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Ibn Khaldun's principles of political economy: Rudiments of a new science

Battah, Abdalla M., Ph.D.
The American University, 1988
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IBN KHULDUN'S PRINCIPLES OF POLITICAL ECONOMY: RUDIMENTS OF A NEW SCIENCE

by

Abdalla M. Battah

submitted to the

Faculty of the School of International Service

of The American University

in Partial Fulfillment of

The Requirements for the Degree

of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

International Relations

Signatures of Committee:

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IBN KHALDUN'S PRINCIPLES OF POLITICAL ECONOMY: RUDIMENTS OF A NEW SCIENCE

BY
Abdalla M. Battah

ABSTRACT

Although much less known to Western political economists, than, for example, to sociologists or historians, Ibn Khaldun is the true founding father of political economy. Centuries before his successors, the "classical political economists," Ibn Khaldun dealt systematically and masterfully with the relationship between economics and politics. He, furthermore, was able to define the subject matter of his "new" science by delineating the fundamental political and economic processes.

At a time when we are witnessing a tremendous surge of interest in political economy in the field of international relations, it is rather ironic that Ibn Khaldun's work is still almost completely unexplored.

This dissertation is an attempt toward demonstrating the originality and significance of Ibn Khaldun's contribution to political economy. It provides a rendition of Ibn Khaldun's views on a wide range of topics: ʿumran
(development), mode of production, specialization, division of labor, laissez faire, money, exchange, 'asabiyya (roughly solidarity), anarchy, mulk (royal authority), the rise and fall of states, theory of the state, sociology of knowledge, social conflict, among others. The relevant sections of Ibn Khaldun's masterwork Mugaddimah (Volume One of his Kitab al-`Ilmar), our primary source, are arranged to form a coherent basis for this study.

The study demonstrates the following major points:

(1) that Ibn Khaldun's contribution to political economy is original and so great as to unquestionably qualify him for the title "father of political economy;"

(2) that Ibn Khaldun's work has commanded great respect from writers in sociology, history, and philosophy, and that it exercised noticeable influence on Arab and Muslim scholarship; and,

(3) that Ibn Khaldun's political economy is relevant and timely.

Researchers in international relations, political economy, and other social science fields are urged to seriously explore the Mugaddimah, for it contains a wealth of information and provides keen insights on numerous areas of knowledge.
To my beloved parents,
Mohammed Ali and Saphia,
I wish to dedicate this study
This dissertation has indeed been a labor of love for me. But while I was the one to put pen to paper, it has by no means been a solo performance. My dissertation committee advisors have contributed significantly to the completed version, and I wish to express my gratitude to them all: Yusuf Ibish, for suggesting the study of Ibn Khaldun and for being a patient mentor and a source of inspiration; Nicholas G. Onuf, for being a super teacher and for his invaluable comments on all chapter drafts; John Willoughby, for his kind criticism and helpful remarks especially on matters concerning economic theory; Ibrahim Ibrahim, for his many insights on the "reason versus revelation" debate in Islam; and Abdul Aziz Said for his support and friendship.

To the Karim Said Foundation, I am indebted for the Dissertation Fellowship, without which this project would have taken much longer to complete.

I wish to thank Mr. Robert Hammarberg, director of the computer lab at the University of Minnesota's Political Science Department, for allowing me to use their computer terminals and for his kind assistance in word processing. Thanks are due to Ms. Barbara Walczak for her efficient
typing of the first two chapters as well as the bibliography. I am grateful to Mrs. Kathleen Partridge for giving me free access to her beautiful home many a time while in Washington, D.C. I am also grateful to Monther Damin for his friendship and generosity.

Finally, my greatest debt is to my wife, Debra, and daughters, Anisa and Nadia, for their forbearance and love, and for the joy they bring to my life.
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INTRODUCTION

Ibn Khaldun has been considered a pioneer in many social science fields: sociology, politics, philosophy of history, sociology of knowledge, economics. Indeed, he is credited for being founding father to at least three of these subjects. Saleh Faghirzadeh named Ibn Khaldun's work "sociology of sociology."\(^1\) Yves Lacoste retorted: if Thucydides invented history, Ibn Khaldun made it a science.\(^2\) M.A. Nashat called Ibn Khaldun "pioneer economist."\(^3\) H.S. Sa'fan claimed that Ibn Khaldun is the founder of sociology of knowledge, arguing that Ibn Khaldun created sociology in order to outline and serve his sociology of knowledge.\(^4\)

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\(^1\) **Sociology of Sociology**, Tehran: The Soroush Press, 1982.


In addition, unqualified praise came from many sources. Arnold Toynbee, the eminent British historian, hailed Ibn Khaldun's philosophy of history as "undoubtedly the greatest work of its kind that has ever been produced by any mind in any time or place." The famous 19th century philosopher of history, Robert Flint, had this to say: "Neither the classical nor the medieval Christian world can show one of nearly the same brightness.... Plato, Aristotle, and Augustine were not his peers, and all others were unworthy of being even mentioned along with him." What such nominations and accolades point to is the wide acknowledgement of the significance of the contributions Ibn Khaldun made to the social sciences. Yet what is striking is the conspicuous neglect of Ibn Khaldun's political economy.

I do not mean to imply that Ibn Khaldun's political or economic thought have not been studied. What I mean is that the attention has been confined to one or the other. Consequently, political scientists emphasized the primacy of politics over economics, and thereby focused their attention to Ibn Khaldun's "political realism," comparing him with the

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likes of Machiavelli and Hobbes. On the other hand, economists gave the primacy to economic factors, and, hence, were impressed by the "modernity" of Ibn Khaldun's economic analysis, and considered him forerunner of "the materialist conception of history." Consequently, the comprehensive system of Ibn Khaldun, which is key to his political economy, was sadly missed. This system of thought, I believe, can only be captured by transcending the academic, disciplinary compartmentalization of economics and politics.

