



Ibn Khaldūn's *ʿAṣabiyyah* Theory as an Analytical Framework in Contemporary Global Historical Historiography

Eun Kyeong Yun*

Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Seoul, South Korea, 02450

Email: e.kyeongyun@hufs.ac.kr

Daniel Ross

Utah State University, Logan, United States, 84321

Email: daniel.ross@usu.edu

Leonid Issaev

Utah State University, Logan, United States, 84321

Email: leonid.issaev@gmail.com

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Abstract

Global historiography continues to evolve toward a more integrated reading of world history, although some interpretive frameworks remain dominated by Western historiographic perspectives, and the relationship among social cohesion, the formation of power, and the transformation of civilizations across regions has yet to receive an adequate conceptual explanation. Studies on the theory of *ʿAṣabiyyah* generally focus on Islamic history or regional political dynamics, while its use as an analytical tool in global historiography is still limited. This study aims to reconstruct Ibn Khaldūn's *ʿAṣabiyyah* theory as an analytical framework for explaining the relationship among collective solidarity, political legitimacy, power expansion, and civilizational change in global historiography. This study uses a qualitative approach based on literature studies through historiographical analysis, conceptual analysis, and critical interpretation of the *Muqaddimah* as a primary source and recent academic literature as a secondary source. The analysis yields a conceptual reconstruction that positions *ʿAṣabiyyah* as a historical mechanism linking social cohesion, the consolidation of political authority, the capacity for collective mobilization, the expansion of power, the process of institutionalization, the decline of solidarity, and the cycle of civilizational transformation across regions and historical contexts. This reconstruction demonstrates the ability of Ibn Khaldūn's theory to explain historical dynamics through the integrated interaction of social and political factors, and expands the function of *ʿAṣabiyyah* from a historical concept to an interpretive instrument in global historiography. The findings of this study enrich the conceptual framework of global historiography by integrating the Islamic intellectual tradition as a systematic and relevant analytical perspective, broadening the horizons of world historical explanation.

Keywords: *ʿAṣabiyyah*; Global Historiography; Social Solidarity; Power Dynamics; Transformation of Civilization

Abstrak

Historiografi global terus berkembang menuju pembacaan sejarah dunia yang lebih terintegrasi, meski sebagian kerangka interpretatif masih didominasi oleh perspektif historiografi Barat, sehingga hubungan antara kohesi sosial, pembentukan kekuasaan, dan transformasi peradaban lintas kawasan belum memperoleh penjelasan konseptual yang memadai. Kajian mengenai teori 'Aṣabiyyah umumnya berfokus pada sejarah Islam atau dinamika politik regional, sedangkan pemanfaatannya sebagai perangkat analitis dalam historiografi global masih terbatas. Penelitian ini bertujuan merekonstruksi teori 'Aṣabiyyah Ibn Khaldūn sebagai kerangka analitis untuk menjelaskan relasi antara solidaritas kolektif, legitimasi politik, ekspansi kekuasaan, serta perubahan peradaban dalam historiografi global. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif berbasis studi kepustakaan melalui analisis historiografi, analisis konseptual, dan interpretasi kritis terhadap *Muqaddimah* sebagai sumber primer serta literatur akademik mutakhir sebagai sumber sekunder. Analisis menghasilkan rekonstruksi konseptual yang menempatkan 'Aṣabiyyah sebagai mekanisme historis penghubung kohesi sosial, konsolidasi otoritas politik, kapasitas mobilisasi kolektif, ekspansi kekuasaan, proses institusionalisasi, penurunan solidaritas, hingga siklus transformasi peradaban dalam berbagai konteks sejarah lintas wilayah. Rekonstruksi ini memperlihatkan kemampuan teori Ibn Khaldūn dalam menjelaskan dinamika sejarah melalui interaksi faktor sosial dan politik secara terpadu, serta memperluas fungsi 'Aṣabiyyah dari konsep historis menjadi instrumen interpretatif dalam historiografi global. Temuan penelitian ini memperkaya kerangka konseptual historiografi global melalui integrasi tradisi intelektual Islam sebagai perspektif analitis yang sistematis, relevan, serta mampu memperluas horizon penjelasan sejarah dunia.

