

(historical, long-term, short-term); or aspect (cultural, intellectual, and civilizational).

The empirically-focused social sciences paradigm has avoided more theoretical and philosophical questions. The literature has demonstrated a methodological need for interdisciplinary study of civilization and a systematic examination of its complexity. The various concepts of 'civilization' could assist in considering its multi-faceted character and inadequate existing approaches. The failure of other approaches to comprehensively manage the study of civilization suggests that civilization cannot be adequately studied at various levels in an isolated manner, but should be conceptualized in a global perspective.

Chapter Two

The Major Concepts of Bennabi's Approach to Civilization

Bennabi criticized the reformist and modernist trends in the modern Muslim world for overlooking the causes of the crisis and only focusing on symptoms. He asserted that efforts to ignite a renaissance in the Muslim world did not produce a systematic approach to the crisis. The problem was rooted in the Muslim culture of the post-*al-Muwahhid* era, and Bennabi said the historical process paved the way for colonizability. Colonization is not the main reason for the present situation in the Muslim world, but our vulnerability to be colonized is one of the many secondary factors.

Bennabi's definitions of civilization are varied. He recognized that civilization activates social capacities to face crucial problems of a society, and indicated the balance between the moral and material aspects in human life. Since society justifies human activities in the realm of history, society is the core force in any civilizing process.

Bennabi asserted that moral and material factors are crucial to create balance and liveliness in human society and generate solidarity and unity. He defined civilization via its structure and social essence: "...the human being learns how to live within a group and perceives...the essential importance of the network of social relations in organizing human life in order to perform its historical function and responsibilities."

For Bennabi, the formula “Civilization = Man + Soil + Time” represented the equation of civilization, which structurally determines its elements or ingredients. These basic elements of any civilizational action or product indicate that the problem of civilization deconstructs into three categories: man, soil, and time.

Bennabi said all objects or things humans produce result from man (*Insān*), soil (*Turāb*), and time (*Waqt*). The three elements found in every society are the fundamentals for a society to begin a civilizing process. When we scientifically address the construction of human personality, soil exploitation, and time organization, only then will civilization provide the necessary social services and assistance humans need for development. In this equation, man (*Insān*) is the primary device of civilization and the central force in any civilizing process. Bennabi criticized the reformist movement in the Muslim world for its attempt to reform the milieu rather than the human factor, and argued that we must reform man. He stated that civilization rises with the integrated type of man who transforms his characteristics into his ideals to undertake his role in society.

The concept of orientation (*tawjīh*), according to Bennabi, refers to harmony in the movement of a civilization, unity in objectives, and avoidance of conflict between efforts starting from the same sources and aiming at similar objectives. Bennabi viewed culture as the primary factor influencing man as a social personality, and society as a collective body. The mode of culture determines the direction of civilization and its destiny in history.

In Bennabi’s equation, religion is essential to organize and direct the three elements towards their civilizing process. All civilizations without exception in history have flourished amid religious ideas. However, in Bennabi’s approach, religion cannot begin its civilizing function as a catalyst unless it embarks upon a civilizing process that assembles man, soil, and time in one project. He argued that contemporary civilizations formulated the original dynamic synthesis of man, soil, and time in the cradle of a religious idea.

Bennabi discussed the origin and nature of society’s realms, where the component of any action belongs to one of three categories: objects, persons, and ideas. Applying the mechanism of synthesis to these elements demonstrates that all actions, activities, and deeds are the sum of men, plus the sum of materials or instruments, plus the sum of ideas

behind those actions. The accomplishment of civilization depends on the entirety of the activity resulting from the sum of all the activities done by man.

In the realm of the person, civilization starts its process with a transformed individual integrated into society's activities. Bennabi's "realm of persons" denotes the sum total of relations, constructive or destructive, among a certain group, and emphasizes the significance of those relations. Consequently, society's destiny in its civilizing process is based on the nature or the quality of the relations in that system formed by the realm of persons.

According to Bennabi, the realm of ideas consists of impressed ideas derived from sacred or secular sources, and functions as a pattern that orients and guides society to certain values and ethics. In Muslim civilization, impressed ideas derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah. Bennabi considered civilization the result of a living, dynamic idea that mobilizes a pre-civilized society to enter history and construct a system of ideas according to its archetypes.

The realm of ideas gives vision and original patterns to society to formulate its civilization, and forms a prototype all persons in a society can follow, distinguishing the culture. The realm of ideas is important for society to undertake any constructive role in history. The realm of objects provides tools, channels, natural resources, and instruments needed for the civilizing process. It provides the material needs for the historical movement of society and expresses the position of society in its civilizing process.

Bennabi asserted that no historical activity can exist among these realms without "the social relations network," a concept strongly linked with his understanding of the nature and dynamism of society from socio-cultural and historical perspectives. The dialectic relationship among the three realms denotes and implies the existence of the social relations network. This realm provides minimum necessary relations among the three realms for any historical action that attempts to construct a civilization. The three realms cannot function without the social relations network.

Since Bennabi was primarily concerned with how to reconstruct Muslim society, revive its culture, and purge it from negative elements inherited from its age of decline, he emphasized the need for "sociology

of independence.” The starting point for that new sociology is to redefine ‘society.’ He implied that while the natural society is a static society, historical society is dynamic. He argued that some characteristics are common to all types of historical society. The social relations network links members of society and directs activities to fulfill a common function that is the specific mission and vocation of that society.

Chapter Three

Bennabi’s Interpretation of the Movement of Civilization

Bennabi viewed the cycle of civilization as “a numerical series following its course in similar but not identical terms,” suggesting that particular civilizations are cyclical and follow a patterned course. Each social group imprints its specific characteristic upon civilization and each civilization has a distinct identity. Civilizations differ in their specific psycho-temporal conditions but are similar in their general pattern in history.

Bennabi asserted that civilization begins its cycle when its fundamental elements synthesize within the frame of the religious idea, and finishes when those fundamental elements are no longer in dynamic interaction. Every civilization plays its role in history until it declines and ceases to develop and lead humanity. Another civilization starts anew to formulate its cycle in history. This transitory process of civilization justifies the cyclical phenomenon in history.

Bennabi argued that any society in its civilizing process will follow a defined pattern leading to a civilizational transformation. After completing the pre-civilized stage, a society in its second stage (civilized stage) will undergo three phases: the soul (the spiritual), reason (the rational), and instinct (the instinctive).

The cyclical notion can address social problems by determining our position in the cycle of history and understanding the causes of decline and the potential for progress. The cycle concept can explain the movement of civilization and is the underlying framework to analyze and understand human social existence. Bennabi, who developed this idea from Ibn Khaldūn, suggested that human civilization starts from a