What is much overdue, then, is the examination of Ibn Khaldun's thought through the lens of political economy. This study aims to accomplish this objective. It will systematically and comprehensively show Ibn Khaldun's major contributions to political economy. The main thesis is that Ibn Khaldun's "science of 'umran" is in fact what we call political economy. Although Ibn Khaldun's analysis represents only a rough outline of political economy, its significance must be understood in the context of the 14th century level of economic and intellectual development. Ibn Khaldun, thus, rightly deserves the title of father of

7 See, for example, Barbara F. Stowasser, Religion and Political Development: Some Comparative Ideas on Ibn Khaldun and Machiavelli, Occasional Paper Series, Washington, D.C., Georgetown University Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, 1983.

Political Economy: Classical Paradigms

Strictly speaking the term "political economy" is specific to capitalism and developments caused by its advent. The canons of political economy as well as the subject matter, are defined by the works of the classical political economists: Adam Smith, Rev. T.R. Malthus, J.S. Mill, David Ricardo, and Karl Marx. Production, distribution, exchange, and consumption form the object of analysis in political economy. "The aim of political economy," according to Edwin Cannan, "is the explanation of the general causes on which the wealth or material welfare of human beings depend."

Mercantilism, Liberalism, and Marxism have emerged as the major paradigms of classical political economy.

Liberalism and Marxism emphasize the material aspect of civilization, claiming primacy to economic over political activities. Thus, they are, in the words of Martin Staniland, "economistic."

The liberals focus on the role of the market in

---

9 Paradigm is used here in the sense of doctrine, worldview, theory.


shaping social organization and societal growth. The liberal viewpoint conceives the role of the state as one of regulation and of curbing the adverse affects of capitalism on the proletarianized masses to prevent their rebellion. For the liberals, the state serves as a guarantor of private property and individual liberty. The liberals, however, advocate Laissez Faire and free trade to promote prosperity at home and "harmony of interests" and peace internationally. \(^\text{12}\) Liberalism does object to economic self-determination. Human reason and liberty are viewed as remedy for conflict.

The Marxists attribute historical change to the everpresent class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. \(^\text{13}\) The Marxist method is derived from the dialectic of class struggle. On the role of the state, the Marxists view the state as a tool in the hands of the bourgeoisie class to keep control of the proletariat. Unlike the liberals who want minimal government, the Marxists would prefer to see the state wither away, paving the way for universal Socialism.

The third paradigm of classical political economy, Mercantilism, gives primacy to politics over economics. \(^\text{12}\) For a scathing critique of such notions in the liberal thought, see E.H. Carr The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939, London: Macmillan & co., 1946.  

Mercantilism represents the methodological orientation, named by Staniland, "politicism." Economic considerations are subordinated to, and used for, state building, the national interest, pursuit of power. Economic activities necessarily involve conflict, according to this paradigm. Mercantilism is skeptical of free trade. Today, Mercantilism survives in the form of what Robert Gilpin calls "economic nationalism," or, what Staniland calls "autarky" (narrow nationalism).\textsuperscript{14}

The classical political economy, with its lopsided treatment of one or the other branches of political economy, leaves little room for writers, such as Ibn Khaldun. Were we to adhere to this limited sense of political economy, we would have to forego our study of Ibn Khaldun and relegate the exploration of his thought to historiographers or sociologists—as has heretofore been the case for the most part. Were we to do this, we would have to accept the implicit assumption that what matters to our contemporary world is European history and thought, since by and large capitalism has been an European phenomenon. In other words, historical developments in over two-thirds of the world's population would have to be understood through capitalist eyes and modes of thought. Were we, finally, to accept this "classical" lopsidedness, we would have to succumb to the

logic of science fragmentation which in this case does more harm than good.

**Political Economy and Third World Modernity**

The inadequacies of Western political economy, as it is applied in the Third world, show themselves clearly in modernization/development theories. Essentially, Liberalism prescribed Weberian "protestant ethic" and Western models of development for underdeveloped societies. Needless to say, these have failed to lead most Third World nations to develop or "catch up with the West," so to speak. Indeed, these prescriptions have failed miserably, as is clear from the present situation of many of the underdeveloped nations.

The gap separating the "haves" and the "have nots" has, if anything, continued to widen. Many nations in Africa and Asia are under constant threat of famine. And many, previously hopeful candidates of industrialization, are on the verge of total bankruptcy and economic collapse as a result of their ever mounting debts to Western banks.

Consequently, many underdeveloped nations have come to the grim realization that in spite of the impressive achievements of Western nations, they cannot go on indefinitely imitating Western example of development.

Imitation of Western model is not a guarantee of modernization or development for most Third World states. First, most industrial Western nations had a head start free
of structural problems, such as colonialism and foreign exploitation. They were able to effectively control their own resources, start with little capital, and capitalize on whatever "comparative advantage" they had. Second, Western industrialization took place at a high social, political and economic cost. The horrible consequences of the proletarianization process are too high a price to pay nowadays for uncertain prospects of development.15

Marxism, and by extension those informed by it as the dependency and world systems theories, although very instructive for identifying the structural consequences of capitalism on underdeveloped areas, has not fared much better than Liberalism. The ills of underdeveloped countries have been disproportionately attributed to external factors, i.e., the role of imperialism. Thus, the internal processes (cultural, political, economic) of underdeveloped nations have been virtually neglected or minimized. In addition, there is the difficulty of trying to classify social strata of Third world states according to the Marxian rigid notion of "class."

Western political economy, as developed by the classical political economists, is less than adequate for a genuine understanding of the Third world's past and present. And, while I do not lay the claim of having a solution, I

15 For a thoughtful analysis of this, refer to Karl Polanyi, The Great Transformation, Boston: Beacon Press, 1957, esp. chaps. 7, 8, and 9.
believe that the solution not only has to reflect the internal structures and history of Third world countries, but must come from within. Hence, the choice of studying a 14th century scholar, Ibn Khaldun, becomes clear, for not only does such a study bring attention to his scholarly achievements, but because of the relevance of his thought to the present reality of the underdeveloped nations.

No longer will the student of international relations have to exclusively look for Marxian, Weberian, or Wallersteinian insights as to why some nations advanced and others lagged behind. Of course there is nothing wrong in seeking such insights for comparative purposes and to explain Western experience and history. What is wrong is generalization of Western experience to the rest of the world.\textsuperscript{16} If this study proves Ibn Khaldun's worthiness of the title "father of political economy," and if it succeeds in establishing the relevance of his work, it will have provided a rationale for scholars of international relations and political economy to explore contributions made by Ibn Khaldun and other non-Western scholars.

