

IBN KHALDUN'S CONCEPT OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND ITS RELATION TO THE DISCOURSE OF INDONESIAN CIVIL SOCIETY

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Abstract. This writing discusses about Ibn khaldun's theory of civil society and its relation with Indonesian civil society. The main purpose of the writing is to seek the connection between Ibn Khaldun concept of civil society and the historical condition of civil society in Indonesia. The writing is qualitative method through library research. Historical and sociological approaches are using in this writing to look at the concept and the history of civil society in Indonesia. Ibn Khaldun's theory of *asabiyya* contains five levels of civilization cycle in a country, viz. success or consolidation, tyranny, prosperity, satisfied, and enjoy. Ibn Khaldun Analysis of Civil Society in Indonesia seems to have some similarities with the situation of Indonesia. The first level is success or consolidation. In the end of the Dutch colonialism, all Indonesian society was unity and work together faced the Dutch. The second level of Ibn Khaldun's theory is tyranny. During the Old Order Era and the particular of New Order Era depicted the tyranny of the government. The third level is prosperity. It is hoped that in post-Reformation Era, civil society in Indonesia will get prosperity.

Keywords: *Civil society, asabiyah, consolidation, tyranny, prosperity.*

Introduction

Ibn Khaldun is a great Islamic thinker who lived in the 13th century. The idea of Ibn Khaldun in his work entitled *Al-Muqaddimah* (written in 13th century) explains many various aspects of scientific knowledge and still relevant with the current situation (Khaldun, 1986). In the beginning of chapter one, he explains the general changes of human being, followed by chapter two contains philosophy of history. He divides human society into two classes, the rural (*al-umran al-badawi*) and the urban (*al-umran al-hadari*) people. He states that history is very important to find out the social condition of previous nations that reflected their national characters. Historical writing needs a diversity of sources and knowledge (Khaldun, 1986). Ibn Khaldun's theory is similar with the development of Indonesian civil society.

The history development of the Indonesia civil society seems to be relevant with the concept of *asabiyya* solidarity or cohesion. One important aspects of the history of *asabiyya* that contains five levels of civilization cycle in a country, namely success or consolidation, tyranny, prosperity, satisfied, and enjoy (Rizali, 2001). The theory is very good to search the political history of Indonesia, particularly in the development of the Indonesian civil society in New Order Era.

Increasing attention to the idea of civil society in Indonesia emerged as a reaction to the political discourse the New Order era. Anderson argues that the New Order is the best understood as the reaction of the state and its triumph vis. a vis. society and nation. The basis of the triumph was achieved via the physical annihilation of the PKI and its allies, the suppression of popular movements, sweeping purges of the state apparatus, and the suppression and eventual removal of Sukarno as an effective political force (Anderson, 1990).

Hooker (Hooker, 1993, 1) states that the period from the beginning of the New Order era in the 1960s brought some sense of political stability, where the government succeeded in projecting a spirit of natural purpose through the mass media and an expanded education system. Hooker stresses that the New Order government, both *Pancasila* and the 1945 Constitution were strengthened as the bases of the state. Presiden Suharto's government also promoted its own distinctive style, with the leader characterized as a *Bapak Pembangunan* (father of development).

According to Uhlin (1997), one of the major characteristics of the New Order Era was the dominance of state over society. A common wisdom among most Indonesians is that political life in Indonesia is strongly dominated by the state. State power, which is supported by military capabilities, is exercised both through patronage and repression. For example, foreign capital was distributed to military bureaucrats and rural elites in order to support Suharto's position in the New Order era. The authoritarianism of New Order government in Indonesia was cause the civil society movement, especially from students and NGOs.

The intention of this paper is to analyze the development of civil society in post independence Indonesia, particularly in New Order Era based on Ibn Khaldun's theory of *Asabiya*.

Methodology

The writing is a qualitative method through library research. Historical and sociological approaches are using in this writing to look at the concept and the history of civil society in Indonesia. The writing is analyzed with descriptive analyze to look the relation between Ibn Khaldun's theory of civil society and its relation with the condition of civil society in Indonesia.

Ibnu Khaldun's Theory of Civil Society

Ibn Khaldun was an intellectual Muslim who expert in multi disciplinary. He was known as an expert in sociology and politics, history, economy, and education. A lot of writings are concerning the concept of economic theories of Ibn Khaldun. In analyzing Ibn Khaldun concept of economics, it is found that he had put some ideas pertaining to global trade that parallels to modern theories (Mahmud, 2011).

Gibb (1933) states the true originally of Ibn Khaldun's work is to be found his objective analysis of the political, social, and economic factors dealing with the establishment of political unit of State and the consequence of his analysis constitute new science which Khaldun claims to have found. His idea of civil society starts from a global conception of human society (*al-mujtama an-insani*), whereas he starts from a dynamic conception of human association (*al-ijtima*).

