage of indulgence where people forget their previous hardships, lose their solidarities, and eventually weaken, leading to the state's decline.

4. Decline: The final stage where society deteriorates, akin to the lifecycle of an individual from birth to death.

Ibn Khaldun conducted his research by observing social phenomena among the peoples he encountered, tracing these phenomena in the history of these same peoples across previous eras, and comparing them to similar phenomena in other nations. He analyzed the relationships between these phenomena and their developmental factors across different nations and eras, ultimately deducing the laws governing them.

He also noted that the pitfalls historians often fall into—such as errors, falsehoods, and fabrications—could weaken historical narratives and, consequently, the historical method. Ibn Khaldun emphasized the importance of not fully trusting narrators, advocating for accuracy when consulting historical sources, and verifying events and scrutinizing them before accepting them.

### Giovanni Battista Vico

The Italian thinker Vico (1668–1744) expanded the scope of history through his work "The New Science". He shifted the focus from wars, treaties, and political alliances to include customs, laws, economic systems, languages, arts, and religions. Vico's influence extended to many 19th-century thinkers, particularly through his assertion that "humans create their own history."

The central idea in Vico's concept of social history is the theory of three developmental stages:

1. The Religious Stage: Dominated by theological and religious thinking.

2. The Heroic Stage: A period where individuals with exceptional abilities rise to power, representing a shift from faith-based to reason-based rule.

3. The Human Stage: A phase of freedom and civil rights, characterized by democratic governance.

Vico argued that these stages cyclically repeat, with the last stage setting the groundwork for the first. This cyclic progression represents a universal law governing historical events across nations.

Vico outlined the following principles for the historical method:

- Identifying the phenomenon to be studied and tracing its evolution across different historical eras.

- Collecting documents related to religious beliefs, customs, and historical events relevant to the phenomenon.

- If data about ancient peoples is unavailable, studying contemporary societies at similar developmental stages to infer the unknown from the known.

- Analyzing and critiquing sources to confirm their authenticity.

- Utilizing linguistic studies to verify historical claims.

- Classifying and synthesizing facts to uncover the laws governing the phenomenon.

### Saint-Simon

The French philosopher Saint-Simon (1760–1825) linked the historical method with scientific research, defining history as the social condition of peoples. He believed that understanding true history requires scientific observation of the development of civilization.

Saint-Simon believed in progress and emphasized that conflict drives advancement. He argued that understanding the continuous evolution of social phenomena requires knowledge of the intellectual history of humanity and the history of science. He identified three stages in this progression:

1. The Religious Stage

2. The Intermediate Stage: A transition between religion and realism.

3. The Realistic Stage: Marked by scientific realism, emerging in the 19th century.

His historical method involved:

- Using preserved documents and official records.

- Studying the development of sciences as a key aspect of history.

- Observing past developments through arts, crafts, and industries.

- Identifying the characteristics of the three historical stages.

- Using scientific observation and induction to predict future developments.

### Auguste Comte

Comte (1798–1857) aimed to uncover general laws governing the growth and development of social phenomena through the historical method. He believed all phenomena evolve simultaneously, influencing one another. Understanding one phenomenon's development requires a comprehensive view of humanity's progress.

Comte proposed the "law of three stages" as a framework for understanding progress:

1. Theological (or Imaginary) Stage

2. Metaphysical (or Abstract) Stage

3. Scientific (or Positive) Stage

Researchers, according to Comte, should:

- Observe and connect phenomena.

- Categorize phenomena and define historical periods.

- Identify general trends in political, religious, or economic developments.

- Derive specific laws for each aspect of development.

Steps of the Historical Method:

### The steps of the historical method are as follows:

1. Identifying the Problem: This refers to the historical phenomenon or event around which questions arise, with a focus on the time and place in which it occurred. It is required that the phenomenon has historical continuity and permanence.

2. Collecting Documents Related to the Research Topic : After identifying the research topic in terms of place and time, the researcher collects information from primary (original and direct) and secondary (non-original) sources. Often, secondary sources are initially collected to lead the researcher to primary sources, which should be identified and distinguished from one another.

a. Primary Sources: These include artifacts and documents. Artifacts are remains of events that occurred in a past historical period, while documents are records of past occurrences that could be written, visual, or oral. Written records include manuscripts and letters; visual records include arts such as paintings, videos, and photographs; while oral records refer to narratives and testimonies. Legal scholars use official documents, such as old legislation published in official newspapers, judicial rulings, and minutes of meetings of official bodies and political institutions.

b. Secondary Sources: These are indirect sources of information and include everything that has been written or translated from primary sources, such as books and writings on an old legal text, or articles published in magazines and journals during a certain time period.