Kata Kunci: 'Aṣabiyyah; Historiografi Global; Solidaritas Sosial; Dinamika Kekuasaan; Transformasi Peradaban

Introduction

The historiography of global history has evolved from writing national histories to studies that examine the interconnectedness of societies, the circulation of ideas, human mobility, economic exchange, and the transformation of power across regions (García, 2021). This perspective differs from world history, which focuses on narratives of global developments (Ghobrial, 2019); comparative history, which compares historical experiences across regions (Bernhard & O'Neill, 2021); and connected history, which emphasizes intercommunity relations (Repina, 2022). The historiography of global history focuses on the patterns of interaction, processes, and structures that shape historical change across time and space. Its methodological development still faces epistemological challenges due to the dominance of the Eurocentric paradigm, which uses Western historical experience as the primary reference in developing global historical theory. This condition limits historiography's ability to explain the dynamics of non-Western societies through conceptual frameworks derived from its own intellectual traditions (Gubman, 2022).

Limitations become increasingly apparent when various historiographical approaches emphasize economic, state, technological, or international system determinants, while social cohesion as a driver of historical change has yet to gain

adequate conceptual standing (Burchi et al., 2026; Fonseca, Lukosch, & Brazier, 2019). This conceptual vacuum underscores the need for an alternative analytical framework capable of explaining the relationships among social solidarity, political legitimacy, power expansion, and civilizational change in an integrated manner. Ibn Khaldūn's 'Aṣabiyyah theory offers such a foundation through the concept of group solidarity, which shapes the rise, development, and decline of power and civilization. Thus, it has the potential to be developed as an analytical framework for global historical historiography.

Global political transformations in recent decades have demonstrated the growing role of collective solidarity in shaping historical change. The United Nations (2025) noted increasing social fragmentation, identity conflicts, and declining trust in public institutions across regions worldwide. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2021) identified widening economic inequality as a trigger for the mobilization of groups based on social and political identities. The World Economic Forum (2025) identified social polarization, the crisis of government legitimacy, and geopolitical fragmentation as global risk groups with long-term impacts on international stability. These phenomena demonstrate that contemporary historical change occurs through the interaction of social cohesion, collective identity, political legitimacy, and the distribution of power. Global historiography lacks analytical tools that comprehensively explain the causal relationships between these elements, as most explanatory models rely on political economy, state institutions, or technological developments. This situation highlights the academic need to reconstruct a historiographical framework that integrates social, political, cultural, and historical dimensions into a coherent analytical model.

Studies on Ibn Khaldūn are flourishing in the fields of history, sociology, political science, and philosophy of history, although their development orientation remains fragmented. Wazir et al. (2022) interpret 'Aṣabiyyah as a theory of state formation grounded in group solidarity, but their discussion remains confined to pre-modern societies and thus fails to explain its relevance to global historiography. Demirel (2024) views 'Aṣabiyyah as a concept of social cohesion that supports the political structure of segmentary societies, although he has not developed it into an instrument for interpreting regional historical transformations. Hafis et al. (2025) explain the philosophical dimensions of Ibn Khaldūn's civilizational cycle, while the relationship between the concept of the historical cycle and the methodology of global historiography has not been systematically discussed. Shahidipak (2020) presents Ibn Khaldūn's thought as an alternative to Western social theory, although his study focuses on epistemological critique rather than on producing an operational historiographical framework.

Hamod (2025) emphasized Ibn Khaldūn's contributions to historical source criticism and historical writing methods, although he failed to connect these methodological contributions to the dynamics of contemporary global history.

Overall, the research demonstrates that the development of 'Aṣabiyyah studies remains oriented toward conceptual interpretation, social theory, the philosophy of history, or the context of Islamic history. A comprehensive reconstruction that positions 'Aṣabiyyah as an analytical framework within global historical historiography to explain the relationships among social solidarity, political legitimacy, shifts in power, civilizational interactions, and cross-regional historical networks has yet to emerge. This gap provides the basis for developing an alternative historiographical model that draws from the Islamic intellectual tradition while simultaneously expanding the diversity of global historiographical perspectives.

This research formulates four main questions: how does the conceptual structure of 'Aṣabiyyah construct an analytical framework in Ibn Khaldūn's historiography? How does this concept explain the relationship between social solidarity and power shifts as a historical process? How is this framework used to interpret the dynamics of contemporary global historical historiography? Moreover, what are its strengths and limitations as an analytical tool in historiography? The purpose of this research is to reconstruct the conceptual structure of 'Aṣabiyyah as a historiographic model, explain the mechanism of the relationship between social solidarity and historical transformation, develop an analytical framework for reading contemporary global history, and evaluate its conceptual validity through critical analysis. The research argument departs from the scientific assumption that places collective solidarity as a structural variable that interacts with economic, political, cultural, technological, and geopolitical factors in shaping the legitimacy of power and civilizational change. This position produces a more integrative historical reading than a deterministic approach that focuses on a single dominant variable. The theoretical contribution of this research is the reconstruction of a global historiographic model based on 'Aṣabiyyah theory, the strengthening of alternative non-Western epistemologies to advance historiographical theory, and the development of an analytical framework that connects social cohesion, political legitimacy, shifts in power, and the dynamics of civilization across regions. The practical contribution is to provide conceptual instruments for research on global history, political history, the history of civilization, and the study of Islamic thought, thereby expanding the use of Ibn Khaldūn's theory as a tool for contemporary historical analysis.

Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a library research design, based on comparative historiographical analysis and conceptual reconstruction, to develop Ibn Khaldūn's 'Aṣabiyyah theory as an analytical framework for the historiography of contemporary global history. Historiographical analysis examines the development of global historical paradigms, while conceptual reconstruction constructs an interpretative model through a systematic synthesis of Ibn Khaldūn's

theoretical categories and contemporary historiographical discourse. Primary data consists of a critical Arabic edition of the *Muqaddimah* selected for its academic authority, while secondary data include reputable journal articles, academic books, and scientific works published in the last ten years that are relevant to the 'Aṣabiyyah theory, global historiography, and historical social theory. The literature was selected based on its thematic relevance, academic quality, and contribution to scientific debate. Data collection was carried out through a systematic search of academic databases using established keywords, followed by selection based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, conceptual coding, thematic categorization, and data extraction. Data analysis includes critical reading of primary sources, contextual interpretation, operationalization of the 'Aṣabiyyah dimension as a unit of analysis, comparison with global historiographic paradigms based on indicators of social solidarity, power transformation, and historical change, and then conceptual synthesis to build an analytical framework that is coherent, transparent, replicable, and has theoretical contributions.

Results and Discussion

Conceptual Reconstruction of 'Aṣabiyyah in the Framework of Ibn Khaldūn's Historiography

The term 'Aṣabiyyah is often reduced to kinship-based group solidarity, yet a textual reading of the *Muqaddimah* reveals a far more complex conceptual scope. Muhsin Mahdi (1957) places this concept as a central element in Ibn Khaldūn's theory of society, while Syed Farid Alatas (2014) interprets 'Aṣabiyyah as a mechanism of social integration that enables collective action beyond genealogical ties. These differing interpretations demonstrate the absence of academic consensus regarding the epistemological status of 'Aṣabiyyah. This article positions the concept as a causal mechanism linking social organization, collective mobilization, and historical transformation. This position is crucial because many prior readings focus on the sociological dimension without explaining the concept's role in constructing historical knowledge. Ibn Khaldūn's analytical framework instead attempts to transform empirical observations of human groups into explanatory categories for political change.

The theoretical foundations of this concept emerged through abstraction from the patterns of interaction between North African Bedouin and early Arab communities. Ibn Khaldūn (1967) treated empirical experience as a source for identifying social regularities across time and space. This process of abstraction distinguishes his approach from contemporary chronicle historiography. The analytical focus shifts to the search for social mechanisms that explain the emergence of political power. Genealogical ties are indeed a source of solidarity, but the capacity for collective mobilization emerges when group loyalty develops into a shared sense of interest (Van Dyke & Amos, 2017). Political patronage, ideological affiliation, and cultural integration gain importance because they can broaden the

basis of cohesion beyond blood ties. These characteristics make 'Aṣabiyyah closer to the concept of collective agency than simply communal solidarity. The emphasis on the capacity for collective action allows this concept to serve as an analytical category for explaining historical change through social dynamics rather than the individual will of rulers.

The analytical status of 'Aṣabiyyah becomes clearer when it is positioned as an explanatory variable in the relationship between social cohesion and the capacity for political organization. Contemporary literature on social cohesion generally highlights trust, collective identity, and social cooperation as factors of societal integration (Aruqaj, 2023; Schiefer & van der Noll, 2017; Vonhm, 2025). Ibn Khaldūn (1967) offers a more specific formulation, linking this cohesion to the capacity for political domination. Solidarity acquires historical significance when it generates collective discipline, coordination of action, and a readiness to defend group interests. This mechanism explains why communities with limited material resources can outperform more economically established groups. This argument avoids the material determinism that often dominates explanations of political change (Siregar et al., 2026). The analysis focuses on the group's ability to organize resources through social loyalty. This formulation provides operational indicators for 'Aṣabiyyah, namely the intensity of cohesion, the effectiveness of mobilization, and the success of collective coordination, which can be observed through social practices and political developments.