The main idea civil society in Ibnu Khaldun's perspective is the concept of *umran*. Mahayuddin Hj. Yahya translates this term into 'prosperity' and *umran al-alam* into 'universal prosperity.' In searching the reasons or causes of the crisis of Maghrib at the fourteenth century, Ibn Khaldun has formulated a general conception of civil society (Yahaya, 2011). Ibn Khaldun was very conscious of the uniqueness of his science of human society. The substantive interest of Ibn Khaldun lies on the explanation of the formation and decline of Maghribian state. This is presented the nature of nomadic society, the superiority of tribal social solidarity (*asabiyyah*) and the natural inclination of nomadic society to attaining royal authority (*mulke*), establishing dynasty (Alatas, 2006).

The general situation of Maghrib (the West) and Mashriq (the East) was these areas were in the state deterioration. Civilization of both in the West and the East was visited by destructive plague which distressed nations and caused

population to vanish. The global change in of the countries was a negative nature. The destructive plague leads the list of many negative changes that dangerously devastated the Arab Muslim world. Ibn Khaldun's analysis of the decline of Arab Muslim societies in the West and in the East was conquered to emphasize political, economic, democratic, and social changes (Dhaouadi, 1998).

The civil social change of Indonesia after the Independence Day, especially in the New Order Era showed many negative changes. The history development of the Indonesia civil society seems to be relevant with the concept of *asabiyya* solidarity or cohesion. One important aspects of the history of *asabiyya* that contains five levels of civilization cycle in a country, namely success or consolidation, tyranny, prosperity, satisfied, and enjoy (Cheddadi, 1994). The theory is very good to search the history of civil society in Indonesia

Civil Society in Indonesia

The most important element in the rise of civil society movements in Indonesia was the authoritarianism of the New Order era. The 'New Order' refers to the period of Suharto's rule. The transfer of power from Sukarno to Suharto effectively ended the role of political parties and associated mass organisations, and gave the state absolute power over society.

In operating its administration, the New Order regime chose intellectuals and technocrats as power partners, a strategy which strengthened its main political body, the Golkar or "Functional Grouping". The New Order's first move was away from Sukarno's populism towards corporatism, which entailed the linking of social institutions and organisations into the state apparatus (Karim, 1999).

President Suharto and his New Order regime were very successful at doing this during more than three decades in

power. According to Eklof, up to mid-1997 the regime was successful in economic growth, which brought about increased standards of living for the majority of the Indonesian people. However it also brought its fair share of traumatic social change. The regime continued to rely on its ruling formula of combining authoritarian controls with a degree of popular legitimacy mainly derived from the economic benefits flowing to the majority of Indonesians (Eklof, 1999).

The New Order saw a restructuring of the political system in which the independence and influence of the political parties was severely circumscribed. Several of the parties experienced pressure and manipulation from the government in their internal affairs, and those parties that were not banned after the 1971 election were pressed to merge to form two non-government parties. As a result, four Muslim parties merged to form the United Development Party, *Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP)* and three nationalist and two Christian parties merged to form the Indonesian Democratic Party, *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia (PDI)*. Both parties had to adhere to the state ideology *Pancasila*, and were designed to be purely nominal opposition parties (Eklof, 1999, 5).

Schwarz (1994) states that the rapid economic recovery of post-Sukarno Indonesia was thus achieved through trade-off between economic development and civil rights. This factor should not however obscure the achievements of Suharto in bringing a degree of prosperity to the nation.¹ Hainsworth (1999) states that Suharto had good reason to be proud of

¹ Generally, Indonesia's economy had performed well since Suharto's ascendancy to power. The management of monetary resources encouraged investment and increased labor productivity. When combined with an oil boom this gave Indonesia an average rate of growth of more than 7 per cent from 1968 to 1981. However, annual growth decreased to 4.3 per cent between 1981 and 1988 due to the fall-off in oil revenues and the accumulated effect of government intervention. From 1989 to 1993 the economy again increased to almost 7 per cent annually

Indonesia's achievements during the 30 years of his New Order administration, particularly in comparison to the preceding 16 (1944-1965) years of political and economic chaos under Sukarno. There were several economic achievements under the New Order era.²

However, all scholars agree that at the end of Suharto's government, the economic conditions in Indonesia dropped sharply. Corruption, collusion and nepotism (KKN) were some of the primary causes of the economic crisis which struck Indonesia in 1997. Even by the end of the 1980s, corruption and collusion had increased and thrived in this political economy. A huge amount of resentment became focused on President Suharto's blatant favoritisms of his own relatives and his cronies. Beginning in the 1980s, several of Suharto's children began assembling vast conglomerates from the concessions handed to them from the president (Schwarz, 9).³

² Population growth rates fell from 2.2 per cent in 1970 to 1.7 per cent in 1995 with the average real GDP growth rising above 6 per cent per annum in the same period. The percentage of population living below the poverty line was officially estimated to have declined from around 40 per cent in 1971 to a forecasted 11 per cent in 1997. Additionally there were improvements in a range of social indicators, such as a rise in literacy from around 20 per cent in 1960 to 84 per cent in 1997, and a drop in infant mortality from around 225 to 55 per 1.000. Virtual self-sufficiency in rice was achieved by the 1980s after being the world's largest importer of rice in the early 1960s. Finally, structural transformation involved the share of agriculture in the GDP decreasing from 45 per cent in 1970 to 18 per cent in 1995, with the share of industry and manufacturing rising from 29 per cent to 61 per cent during the same period.