3. Critiquing Historical Documents: This refers to evaluating the gathered sources and academic material. After collecting documents, the researcher examines sources and document texts to verify their accuracy and precision. This is done through external and internal criticism.

a. External Criticism: This aims to determine the authenticity and credibility of a document to accept it as evidence in research or not. The researcher raises questions to uncover the source of the original document, such as: Who is the author or owner of the document? Did they really write it? When and why was the document created? Is it original or a copy? If it is a copy, where is the original? External criticism also involves checking the scientific standing and integrity of the researcher.

External criticism is divided into source criticism and correction criticism. Source criticism seeks to confirm the entity that owns the document and verify the identity of its author. Correction criticism checks the accuracy of the document by attributing it to its rightful author and linking it to the events it pertains to.

b. Internal Criticism: This focuses on the content and the information contained in the document, identifying any errors or contradictions. Internal criticism is done by analyzing and interpreting the material, seeking to understand the meanings intended by the document's author to verify the accuracy of the intellectual premises that their ideas are built upon. Internal criticism also includes evaluating the author's qualifications, such as their age when writing the document, the language used in the document, the author's expertise, and the circumstances under which it was written (whether directly after the event or from eyewitness accounts). It also involves comparing the document with other documents written on the same topic.

4. Formulating Hypotheses and Verifying Them: The researcher formulates hypotheses that explain the causes of historical events, then tests their accuracy and validity to either accept or reject them and replace them with other hypotheses. Hypotheses are developed based on chronological, thematic, or geographical order, depending on the nature of the study, or a combination of these factors. The researcher's success lies in organizing the collected material and data into a unified, non-contradictory framework.

The organization involves creating a clear image of each historical event as a fact, classifying facts into categories according to the logical sequence of events, and linking them by causal relationships to derive rules that explain historical events.

5. Drawing Conclusions: The process of collecting, critiquing, interpreting, and verifying hypotheses enables the researcher to draw conclusions using a scientific and objective approach. This stage highlights the scientific results

of the historical research and presents them as general principles or theories that explain and interpret historical phenomena. This approach is similar to the inductive method, as it examines historical events as specific cases to reach conclusions that can be generalized. (Mohammed, Ibrahimi, 2021, pp. 5-7)

### Fields of Research Using the Historical Method:

### The Historical Method in Social Sciences:

The use of the historical method in social research aims to reach general principles and laws by studying past historical events and analyzing facts related to human problems and the social forces that have shaped the present. By going back to history, we do not attempt to confirm individual incidents, nor do we aim to depict past events and personalities in a way that brings them to life again. Instead, we seek to determine the conditions that surrounded a group of people or a phenomenon from its inception to understand its nature and the laws it is governed by. The return to the past is what distinguishes the historical method from other social science methods. It is an indirect method because it relies on sources related to the phenomenon or event, rather than experiencing the phenomenon itself.

Pauline Young tried to clarify the importance of the historical method in social research by saying: "In social research, we trace historical development to reconstruct social processes, link the present to the past, and understand the social forces that shaped the present to reach an understanding that can help in formulating social principles or laws about the behavior of individuals, groups, or systems, and to describe the processes of social life." Therefore, the importance of history in social research, from Pauline Young's perspective, can be summarized in the following points:

- History is an element of renewal and strength in social construction, as much of life is variable and evolving. By studying the past, we can ensure the present proceeds smoothly and reorganize various social processes;

- There is a causal relationship between the past and the present; the past life of any group and its social systems are causally related to the present life of the group and its social systems, meaning that the past is the key to understanding the present;

- Studying history helps with scientific induction and the formulation of social laws, which are the product of the interaction of human relationships on one hand, and the result of the social forces emanating from institutions, groups, and systems within the environment on the other;

- Studying history allows the social researcher to provide descriptive analysis after carefully examining historical documents that explain past events. A successful researcher is one who does not move too far from the historical context when studying present-day events;

- The study of history helps identify the factors affecting current social issues and establishes a sound basis for social planning and reform by identifying the true sources of the problem and the degree of impact it had on the group's living conditions, as well as methods to control these sources and influences.

From these components, the historical method is considered scientific, as it seeks to discover and critique evidence and establish connections between them to reach conclusions about past events. In other words, it involves critical observation of past events to uncover the causal relationships between them for explanation and justification.

### Application of the Historical Method in Legal Studies:

Historical events are primary material for legal scholars, as they are the source of some legal theories and principles. Some jurisprudential theories led to revolutions, such as the philosophical ideas of Montesquieu and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, which led to the French Revolution of 1789. The historical method enables the understanding of the origins of legal theories, such as the theory of abuse of rights and the theory of force majeure in administrative contracts. These theories are linked to old judicial rulings from the 19th century, and they must be referenced to understand their origins.