The relationship between solidarity and power is not understood as an automatic process. Ibn Khaldūn (1967) identified a set of conditions that enable social energy to transform into political authority. Leadership serves as a coordinating center that consolidates group loyalty into directed collective action. Legitimacy does not arise solely from military superiority, but rather through internal recognition of leadership perceived as representing the common interest (Peter, 2020). This process generates the capacity for political expansion and the formation of more stable government structures. This reading demonstrates the function of 'Aṣabiyyah as a mediating mechanism between social structures and political institutions. The concept's position does not stop at the source of solidarity; rather, it explains the stages of a community's transformation into a powerful entity. This mediative character distinguishes it from interpretations that place solidarity as the sole cause of political change. The capacity for domination emerges from the interaction among social cohesion, leadership, legitimacy, and collective organization, which together form the institutional foundation of government.

The historiographic significance of this concept is evident in its connection to the intellectual project of *ʿilm al-Umrān*. Ibn Khaldūn (1967) viewed history as a field of analysis that demanded the identification of social causes. This framework yielded a method of historical criticism that assessed the validity of reports based on social contingency and the rationality of societal structures. 'Aṣabiyyah served as

a tool for historiographical verification. Historical information was considered problematic if it contradicted the logic of the social organization that enabled an event to occur (Heller, 2023). This position represented a significant shift from the tradition of historical writing that focused on chronicle transmission. Historical explanations gained legitimacy through the analysis of causal relationships rooted in social reality. This conception established 'Aṣabiyyah as an epistemological category that connected empirical observation, historical interpretation, and the critical evaluation of historical sources. This dual function is often overlooked in conventional readings of Ibn Khaldūn's thought.

A comparison with the modern historical sociological tradition clarifies the conceptual position of 'Aṣabiyyah without falling into intellectual anachronism. The purpose of the comparison is not to demonstrate Ibn Khaldūn's chronological priority over modern thinkers, but rather to identify the similarities in the theoretical problems they face. Durkheim (1997) emphasized social integration as a prerequisite for societal stability, Weber focused on the legitimacy of authority, and Tilly (1992) linked collective mobilization to state formation. Ibn Khaldūn (1967) combined these elements into a single analytical category that clarified the relationship between social cohesion, leadership legitimacy, and political expansion. The key difference lies in his more explicitly historical orientation. The analysis focuses on the mechanisms of power change across generations, rather than simply on social stability. This shared theoretical problem opens up a space for productive dialogue between classical Islamic thought and contemporary historical sociology without erasing the intellectual context of each tradition.

This conceptual reconstruction also provides a basis for criticizing the tendency of essentialist readings that equate 'Aṣabiyyah with ethnic identity or blood relations. Eker's (2025) study shows that political solidarity is often formed through identities that are constructed, negotiated, and expanded according to collective needs. This perspective aligns with Ibn Khaldūn's (1967) description of the possibility of expanding group loyalty through political alliances and cultural integration. This flexible character explains the concept's ability to adapt beyond the tribal context of fourteenth-century North Africa. Its analytical value lies in its ability to explain how collective identity generates the capacity for collective action with historical impact. This understanding also avoids reducing the concept to a static cultural category. The primary focus is on the social function of solidarity as a mechanism for mobilization and integration. This position strengthens the theoretical relevance of 'Aṣabiyyah in historical analysis, which positions society as the primary actor in political change.

Dynamics of Social Solidarity and the Cycle of Power from the Perspective of 'Aṣabiyyah

The mobilization of collective solidarity occupies a central place in Ibn Khaldūn's explanation of the emergence of political power, although the causal

relationship between social cohesion and political dominance is not automatic. Solidarity serves as a social resource that lowers coordination costs among group members, strengthens trust, and increases willingness to take collective action for shared goals (Kerstetter et al., 2023). This perspective shares analytical similarities with Mancur Olson's (1971) theory of collective action and Charles Tilly's (2004) approach to contentious politics, both of which posit organizational capacity as a prerequisite for political mobilization. A group's strength is not solely determined by its membership, wealth, or military prowess, but by the effectiveness with which it organizes resources through stable networks of loyalty. Consolidated social energy enables the overcoming of coordination problems, the acceleration of decision-making, and the strengthening of collective discipline (Wang et al., 2024). Such mechanisms explain why peripheral communities are often able to challenge dominant powers experiencing internal fragmentation despite having more limited material resources.

The transformation of solidarity into power occurs through institutionalization that links social cohesion to leadership, military organization, and administrative capacity (Zheng, 2023). Leader legitimacy emerges when the group views leadership as representing collective interests, so that loyalty does not depend solely on coercion (Haugaard, 2025). Such social recognition enhances the ability to mobilize workforce, funds, and political support. A study by Vieta and Heras (2022) shows that successful political expansion requires a combination of internal solidarity and organizational capacity to manage an expanding territory and population. Ibn Khaldūn's framework becomes relevant when read as an explanation of the conversion of social capital into political capital. Solidarity generates collective discipline, collective discipline strengthens organizational effectiveness, and effective organizations enable the expansion of power. Political dynasties emerge when group loyalty takes on a relatively stable institutional form through government structures, resource extraction mechanisms, and a centralized distribution of authority (Maharani, Baskara, & Suwadi, 2024).