\textbf{The Revival of Political Economy}

The present state of modern political economy has been

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{16} W.W. Rostow, for instance, generalizes even the experience of England. See his \textit{The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto}, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960.}
influenced by, among others, the following: First, compartmentalization of knowledge into specialized disciplines, a trend emerged toward the end of the 19th century. This trend was stimulated and modelled after the natural sciences. Scholars in economics and in politics believed that progress in their respective "fields" was contingent upon such fields becoming independent sciences, hence, the emergence of political science and positive economics. Undoubtedly, such de facto separation of economics and politics has undermined the integrity of political economy. Susan strange, for example, believes that in order for political economy to restore its legitimacy as a viable science, it has to "throw off the hindering influences of conventional disciplines...."17

The second factor affecting the politics/economics equation relates to what has taken place particularly since World War II. Whenever security concerns seemed salient, politics overshadowed economics. According to Joan Spero, the cold war and the separate economic systems adopted by the East and the West after World War II have perpetuated the relative predominance of politics.18 The role of economics


is gradually emerging, as a result of the lessening of tensions between the superpowers.

It is encouraging that, as the 20th century approaches its conclusion, we are experiencing a tremendous surge of interest in political economy, particularly by political scientists and international relationists. However, what is interesting is the fact that this "new political economy," as it has been characterized by Staniland, is gradually restoring the balance between economics and politics. The causes for this are related to the rise of the Third world as an effective interlocutor in world politics, particularly in regard to the call for a New International Economic Order (NIEO); increased cooperation between superpowers; and the decline of the hegemonic status of the U.S. as well as the intensification of competition among the industrial states.

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Ibn Khaldun's "New Science"

Ibn Khaldun's "new science" focuses on ʿumran. ʿumran, aimed at the survival and prosperity of the human

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19 This is clear from the formulations used to denote political economy, as, for example, "power and money," "power and wealth," "authority and exchange," "politics and markets," "states and markets." For further discussion of this, see Gilpin Political Economy, p. 9.

20 For a discussion of this, see, Spero, International Economic Relations, pp. 3-4. See, also, Hollist and Tullis (eds.) International Political Economy, pp. 2-6.
species, is defined in terms of the level of progress achieved, politically, materially, culturally, and spiritually. In contemporary terms 'umran is equivalent to such terms as development and modernization. In fact, The Concise Oxford English-Arabic Dictionary makes 'amara (a derivative of 'umran), along with numou (growth) and tatawur (progress), synonymous with the term development.

'Umran is relative, varying among states and among stages the state passes through. The highest level of 'umran is hadarah (civilization). Hence, the terms "'umran" and "civilization" are not exactly interchangeable. Ibn Khaldun clearly states that hadara is the ultimate end (ghaya) of 'umran. In other words, civilization is used as an ideal type, while 'umran is used only as a variable, a fact few have recognized.

Ibn Khaldun's notion of political economy employed here will simply refer to the interaction and interdependence of political and economic factors, and their effects on cultural and social phenomena. I believe this definition encompasses the essence of the meaning of political economy.

21 Ibn Khaldun, *Kitab al-'Ibar* (7 volumes), Beirut: Mu'assasat al Alami, n.d., p. 43. Our analysis in this study is exclusively based on the theoretical volume (Volume One), which will hereinafter be referred to simply as *Ibar*.

22 Ibid., p. 123.

23 It is interesting in this regard to note that E.W. Lane's *Arabic-English Lexicon* does not even use hadara (civilization) in his definition of 'umran.
whether it be applied to pre-capitalist or capitalist society. In a sense, Ibn Khaldun's conception is closer to that of the 16th century Spanish political economist, Juan de Mariana, or, even to Sir James Steuart's conception.24

Politics and economics, the dual branches of political economy, are to be stressed equally, for, according to Ibn Khaldun, neither has primacy over the other. Politics and economics are also complementary to one another, with politics serving as the form, and economics supplying the substance. They go hand in hand, although in some instances elements of one serve as prerequisite for the other, as, for example, political security for economic prosperity, or economic prosperity for social conflict and revolution. Hence, politics and economics are reciprocal determinants.

Ibn Khaldun looks at a wide range of subjects, some of which to-day's political economists would frown at. In terms of comprehensiveness, Max Weber's Economy and Society may be considered a modern example that compares with the Muaaddimah.25 Professor Gilpin, in his latest book, does recognize the need for comprehensiveness, when he writes: "a unified methodology or theory of political economy would


25 Perhaps one may consider Weber's Economy and Society as the closest modern example to the Muaaddimah in breadth of analysis, conception of political economy, and even methodology.
require a general comprehension of the process of social
change, including the ways in which the social, economic, and
political aspects of society interact."\textsuperscript{26} (Emphasis mine)

The concepts of Ibn Khaldun's political economy, in
comparison with modern political economy, are elemental. We
must not, however, forget that centuries and phenomenal
achievements separate Ibn Khaldun's world from the world of
his successors. While Ibn Khaldun's science represents the
state of the art of 14th century political economy, to us his
science can only be considered as a rough sketch, an outline,
of a modern conception of political economy. The subtitle of
the dissertation "Rudiments of a new science," is thus an
accurate description.

Fallacious Characterizations of the "New Science"

Many writers have incorrectly labelled Ibn Khaldun's
science as "science of culture," as, for instance, Muhsin
Mahdi and Franz Rosenthal. Others, have labelled it as
"science of sociology," as, for example, Charles Issawi.
Such characterizations are inaccurate and misleading. To
call Ibn Khaldun's political economy "science of culture," we
believe, is to mystify it by reducing the importance of the
material aspect in it. Is not culture only one aspect (to be
sure, the aesthetic aspect) of \textsuperscript{umran} and civilization?