Ancient legal studies laid the foundations of law, and there is a legal branch dedicated to studying the legal history of political communities and past legal institutions, as well as the history of international relations. Studying any legal system would be futile if the prevailing legal situation from a certain period is not examined. To understand the law, its history must be studied. The historical method allows us to comprehend and study current legal phenomena, their evolution through history, and the social environment in which they arose and developed. Thus, it helps legal researchers identify legal systems, doctrines, and principles, and enables them to compare past and present systems to understand the development of law. It also assists in understanding the issue of legal change or stability, explaining the phenomenon of legal rules that have lost their effectiveness and the emergence of new rules, such as the repeal or amendment of laws, and studying the circumstances that led to these changes.

The historical method also helps legislators avoid repeating past mistakes by amending legislation, benefiting from the positives, and avoiding the negatives of previous legal systems. Judges benefit from previous judicial rulings. The historical method is applied when solving cases by identifying and ordering the facts chronologically. It is also applied in criminal investigations by going to the crime scene to examine evidence, traces, and witness testimony.

### The Relationship between Anthropology and History:

Both history and anthropology are sciences linked to humans, space, and time. While history studies the past of civilizations and their progression through certain time periods, anthropology examines humans from a physiological and intellectual perspective, offering descriptions of their characteristics, qualities, and analyzing and explaining their social systems. The relationship between history and anthropology lies in their sources and references. It is impossible to study a civilization anthropologically without referring to historical sources such as artifacts and languages, as geological studies determine the time period during which a certain civilization or a specific human species lived based on the changes they experienced.

### Criticisms of the Use of the Historical Method:

Despite the scientific value and theoretical effectiveness revealed by the frequent use of the historical method by many researchers, there are several criticisms of this method. One of the most notable criticisms is by Karl Popper, who emphasized that:

- The relativity of social laws to history prevents the application of experimental methods.

- The impossibility of relying on the concept of causality, meaning that similar conditions in different time periods may lead to varied results, thus denying causality in historical approaches. Social conditions in different historical stages can lead to differing outcomes.

- The difficulty of social prediction, which renders the historical method ineffective. Since the early stages of human history are unknown, the historical method cannot explain how the unknown past is linked to the present. It does not provide answers or explanations; rather, it is an interpretive method. Moreover, it falls into another fallacy when it seeks to study unique, non-repetitive events in the same manner as events that occur in contemporary society. In fact, the circumstances and conditions governing a phenomenon's occurrence change over time and may completely transform. Furthermore, studies show that there is no complete agreement among thinkers who have adopted the historical method in studying specific topics, and historians' opinions differ on the same historical event. This is sufficient evidence of the need to acknowledge the subjective element in historical analysis.

### Conclusion:

In conclusion, based on the previous points, it can be said that raising the issue related to methodologies in general is sufficient by itself to advance social research and guide it in the right direction, benefiting humanity and utilizing it to solve many of its problems. This is because the progress and strength of societies today are measured by their ability to adopt an approach that fits the nature of current social life, benefiting from the achievements and

capabilities provided by history, and re-reading it according to new perspectives and concepts that are governed by "epistemology of the system" and specification. The organized often triumphs over the random and chaotic. Whether related to the historical, comparative, or experimental method, we find that clear and precise formulation is present in various social research studies that have adopted the aforementioned methods, unlike metaphysical writings and reflections that lack any logical connection allowing us to speak about the birth and existence of a methodology in research and thought.

### References:

1. Ibn Khaldun, Al-Muqaddimah, Mustafa Muhammad Printing, no date, Egypt, p. 3.
2. Tawfiq Qatoush, "The Relationship Between the Science of History and Sociology in Khalduni Thought," Journal of Arts and Social Sciences, Vol. 07, Issue 01, 2014.
3. Muhammad Al-Badawi, Methodology in Literary Research and Studies, 2nd edition, Dar Al-Ma'arif for Printing and Publishing, Sousse, Tunisia, 1998.
4. Hassan Othman, The Method of Historical Research, Dar Al-Ma'arif, Cairo, 1980.
5. Muhammad Ibrahimi, "The Relativity of the Historical Method Between the Importance of Steps and the Negativity of Results," Historical Insights Journal for Research and Studies, Vol. 1, Issue 2, 2021.
6. Fawzi Adham, "The Influence of Ibn Khaldun on Modern Western Thought (1)," Al-Maqasid Journal, Beirut, Issue 5634, 2016.
7. Abdul Razzaq Tumiat, "Between Anthropology and History: A Comparison of the Relationship Between Anthropology and Modern Colonial Thought," Al-Hikma Journal of Philosophical Studies, Vol. 10, Issue 01, 2020.
8. Abdul Salam Janat, "The Historical Method in Arab Critical Practice: Arabs and the History of Literature by Ahmed Bouhassan as a Model," Master's Thesis, Oum El Bouaghi, Algeria.