The consolidation of power creates changes in social structures that initially affect the nature of solidarity. Political success drives economic growth, job differentiation, bureaucratic expansion, and increased complexity of social relations (Burt & Oppen, 2020). These conditions shift the orientation of group members' actions because the need to maintain cohesion is no longer based on shared experiences of struggle. Historical sociological analysis shows that the relationship between prosperity and changing patterns of social integration is not linear (Hua et al., 2026). Ibn Khaldūn drew attention to the risks when solidarity, initially based on collective participation, shifts toward relationships that increasingly depend on material incentives and administrative structures. This shift does not equate to a loss of social cohesion, but rather a change in the form of integration that underpins power. The primary focus is the reduced capacity for voluntary mobilization due to

the increasing social distance between the ruling elite and the groups that previously formed the basis of political support.

Bureaucratization and professionalization of the apparatus strengthen government stability while creating a political paradox that occupies a key place in power cycle theory. Elite dependence on formal institutions diminishes the need to maintain solidarity networks that once served as sources of legitimacy (Nicholls & Baran, 2024). This perspective bears similarities to Francis Fukuyama's (2014) concept of political decay, which explains how institutions can lose their adaptability when the relationship between state and society weakens. Ibn Khaldūn's focus was not on bureaucracy as the sole cause of decline, but rather on the erosion of collective capacities that previously enabled rapid responses to political threats. Elites began to rely on professional administrative and military mechanisms as their primary instruments for controlling power. As a result, the emotional and symbolic ties that bound political communities declined in intensity, resulting in the loss of legitimacy, the social foundation that once supported the expansion and consolidation of power (Bandiera, Larreguy, & Mangonnet, 2026).

Internal fragmentation develops when the distribution of resources, access to power, and elite interests become increasingly differentiated (Vasilyeva & Libman, 2020). This situation does not automatically lead to regime collapse, but it does increase vulnerability to political conflict and intergroup competition. Florea's (2018) study shows that the decline of power is often triggered by a combination of internal conflict and the emergence of alternative actors offering new sources of legitimacy. Ibn Khaldūn's framework can be read through a similar lens. Weakening solidarity reduces the elite's ability to maintain political consensus, while rival groups gain opportunities to expand their influence by building more effective loyalties. This explanation avoids the determinism that assumes every dynasty inevitably collapses due to luxury or moral decadence (Peters, Green, & Fuller, 2023). The analysis focuses on the changing balance of mobilization capacity between groups that results in shifts in the distribution of power throughout the historical process.

The emergence of new political forces is closely related to the ability to build solidarity that overcomes coordination problems and creates a compelling collective identity. Historical experience demonstrates that the success of a challenger group depends not solely on internal cohesion but also on the ability to forge social alliances, articulate shared interests, and exploit the weaknesses of delegitimized power (Kim & Schifeling, 2022). This reading extends Ibn Khaldūn's theory beyond the tribal context of fourteenth-century North Africa. Solidarity is understood as an organizational capacity that can be formed through political identity, ideological affiliation, religious networks, or cultural ties. This reinterpretation aligns with Yuen and Tong's (2021) study on the construction of collective identity, which positions solidarity as a product of social and political processes rather than simply of

genealogical relationships. Power shifts are ultimately understood as a consequence of changes in the configuration of social mobilization that alter the balance of political power.

The pattern of power shifts exhibits a cyclical character that differs from the assumption of a linear progression toward permanent stability. Ibn Khaldūn's cyclical model should not be read as a universal law of history, but rather as a heuristic tool for explaining the relationship between social cohesion, institutionalization, and political change. Its theoretical value lies in its ability to identify internal mechanisms that structural approaches often overlook. World-Systems Theory explains the distribution of power through global economic relations (Chase-Dunn & Grell-Brisk, 2019), while Ibn Khaldūn's power cycle theory highlights the social capacities that enable political actors to respond to structural pressures. The dialogue between these two perspectives yields a more comprehensive understanding of historical change. Economic structure shapes opportunities for political action, while solidarity determines a group's ability to capitalize on them. The reciprocal relationship between social and structural factors opens up a richer analytical space than explanations focused solely on a single dominant variable.