As regards the second claim, \textit{Weberster's Third New

\textsuperscript{26} See Gilpin, \textit{Political Economy}, pp. 8-9.
International Dictionary defines sociology as "the science of society, social institutions, and social relationships."
Edward Shils writes: "The knowledge contained in sociology covers a very wide and differentiated range of phenomena...."27 In other words, such generality of the field of sociology qualifies a large number of writers (Ibn Khaldun, Marx, Weber) to be called sociologists. And, in a limited sense they are sociologists, for they dealt with a wide range of topics. The question, however, is whether Ibn Khaldun's primary objective can be considered in the realm of sociology or political economy. Ibn Khaldun's main concern is clearly with the rise and fall of states, a cyclical process that is a product of economic and political factors operating in unison. The state is, thus, his primary unit of analysis.

Shils, furthermore, points out that "...sociology is not a science in the sense of having a coherent, widely accepted body of general or theoretical propositions which rest on more particular propositions and which explain particular reliably observed events...."28 (emphasis mine)

On the basis of this, we can argue that, unlike sociological studies, Ibn Khaldun's analysis does not only address well-defined questions and formulates particular propositions, but

28 Ibid., p. 801.
also uses scientific methodology. Thus, while Ibn Khaldun could be considered as a sociologist, he is a political economist first.

Matters of Procedure

The focus of this study is on Ibn Khaldun's theoretical work as embodied in the Muqaddimah and not on the application of his theories, which constitutes the rest of his Kitab al-`ibar (or Universal History), of which the Muqaddimah is only the introductory volume of the three volume work.

The Muqaddimah, which contains the theoretical exposition of Ibn Khaldun's political economy, is divided into six parts:29

I. Human Society: kinds and geographical distribution;

II. Nomadic Societies: tribes and savage nations (This was the first because, it comes before all others in time.);

III. States, the Caliphate, Royal Authority, and Government Ranks (This, too, had to precede sedentary society and the development of cities.);

IV. Sedentary Societies, Cities and Provinces;

V. Crafts, Jobs, and Economic Activity (The rationale for this was that jobs were natural and necessary, but sciences, which followed, were luxury--and necessities are prior to luxuries. Crafts were classified with jobs and economic

29 See `Ibar, p. 41.
VI. Sciences and Education.

The overall organization of the dissertation roughly follows the organization of the *Mugaddimah*. However, individual chapters are topically organized, drawing upon the relevant discussion wherever found in the *Mugaddimah*. Ibn Khaldun has often discussed one topic in one chapter, to return to it again and again in subsequent chapters. Therefore, it is necessary for us to do a little rearranging in order to present the material in a systematic and coherent fashion. We are aware that our organization may not be uniformly appreciated by readers, for the task itself is a subjective one.

We will primarily rely on the Arabic edition of the *Ibar*. All English quotations are my own translations, that is, except in a few instances where other existing translations are clearly superior and accurate. In particular, two supplementary interpretive translations will be quite useful: Charles Issawi's *An Arab Philosophy of History*, London, 1950; and Franz Rosenthal's *The Mughaddimah: an Introduction to History*, 3 volumes, New York: Bollingen

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Outline of Chapters

One of our contentions in the dissertation is that few political economists have heard of Ibn Khaldun, let alone studied his pioneering work. In the first chapter, we discuss the life of the multi-talented scholar, and situate him within the context of his time to account for his genius. If there is one thing needing more emphasis than any other in this chapter, it is that Ibn Khaldun was not an "ivory tower" intellectual.

The *Mugaddimah* is a synthesis of Muslim learning and civilization. Its author was certainly influenced by the great philosophical and religious debates in Muslim history. Chapter II, conveniently subtitled "Reason and Revelation," discusses such debates and summarizes Ibn Khaldun's reaction to them. The aim of the chapter is not only to ascertain what influenced Ibn Khaldun's intellectual orientation but also to uncover the epistemological assumptions of the methodology of the *Mugaddimah*.

In Chapter III, our intent is to show that Ibn Khaldun, centuries before the classical political economists, was able to identify with clarity such key concepts as: cooperation, specialization, division of labor, value, .............

31 Referred to throughout the text as *Mugaddimah*. The reader will find a brief critique of F. Rosenthal's translation in Appendix A.
laissez faire, taxation, supply and demand, among others. Certainly some notions, as, for instance, value, could not be refined in his time to the same degree as in capitalist era. Ibn Khaldun's ability to formulate these notions with such clarity and in a comprehensive system, proves his genius and pioneering work.

In Chapter IV, we analyze such important notions as: wazī', asabiyya, and mulk. Ibn Khaldun makes the significant contribution respecting the role of religion in political action. As forerunner to Hobbes, he solves the "state of anarchy" dilemma, and prove the necessity and "naturalness" of political organization. Lastly, we look at Ibn Khaldun's masterful analysis of the transformation of the Caliphate into temporal authority.

Chapters III and IV give the false impression that Ibn Khaldun meant to separate economics and politics. This was not his intent, nor is it ours here. The aim behind the separation is to show the range of Ibn Khaldun's contribution, by identifying and explaining concepts and ideas that are most related to each other. Neither chapter, however, can be studied apart from the other. Each seemingly self-contained chapter discusses "ideas" --not theories-- that are related to one another and to those in the other chapter. The two chapters follow a synchronic form of analysis.

In Chapter V, we shift to a diachronic form of
analysis in order to illustrate the dynamic nature and unity of politics and economics of Ibn Khaldun's political economy. The object of analysis, the rise and fall of states, lends itself to this type of method. We look at the stages Ibn Khaldun thought every state must pass through. We elaborate on four categories within each state: state, city, economy, and arts and sciences.