³ Eklof explains that Suharto's children were active in a wide range of economic fields. For example, Suharto's eldest daughter, Siti Hardiyanti Rukmana, held interests in telecommunications, agribusiness, road toll contraction and ship manufacturing. Suharto's second son, Bambang Triharjojo controlled the large Bimantara group, which was active in telecommunications, real estate, agribusiness, food retailing, construction and electronics. Meanwhile, Suharto's youngest son, Hutomo Mandala Putra (Tommy) had interests in shipping, agribusiness, petrochemicals and air travel. Indeed, in 1996 a presidential decree gave

Anger towards such crony capitalism was one reason for the growth of civil society because it was seen as one possible way of voicing collective dissatisfaction with such corrupt practices.

In contrast to Sukarno's 'politics as commander' dogma, economic development under the New Order took precedence over political development. Sukarno's preference for revolutionary action over economic stability affected contemporary perceptions of the earlier period of Constitutional Democracy in the 1950s. Despite twenty-five years of political sterility, many intellectuals continued to view the Constitutional Democracy period as one of interminable political chaos (Vatikutish, 1997). This affected their views of the political parties and their role in civil society. Whilst liberal democracy allowed the flourishing of civil society, a lack of constraints led to a chaotic situation which compromised the integrity of the state itself amongst other things. Again, the Hegelian fear of the 'anarchy' that an unfettered civil society could produce was evident in these concerns. The 'order' of the Suharto was seen as a necessary evil in many respects by intellectual elite. The 'shutting down' of civil society was accomplished by various means.

Discussion of civil society in Indonesia during the New Order period arose as a critical response to the state discourse. In the 1990s the concept of civil society gained importance due to the perceived need for grass roots participation in development. The development of a more open political landscape in New Order Indonesia was dialectically related to the dissatisfaction produced by top-down development strategies. This strengthening of civil society, which played a critical role in the fall of the New Order regime, is related to the

Tommy's company, P.T. Timor Putra National, the task of developing a national car.

role of powers outside the formal state system, such as non-government organizations NGOs and Indonesian students.

Ibn Khaldun Analysis of Civil Society in Indonesia seems to have some similarities with the situation of Indonesia. The first level is success or consolidation. This level explains that the consolidation situation of civil society support the state where the civil society (*Asabiyah*) has successfully to resign the authority of dynasty. In the end of the Dutch colonialism, all Indonesian society was unity and work together faced the Dutch. In fact, the consolidation process caused the Indonesian Independence Day. Therefore, the society of Indonesia had successfully to replace the dynasty of the Dutch colonialism.

The second level of Ibn Khaldun's theory is tyranny. During the Old Order Era and the particular of New Order Era depicted the tyranny of the government authoritarianism. This level explains that the state leaders collect many strong followers, particularly military to maintain their position, as well as to protect their family. The tyranny of New Order Era created traumatic among the Indonesian civil society. According to Eklof (1992), the government of New Order brought its fair share of traumatic social change. The regime continued to rely on its ruling formula of combining authoritarian controls with a degree of popular legitimacy mainly derived from the economic benefits flowing to the majority of Indonesians.

It is clear that the history of Indonesian civil society was similar with Ibn Khaldun's theory of *Asabiyah*, especially in level one and two. Hopefully, the government of Reformation Era would create "prosperity" of Indonesian civil society as Ibn Khaldun's theory of level three.

Conclusion

This writing explains Ibn Khaldun's theory of civil society in relation to the condition of Indonesia civil society in New Order Era. The main civil society idea of Ibnu Khaldun is the concept of *umran* which is translated into 'prosperity' and *umran al-alam* into 'universal prosperity.' Ibn Khaldun has formulated a general conception of civil society in searching the reasons or causes of the crisis of Maghrib at the fourteenth century.

The history development of the Indonesia civil society seems to be relevant with the concept of *asabiyya* solidarity or cohesion. One important aspects of the history of *asabiyya* that contains five levels of civilization cycle in a country, namely success or consolidation, tyranny, prosperity, satisfied, and enjoy. The state power of the New Order, which is supported by military capabilities, is exercised both through patronage and repression. For example, foreign capital was distributed to military bureaucrats and rural elites in order to support Suharto's position in the New Order era.

The first level of *Asabiyah* theory deal with consolidation, where all Indonesian society worked together in order to be able to get Indonesian Independence Day. The second level is concerned with the *Asabiyah* theory of tyranny. This idea explains the Indonesia situation during the New Order Era situation. It is hoped that the next era will get prosperity of the Indonesian civil society.

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