The Analytical Relevance of 'Aṣabiyyah in Reading the Structure of Global History

Various currents in contemporary global historiography explain world-historical change through the categories of connectivity, circulation, economic integration, and the formation of transnational networks. Recent works on global history, such as those by Sebastian Conrad (2016), Jürgen Osterhammel (2014), and Jeremy Adelman (2017), have expanded attention to intersocietal relations beyond national borders. However, most of these approaches emphasize patterns of interconnectedness and movement across space rather than the social mechanisms that enable collective actors to exploit the historical opportunities generated by this interconnectedness. This analytical gap opens up the relevance of 'Aṣabiyyah.

The analytical character of 'Aṣabiyyah becomes more evident when placed alongside the traditions of historical sociology and theories of empire formation. The literature on state formation associated with Charles Tilly (1992) emphasizes war, resource extraction, and organizational capacity building as the foundations of state formation. Another tradition, developed by Michael Mann (1986), highlights ideological, economic, military, and political networks of power. Ibn Khaldūn's framework makes a distinctive contribution by focusing on the sources of social energy that enable various instruments of power to function effectively. Empires do not emerge solely through technological superiority or military capacity, but rather through the ability to build solidarity that generates long-term collective discipline. This perspective helps explain why some peripheral powers can challenge established centers of power. Mongol expansion, the rise of the Ottomans, and the

consolidation of early dynasties demonstrate the importance of social cohesion as a prerequisite for large-scale political mobilization.

The explanatory capacity of the concept becomes even more relevant when used to interpret the relationship between global structure and collective action. World-Systems Theory, developed by Immanuel Wallerstein (2004), successfully explains the distribution of economic power between the center, semi-periphery, and periphery. The main limitation of this approach is its limited ability to explain why groups facing similar structural positions often produce different political responses. *'Aṣabiyyah* provides a causal mechanism that bridges this issue by analyzing social mobilization capacity. Global economic opportunities do not automatically generate political transformation. Successfully exploiting opportunities depends heavily on the ability to build collective identity, organizational coordination, and leadership legitimacy (Elfving & Howard, 2018). The reciprocal relationship between economic structure and social solidarity yields a more balanced explanation than models that place one factor as the dominant variable. The integration of both perspectives allows for a reading of global history that accounts for both structural constraints and the capacity for collective agency.

Critiques of Eurocentric tendencies take on greater significance when situated within methodological debates in global historiography. Studies in postcolonial history, decolonial thought, and connected histories have long questioned the tendency to treat European experiences as a universal measure of historical development (Bhambra, 2014). Ibn Khaldūn's relevance lies not in his ability to offer analytical categories derived from non-European historical experiences. This position broadens the conceptual resources of global historiography without replacing one centrality with another. Social solidarity is treated as a mechanism found across diverse civilizational trajectories, across Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. Such an approach strengthens the agenda of pluralizing world historical theory, as explanations of political change no longer rely on a single narrative of modernization. Dialogue across intellectual traditions produces interpretive frameworks that are more inclusive and more sensitive to the diversity of historical experiences.

Attention to social solidarity also allows for a more nuanced understanding of geopolitical dynamics across civilizations. Global historiography often positions political interactions as a consequence of economic competition, trade, or the distribution of strategic resources (Subacchi, 2019). These factors are indeed important, although an actor's capacity to exploit external conditions depends heavily on the quality of its internal integration. Inter-imperial rivalry, territorial expansion, alliance formation, and processes of political disintegration demonstrate the close relationship between internal cohesion and the effectiveness of external action. The *'Aṣabiyyah* framework explains why powers with substantial resources

can decline when social loyalties weaken, while smaller actors can gain strategic advantages through more effective collective organization.

The transformations of global history in the modern era present conceptual challenges that demand a reinterpretation of 'Aṣabiyyah beyond the context of classical tribes and dynasties. Contemporary political mobilization often takes place through national identities, ideologies, transnational religions, diaspora communities, and digital networks (Ahmed et al., 2025). The literature on imagined communities developed by Benedict Anderson (2006) demonstrates how solidarity can be formed through symbolic construction without relying on direct genealogical ties. This finding bears analytical similarities to Ibn Khaldūn's notion of expanding loyalty through political and cultural integration. This conceptual reinterpretation allows for an understanding of 'Aṣabiyyah as the capacity to form a collective identity that generates collective action.

The complexity of contemporary global history also demands that the object of analysis be expanded beyond national and dynastic boundaries. International organizations, multinational corporations, religious networks, global philanthropic institutions, and transnational communities play a crucial role in shaping global power structures. The literature on the network society, developed by Manuel Castells (2023), demonstrates the growing significance of networks as a form of modern social organization. The relevance of 'Aṣabiyyah is to explain how these networks acquire collective capacity, maintain member loyalty, and establish legitimacy for collective action. Solidarity is no longer understood as a bond centered on a single, homogeneous community, but rather as a mechanism of integration that operates through layered and dispersed relationships. This kind of conceptual adaptation broadens the scope of Ibn Khaldūn's analysis to a global context characterized by high connectivity, plurality of identities, and the presence of increasingly influential non-state actors.