In the last chapter, we attempt to answer the question of contemporary influence and relevance of Ibn Khaldun. To illustrate the magnitude of Ibn Khaldun's influence, we analyze the thought of respectively Ali Abd al-Raziq, as representative of modernism, and Sati' al-Husari, as representative of Arab nationalism. We attempt to demonstrate Ibn Khaldun's influence on both scholars. We show that al-Husari and Abd al-Raziq have failed to appreciate the unity of Ibn Khaldun's science. We conclude by arguing the contemporary relevance of Ibn Khaldun's political economy.
CHAPTER I

LIFE AND TIMES OF IBN KHALDUN

Abdul-Rahman Ibn Muhammad Ibn Khaldun was born in Tunis in 1332 and died in Cairo in 1406. It was the destiny of Ibn Khaldun to penetrate with exceptional versatility into the domain of human experience, both public and private.¹ He was not only a philosopher of history, geographer, economist, sociologist, politician, pedagogue, diplomat but also a metaphysician, a jurist and belletrist. The Mugaddimah was without doubt the product of his scholarship, wide experience, superb education, and incisive and keen mind. This chapter will highlight the important aspects of Ibn Khaldun's life and times. (Map 1 shows the cities and areas in which Ibn Khaldun has resided, worked, or visited. It serves as another testimony to his extensive knowledge of Muslim Spain, North Africa and the Middle East.)

Map 1: Major Muslim Cities in the 14th Century

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Historical Background

While some fared better than others, the 14th century was in general a century of decline for the Muslim countries.² (See Map 2; also, Table 1 for dynastic succession). There was a global shift in the Mediterranean balance of power: Muslim control which had centered in the Iberian Peninsula was weakening, and the citadel of the Byzantine empire in Asia Minor, Constantinople, eventually fell in 1458. No sooner Muslim lands recovered from the crusades than they were under attack from the East. Eastern Islam had already suffered a major blow at the hands of Jenkiz Khan whose troops destroyed Baghdad in 1258, and with that came the collapse of the Abbasid Caliphate. Only few lands had been, by the end of the 14th century, spared destruction of Mongol and Tatar hordes.³

Egypt, which was traditionally considered part of eastern Islam, was especially lucky, and under the Mamlukes (1250-1517), it enjoyed security and political stability. Egypt's economy was primarily based on agriculture and international commerce, allowing for its relative

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Map 2: 14th Century Muslim States

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**Major Muslim States in Spain and the Arab World, 632-1300**

**The Rashidun Caliphs:**
- Abu Bakr: 632-34
- Omar: 634-44
- Othman: 644-56
- Ali: 656-61

**Umayyads:** 661-750

**Abbasids ( Ended by Mongol invasion):** 750-1258

**Local States**

**In Spain:**
- Umayyads: 756-1031
- Al-Morabitun: 1086-1145
- Al-Mowahhidun: 1145-1212
- Nasrids of Grenada: 1232-1492

**In North Africa:**
- Fatimids: 909-969
- Al-Morabitun: 969-1130
- Al-Mowahhidun: 1130-1269
- Hafsids: 1228-1534
- Abu Abd al-Wadir: 1236-1550
- Merinids: 1269-1465

**In Syria:**
- Seljuks: 1094-1117
- Ayyubids: 1181-1260

**In Egypt:**
- Fatimids: 969-1171
- Ayyubids: 1171-1249
- Mamlukes: 1249-1517

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prosperity. Cairo was in the 14th century the intellectual center of Islam. Ibn Khaldun arrived in Cairo in 1383. His utter amazement at the splendors of the city, which he expressed in eloquent prose, was more than justified.

In the West, Muslim Spain had by the 14th century all but vanished as a result of Christian attacks. The kingdom of Grenada was the sole survivor, although it was weak and under constant pressure, particularly from Castille. In a sense, the peace treaty which Ibn Khaldun negotiated on behalf of Ibn al-Ahmar, king of Grenada, in 1365 with Pedro the Cruel, King of Castille, gave the Muslim kingdom a new lease of life.

North Africa, had been since the middle of the 8th century politically independent of, although maintained close cultural and economic relations with, eastern Islam. Powerful tribal-based empires succeeded one another.

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4 Ibid., pp. 20-1.

5 See Ibn Khaldun's autobiography, which was edited and annotated by Tawit at-Tanji who published it under the title: at-Ta'rif bi Ibn Khaldun wa Rihlatuhu Gharban wa Shargan (Ibn Khaldun's biography and his travel in the West and in the East), Egypt, 1951, pp. 246-7. Hereinafter, the autobiography will be referred to as Ta'rif.

6 Spain and North Africa to the west of Egypt and eastern Tripolitania, which was also under the control of the Mamlukes.

7 Ta'rif, pp. 103, 130-9, 154-5, 227.
in Tunis, managed sixty years later to conquer Egypt and make Cairo the seat of their state. They encouraged economic and cultural activity and built the al-Azhar University, which is still today a monument of higher learning in the Muslim world. Two Berber dynasties followed: al-Morabitun (Almoravids) and al-Mowahhidun (Almohades), which established their kingdoms successively in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Al-Mowahhidun ruled North Africa and Spain until 1269, when the Merinids defeated them and captured Sijilmassa.

In the 14th century, three major dynasties, which grew out of the break-up of the al-Mowahhidun state, divided among themselves control of North Africa. (See Map 2). From their capital in Fez, the Merinids ruled over the western part of North Africa. In central Maghreb, the Banu abdel-Wad ruled from their stronghold in Tlemcen. And, the Hafsid dynasty was firmly established in Tunis, the capital of Afriqya. Of these dynasties, the Merinids were most ambitious and always on the offensive; but they were unsuccessful in their unification quest for North Africa as well as Spain. Tlemcen, Bougie, and Constantine were politically unstable and most vulnerable to the designs of

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their aggressive neighbors to the West and to the East. Tunis, by contrast, was a prospering center of international trade, and was a mecca of sorts for Spanish intellectual emigres. It was an ideal place of learning, and Ibn Khaldun, as we elaborate later, was obviously a beneficiary of this.

The stability that existed during the al-Mowahhidun and al-Morabitun states collapsed. The decision of the Egyptian government to shift the old gold route, which originated in western Sudan and passed through North Africa on its way to Egypt, in preference of a direct one, precipitated, what Yves Lacoste called "The Crisis of the fourteenth-century." The cities which prospered along the gold route were as a consequence suffering tremendously. Added to the economic hardships, the rivalries among the dynasties, coups, conspiracies, shifting alliances, which then were all characteristic of North Africa. Ibn Khaldun, who himself was more than once suspected of conspiracy, was tremendously affected by the situation.

The role of tribal chieftains was essential in all this. Tribal leaders, especially those who commanded large force of fighting men, were important players in the politics of North Africa. Their allegiance was a valuable asset competed for by the various contending dynasties. It was for this reason that Ibn Khaldun, who was well-known and respected by the tribes, became many times a prized asset for

9 See his Ibn Khaldun, Chapter 5, pp. 79-92.
the sultans, managing occasionally to obtain for them the allegiance and support of one tribe or another.

**Family Background**

Sometime in the first half of 13th century, and shortly before their city of Seville fell into Christian hands in 1248, the Ibn Khaldun family left Spain and crossed over to North Africa.¹⁰

Ibn Khaldun's distant ancestor Khalid (from whose name, the family name, Khaled, was derived), who came to Spain and settled in Seville in the beginning of the eighth-century, was of Hadramut by origin. In Spain, the Ibn Khaldun family played a prominent role in the intellectual and political life. Two members of the family, Kurayb Ibn Uthman Ibn Khaldun and his brother Khalid, participated in the successful revolution against the Umayyad ruler Abdallah in 913. For his key role in the revolution, Kurayb governed Seville.¹¹ His rule lasted for nearly ten years. But his monopoly of power and heavy-handed administration agitated the populace and eventually instigated their revolt. At the

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¹⁰ Information about Ibn Khaldun's family and life is derived primarily from the Ta\'rif (autobiography) which he wrote while in Egypt. It is worth mentioning that Ibn Khaldun was the first Muslim scholar to have written a book-length autobiography. I am certainly in agreement with Enan's assertion that Ibn Khaldun writes about himself in the most objective manner (Enan, *Ibn Khaldun*, pp. 157-8).

¹¹ *Ta\'rif*, p. 6.
hands of his former revolutionary "comrade," Ibrahim Hajjaj, Kurayb was overthrown, losing his life in the process. As a consequence of this, the Ibn Khaldun family temporarily lost its public role and influence.

During the reign of Abu al-Qasim Al Mu'tamid Ibn Abbad, the famous king of al-Tawa'if in Spain, the Ibn Khaldun family regained some of its earlier prominence. Many members of the Ibn Khaldun family fought heroically against the Christian king of Castille in the Zalalijah battle in 1086. As sign of his gratitude, Ibn Abbad rewarded the family with administrative and political appointments.

When al-Morabitun took over the rule of Muslim Spain, the Ibn Khaldun clan, as well as other clans, were suppressed. However, when the second Berber dynasty, al-Mowahhidun, controlled Spain and North Africa, they appointed Abu Hafs, head of the Hintateh tribe, as governor of Seville and western Spain. The Ibn Khaldun family cultivated close ties with the Hafsids, especially with ruler Abu Zakariyya Yahya Ibn Abdel-Wahhid Ibn Abu Hafs, who became ruler of Seville. But Abu Zakariyya wanted to expand his power and gain independence from the al-Mowahhidun. Thus he left Spain and moved to North Africa. He captured Afriqya from his cousins in 1228.

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12 Ibid.  
13 Ibn al Muhtasib Ibn Khaldun once gave Abu Zakariyya a "slave" girl as a gift. She was destined to marry the ruler and bear his three children. Ibid., p. 9.
Abu Zakariyya's decision to leave Spain was a wise one, given the fact that the situation there was deteriorating rapidly. Division and unabated rivalries characterized the Muslim tribes; and, consequently, the Christians were increasingly threatening Muslim presence in Spain. In a desperate attempt, in 1232, Ibn al-Ahmar led a revolt to unify the Muslims—but to no avail. As matters got worse, the Ibn Khaldun family decided to emigrate to the safety of North Africa. After a brief stay in Ceuta, Morocco, it was logical for the family to transfer to Tunis, where their friends, the Hafsids, have consolidated their rule. Tunis was a haven for Spanish refugees who were in general on a much higher cultural level than the native North Africans. The Hafsids, as expected, welcomed the Ibn Khaldun family and gave Abdul-Rahman's great-grandfather the important post of minister of finance, which he executed with exceptional skill and honesty. Ibn Khaldun's grandfather, too, held many administrative positions and became advisor to the Hafsid ruler in Bougie. Ibn Khaldun's father was also employed by the Hafsids, albeit briefly; he eventually retired from politics to devote his time to study and teaching.

Ibn Khaldun's Life and Experiences: 1332-1406

Ibn Khaldun's life may be divided into four stages:

early life and education, 1332-50; political career, 1351-75; retirement from politics, seclusion and intensive research, 1376-81; and his residence in Egypt, 1382-1406.

**Early life and education: 1332-1350**

Ibn Khaldun was fortunate to have been born in Tunis, a city which was then prosperous as a major commercial and cultural center in North Africa. Growing up in high society, Ibn Khaldun had the best education in Tunis, at the hands of the best specialists. He was trained in the Qur'anic sciences, Arabic, poetry, and jurisprudence.

Ibn Khaldun was also in a privileged position to mix with, and study under, many of the scholars who accompanied the sultan Abu al-Hasan in his conquest of Tunis in 1347. None, however, influenced Ibn Khaldun more than Muhammad Ibn Ibrahim al-Abilyy (1282-83/1356), the famous logician and Shari‘ah scholar.15 While in Tunis, al-Abilyy stayed at the Ibn Khaldun's as a house guest. al-Abilyy instructed the young scholar in mathematics, logic and philosophy. In a sense, al-Abilyy was mentor and father figure to Ibn Khaldun, whose father had died in the Black Death which befell Tunis in 1348/49.

Ali Wardi asserted that al-Abilyy was the scholar who introduced Ibn Khaldun to Shi‘ah thinkers such as al-Razi and

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15 Ta‘rif, p. 33.
Tusi. Ibn Khaldun, in fact, wrote a summary of Razi's book, which he called "Lubab Al-Muhassal," in which he adopted the same line of argument as Tusi. Therefore it is certain that it was due to al-Abilyy's influence that Ibn Khaldun developed an appreciation of philosophy.