A Critical Evaluation of the Theory of 'Aṣabiyyah in Contemporary Global Historiography

One of the main problems with the use of 'Aṣabiyyah in global historiography lies in the tendency to treat the concept as automatically relevant to all configurations of political history. Such an assumption ignores the long-standing debate regarding the epistemological status of Ibn Khaldūn's thought and the limits of the universality of a concept born from observations of fourteenth-century Maghrib societies. Aziz Al-Azmeh (1982), Robert Irwin (2018), and Syed Farid Alatas (2014) point to fundamental differences regarding the position of 'Aṣabiyyah as a theory of society, a historical tool, or a heuristic instrument. These differing interpretations require more careful evaluation than simply asserting its relevance for the present. The conceptual value of 'Aṣabiyyah lies in its capacity to identify the relationship between social cohesion, political legitimacy, and collective mobilization.

Contemporary global historiography also cannot be reduced to approaches that emphasize only economics or macrostructures. The work of Sebastian Conrad (2016), Jürgen Osterhammel (2014), Sanjay Subrahmanyam (2005), and Christopher Bayly (2004) demonstrates a strong focus on connectivity, mobility, cultural exchange, and the capacity of historical agents. This context demands a more precise argument regarding the distinctive contribution of *'Aṣabiyyah*. Its significance arises when the category of connectivity fails to explain why groups experiencing similar historical opportunities generate different political responses. Global trade flows, migration, and economic integration do not automatically result in the consolidation of power. The capacity to transform opportunities into collective action depends on the ability to build internal loyalty, coordination, and legitimacy. This allows *'Aṣabiyyah* to function as a middle-level explanatory mechanism that bridges the relationship between structural opportunities and political outcomes.

The relationship between *'Aṣabiyyah* and world-systems theory also requires a more dialogical reading than the binary opposition of agent and structure does. The tradition of Immanuel Wallerstein (2004), along with its development through Giovanni Arrighi (1994), Beverly Silver (2003), and Jason Moore (2015), has demonstrated the complexity of economic, political, and ecological relationships in the formation of global hierarchies. The main obstacle to this approach is its limited ability to explain variations in political responses across societies facing similar structural pressures. Peripheral positions do not always produce identical developmental trajectories. The rise of the Ottomans, the Safavids, and several anti-colonial movements demonstrated differences in mobilization capacity despite facing relatively comparable external challenges. *'Aṣabiyyah* offers an explanatory mechanism for how collective identity, leadership legitimacy, and organizational discipline influence a group's ability to capitalize on historical opportunities. This capacity demonstrates the reciprocal interaction between systemic position and social organizational capacity. The integration of these two perspectives yields a more balanced analytical model than an approach focused solely on a single dominant variable.

Claims about Ibn Khaldūn's contribution to the pluralization of global historiography also require conceptual caution. Non-European origins do not automatically confer analytical superiority or guarantee the liberation of knowledge from universalistic bias. Postcolonial critique, developed by Gurminder Bhambra (2014), warns of the risk of replacing one epistemic center with another without examining the latter's theoretical validity. The relevance of *'Aṣabiyyah* is better understood as an alternative conceptual resource that expands the repertoire of historical theory, rather than as a sole corrective to Eurocentrism. Its added value lies in its emergence from a distinct historical experience and in its explanation of the relationship between social solidarity and the formation of power, a relatively rare focus in global historiography. Critical examination remains necessary to

determine the concept's generalizability, its scope of application, and the explanatory limitations inherent in its context of emergence.

Another issue relates to the tendency to view solidarity as the primary cause of political success. Such a reading risks producing a social reductionism that ignores the role of technology, fiscal capacity, military innovation, strategic geography, and global economic changes. Bjørnå's (2021) study shows that the success of political actors often emerges through a combination of interconnected factors. While social cohesion can strengthen collective coordination, strong solidarity does not necessarily translate into political dominance without adequate material resources. The experiences of several modern social movements show that widespread mobilization can fail to achieve strategic goals due to institutional limitations or significant external pressures (Yang, 2022). The explanatory capacity of *'Aṣabiyyah* becomes stronger when understood as one important variable in a broader causal configuration.

The transformation of modern society also raises questions about the validity of *'Aṣabiyyah*'s basic assumptions when applied to contemporary political identities. Nationalism, diaspora communities, ideological movements, and digital networks demonstrate very different forms of solidarity than the genealogical ties of tribal societies. While reinterpreting the concept allows for a broader scope of analysis, unlimited expansion can lead to conceptual stretching, as Giovanni Sartori (1970) argued. If all forms of collective identity are treated as *'Aṣabiyyah*, the concept loses analytical rigor and becomes difficult to distinguish from the general term social solidarity. The relevance of the theory depends on maintaining its core elements: collective loyalty, which generates mobilization capacity, organizational discipline, and a willingness to sacrifice for a common goal. These elements allow for the distinction between loose symbolic solidarity and political solidarity that can truly generate collective action.

The development of the network society presents new challenges to the use of *'Aṣabiyyah* as an interpretive tool in global history. Manuel Castells (2023) highlights the growing role of decentralized networks characterized by flexible relationships, multiple identities, and cross-border digital connectivity. This situation differs significantly from the social structures that informed Ibn Khaldūn's observations. Collective loyalty is no longer necessarily tied to a homogeneous community or a single authority, but emerges through dynamic, multi-layered interactions. This situation demands a conceptual reconstruction of *'Aṣabiyyah* as the capacity to generate collective commitment within a distributed network, rather than as a closed-group bond. Such a reconstruction opens up the opportunity for a productive dialogue between classical solidarity theory and the network society approach. Its analytical value is its ability to explain the processes of legitimacy formation, coordination of action, and maintenance of loyalty within increasingly complex social structures.

A final assessment of *'Aṣabiyyah* suggests that this position is more appropriate as a mid-level theory explaining the relationship between collective solidarity and political capacity, rather than as a universal model of world history. Its primary strength lies in identifying the social mechanisms linking collective identity, leadership legitimacy, resource mobilization, and the formation of power. Its limitations arise when the concept is used in isolation, without considering the institutions, the global economy, technology, or transnational structures that shape the modern world. The most productive theoretical contribution lies in integrating it with global historiography, world-systems theory, network approaches, and studies of contemporary political legitimacy. Such integration produces an interpretive framework that explains the relationship between collective agential capacity and structural constraints across various historical trajectories. The epistemological value of *'Aṣabiyyah* ultimately enriches historical analysis by elucidating the social dimensions of power that the purely structural paradigm often overlooks, while remaining open to conceptual revision in light of the latest social theory.

Conclusion

The reconstruction of Ibn Khaldūn's *'Aṣabiyyah* theory emphasizes social solidarity as the primary variable that explains the formation of political authority, collective mobilization, the expansion of power, the consolidation of government, and the decline of civilization through recurring historical cycles. This conceptual formulation demonstrates the causal relationships among the intensity of social cohesion, political legitimacy, institutional capacity, and changes in the spatial and temporal configuration of power, thereby providing sufficient clarity to interpret global historical transformations without relying solely on economic or institutional determinism. This framework simultaneously expands the repertoire of global historiography by integrating classical Islamic intellectual traditions into modern historiographical debates and providing a conceptual reference for comparative analysis of state formation, empire dynamics, and changes in political order across regions. Its limitations lie in the use of a conceptual-historiographical method based on a literature review that has neither tested the validity of its arguments through specific historical cases nor compared *'Aṣabiyyah* with modern historiographical theories, and has not evaluated its relevance across various global historical contexts. The next research agenda needs to fill this gap through comparative studies across civilizations, empirical testing through case studies, and the application of historical sociology and comparative political science approaches to strengthen conceptual validity and expand the theory's explanatory power.

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Author Contribution Statement

EKY contributed to the research conceptualization, methodology development, data analysis, writing the initial draft, editing the manuscript, and correspondence during the publication process. DR contributed to the literature review, analysis validation, refinement of scientific arguments, and critical review of the manuscript's substance. LI contributed to data collection and verification, interpretation of findings, language editing, and final review of the manuscript. All authors were involved in the discussion of the results, approved the final version of the manuscript, and are responsible for the integrity and accuracy of the article's content.

Conflict of Interest

All authors declare that this manuscript has no conflicts of interest whatsoever, whether financial, professional, institutional, or personal, that could have influenced the research, analysis, writing, or publication of this article. This research was conducted independently in accordance with applicable academic principles and scientific ethics.

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AI was used only to a limited extent to improve language quality, correct grammar, edit writing style, and assist with manuscript formatting. AI was not used to generate research ideas, formulate research questions, develop methodologies, conduct data analysis, interpret results, draw conclusions, or develop scientific arguments. All concepts, findings, analyses, interpretations, discussions, and conclusions in this manuscript are the result of the author's own research and are the sole responsibility of the author. The author has reviewed, verified, and ensured the accuracy of the entire manuscript before submission for publication.

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