The Merinid ruler, Abu al-Hasan, soon ran into trouble with the tribes. The Hafsids, taking full advantage of the collapse of Abu al-Hasan's tribal coalition, attached him and recovered Tunis in 1350. Simultaneously, as if Abu al-Hasan did not have enough trouble, Abu Inan, his son, revolted against him in Fez. So Abu al-Hasan loaded his supporters and large entourage aboard his ships and headed westward to quell the revolt. The ships, however, sank at the coast of Bougie, and a large number of people died, including scores of scholars who accompanied the Sultan. Fortunately, al-Abilyy remained with the Ibn Khaldun's in Tunis, upon Ibn Khaldun's earnest insistence.

Ibn Khaldun's political career: 1351-1375

Al-Abilyy was soon to be enlisted in the service of the Sultan Abu Inan. It was one of the saddest occasions

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17 Ibid., p. 131.
18 Ta'rif, p. 55.
for Ibn Khaldun to part ways with his cherished professor. Not long after, however, Ibn Khaldun accepted the offer to become Sahib al-`alameh (chief government clerk) for the Hafsid ruler of Tunis, Abu Ishaq. This was a relatively insignificant assignment, requiring an individual with no more than basic education. Understandably, Ibn Khaldun was quite unhappy in his post, and thus was ever more determined to follow his master, al-Abilyy. Abu Ishaq invaded Constantine, but the army of the Sultan Abu Zayd defeated them. Ibn Khaldun, who accompanied Abu Ishaq's invading army, took the opportunity of the defeat to escape to Marakesh.

When Abu Inan returned to Fez, he surrounded himself, like his father had done before him, with scholars, who served as advisors and usually accompanied the Sultan on conquests. Ibn Khaldun's name was mentioned to the Sultan, who in turn invited him to join the court scholars. Fez by then was replacing Tunis as a center of science and culture, under the relative measure of political stability it attained. There, Ibn Khaldun pursued higher learning, attending colleagues' seminars in philosophy mathematics, and logic. Although he occupied a marginal post as Abu Inan's secretary, he had free access to the sultan and to all government documents, and was able to cultivate friendships with court officials and foreign embassies. Abu Abdallah, a deposed Hafsid ruler, and `Amer Ibn Abdallah, who both were
destined to play leading roles later, were among those befriended by Ibn Khaldun.

Ibn Khaldun's close relation with Abu Abdallah caused suspicion among courtiers, who convinced the Sultan that Ibn Khaldun was encouraging Abu Abdallah to escape to Bougie to restore his rule there. Charged with conspiracy, both he and the ruler were sent to prison. The ruler was released shortly afterwards while Ibn Khaldun remained in custody for nearly two years. Following the death of Abu Inan, Ibn Khaldun was pardoned by the deceased Sultan's powerful vizier, al-Hasan Ibn 'Amer.

The new ruler, Abu Salim, apparently had the assistance of Ibn Khaldun in usurping power from his nephew,
Abu Inan's young son. In acknowledgement, Abu Salim assigned Ibn Khaldun to the post of secretary of state (Katib al-sir wat-tarsil wal-insha'), and, later on, he put him in charge of the ministry of justice (Khutat al-Mazalim). However, Abu Salim was a weak and immature ruler, controlled and manipulated by his advisor, Ibn Marzuq. The selfishness and unwise behavior of Ibn Marzuq finally led to a revolution by 'Amer Ibn Abdallah, Ibn Khaldun's close friend from the days of Abu Inan. As a result of their friendship and the assistance rendered in the revolution, Ibn Khaldun, still young and ambitious, aspired to a more influential post in 'Amer's administration. Knowing that Ibn Khaldun was capable of conspiring against him, 'Amer denied Ibn Khaldun appointment to high office, but made available to him money and luxury instead. This, needless to say, was disappointing to Ibn Khaldun. Since his hopes of a key post were frustrated, Ibn Khaldun decided to leave for Tlemcen. Fearing that Abu Hammu, the ruler of Tlemcen might enlist the services of Ibn Khaldun against him, 'Amer was reluctant to permit his travel. But with the intercession of Mas'oud Ibn Rahhu Ibn Masay', 'Amer's longtime friend and vizier, Ibn Khaldun was

22 Upon the encouragement of Ibn Marzuq, Ibn Khaldun promoted Abu Salim's cause with Merinid dignitaries in Fez. See Ta'rif, p. 68.

23 Ibid., p. 77.

24 Ibid.

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finally permitted to travel on the condition that he would not go to Tlemcen. Ibn Khaldun chose Grenada. After sending his wife and children to their maternal uncles, in Constantine, he left in 1362.

The choice to go to Grenada was not haphazard. Muslim Spain was in general more prosperous and politically stable during this period than North Africa, but most important for Ibn Khaldun was his friendship with its ruler, Ibn al-Ahmar, and his advisor, Ibn al-Khatib. During the time when Ibn Khaldun was a high official in the government of Abu Salim, Ibn al-Ahmar came to Fez seeking the ruler's help to regain his throne which was usurped by his brother in 1359. Ibn Khaldun received the deposed Sultan and his vizier warmly and extended his services to them. Therefore, when Ibn Khaldun went to Grenada, he knew he would be well received there. Ibn al-Ahmar immediately made Ibn Khaldun court advisor, and generously furnished for his comfortable residence.

In the following year, 1363, Ibn al-Ahmar sent Ibn Khaldun on an embassy to Pedro the Cruel, king of Castille, to negotiate a peace treaty. Pedro, fully aware of Ibn Khaldun's high rank and importance, tried to lure him to his side. In spite of the generous offers extended to him from the Christian king, Ibn Khaldun graciously declined the

26 Ta`rif, pp. 79-80.
offers, successfully carried out his mission, and proudly returned to Grenada.27

He was not merely a skillful diplomat, but was a devoted tutor to Ibn al-Ahmar. They met frequently in camera, during which time Ibn Khaldun instructed the king in mathematics, Shari'ah, and logic.28 Ibn Khaldun perhaps thought that Ibn al-Ahmar, if well educated, could become the much needed philosopher-king in Muslim lands. The frequency and length of these "educational" meetings made Ibn al-Ahmar's vizier, Ibn al-Khatib, restless and increasingly suspicious of Ibn Khaldun's intentions.29 Fearing the consequences of a showdown with Ibn al-Khatib, Ibn Khaldun prudently decided to leave Grenada altogether. It was about this time that Ibn Khaldun received a letter of invitation from Abu Abdallah, his friend from the days of Abu Inan, who in the year before had managed to regain control of Bougie.

In Bougie, Ibn Khaldun was met by a royal welcome, and Abu Abdallah immediately made him prime minister.30 Unfortunately, the political atmosphere was poisoned by the crisis which resulted from open hostilities between Abu Abdallah and his cousin Abu Abbas, sultan of Constantine. Abu Abdallah badly needed allies and money to finance an

27 Ibid., pp. 84-5.
29 Ta`rif, p. 91.
30 Ibid., p. 98.
expedition against his cousin. No one was as suited for the task as Ibn Khaldun. In addition to his wide experience and political wisdom, Ibn Khaldun commanded high respect from Arab and Berber tribal leaders. But neither the money, which Ibn Khaldun collected, nor the alliance with the Sultan of Tlemcen, Abu Hammu, could save Abu Abdallah.

The decisive factor was that Abu Abdallah lost all popular support because he was little more than a harsh dictator.\(^{31}\) Therefore, when Abu Abbas incited the populace to revolt against Abu Abdallah, the people were quite receptive. Ibn Khaldun remained somewhat passive in the events, during which Abu Abdallah was killed. When advised him to give bay'\(\text{ah}\) (pledge of loyalty) to one of Abu Abdallah's sons, he adamantly, yet shrewdly, refused to do so. Instead, Ibn Khaldun went to the side of Abu Abbas, but stayed there briefly, and then moved to Biskra with whose tribal chief, Ahmad Ibn Yusuf Mezni, he had a longstanding friendship.

Abu Hammu was very angry and determined to recover Bougie to avenge the killing of Abu Abdallah, his father-in-law. He offered Ibn Khaldun the post of prime minister, but Ibn Khaldun refused it but sent his brother Yahya in his place.\(^{32}\) Yet he helped Abu Hammu in initiating an alliance with the sultan of Tunis, Abu Ishaq Ibn Abu Bakr al-Hafsi.

\(^{31}\) Ibid., p. 100.

\(^{32}\) Ibid., p. 103.
Meanwhile, in the West, Abdul Aziz succeeded 'Amer as the sultan of Fez. Abdul Aziz, one of the most expansionist merinid rulers, was in the process of consolidating his power in the conquered areas. The threat posed by Abdul Aziz preempted Abu Hammu's revenge plans. Ibn Khaldun was becoming disillusioned and confused by events. He would rather devote his time to engage in study and writing, when he was left alone. He therefore asked Abu Hammu's permission to travel to Grenada.

When he learned that Ibn Khaldun was on his way to Grenada, Abdul Aziz ordered his arrest, and sent him on a mission to rally the support of the Riyah tribe. After doing so, Ibn Khaldun returned to Biskra to visit with his wife and children. Until his departure to Grenada in 1374, Ibn Khaldun used his stay in Fez to do research and teaching. Although Ibn al-Ahmar's reception was good, Ibn Khaldun soon found that things have changed dramatically in the meantime. His friend Ibn al-Khatib was an exile in Fez, and since the recent revolution there, in jail. While he was in Fez, Ibn Khaldun tried to obtain Ibn al-Khatib's release, the latter was killed in jail in 1372. Ibn al-Ahmar was told by the new rulers of Fez about Ibn Khaldun's efforts on behalf of Ibn al-Khatib. Consequently, Ibn al-Ahmar did not treat Ibn Khaldun as well as he did before, and in a few months Ibn

33 Ibid., p. 134.
34 Ibid., p. 227.
Khaldun returned to North Africa.

**Retirement, seclusion, and intensive research: 1376-81**

Upon arrival in Tlemcen in 1375, Abu Hammu pardoned Ibn Khaldun and immediately dispatched him to the tribes to seek their support. Ibn Khaldun saw in this a golden opportunity to escape to Awlad Arif, who brought his family and sheltered them in Qal`at (castle) Ibn Salameh. Ibn Khaldun stayed in the Qal`at for several years, during which he wrote his Kitab al-`Ibar (or Universal History), which comprised three parts: the first was a draft of the famous Muqaddimah; part two, which was least developed, was concerning pre-Islamic Arabia and Muslim states of the East; and the last part was devoted to Berber and Northwest African history.

It took him five months to finish the Muqaddimah, which he revised a number of times later on. The Muqaddimah was intended at first to be a brief theoretical introduction to his Universal History. However, it developed into a book length size, because in it, Ibn Khaldun outlined the new "science of political economy."Apparently, he discovered

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36 According to Charles Issawi, the Muqaddimah "represents the most comprehensive synthesis in the Human Sciences ever achieved by the Arabs, and gives the modern non-specialist reader an accurate and vivid picture of the range of knowledge available to the medieval Muslim world." See Arab Philosophy, p. 1.

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that this new science was absolutely essential to the understanding of History.

At the end of 1378, Ibn Khaldun reached a point in his research which necessitated consulting library references. Therefore, he petitioned Abu Abbas, Sultan of Tunis, to return to Tunis, his birthplace and home of his ancestors. Abu Abbas not only granted him amnesty, but also gave him access to his court, and allowed him to devote his time to complete his research. But the courtiers, especially Ibn `Arafah, the prominent Maliki jurist, who lost students to Ibn Khaldun, were jealous of his position and conspired to get rid of him.

During this time, Ibn Khaldun revised earlier drafts of the *Mugaddimah*, and completed the third part on Berber and Zanateh tribes. A copy of the book was given to the Sultan; and with it enclosed a poem praising the Sultan and justifying the objectivity of the exposition in the book. 37 Meanwhile the pressure from the court was becoming intolerable. Ibn Khaldun was this time faced not with political struggle but with "scholarly" jealousies, mainly from Ibn `arafah, who found himself suddenly overshadowed by the presence of Ibn Khaldun. 38 To escape the ever increasing

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37 Ta`rif, p. 240.

38 Wardi is correct in asserting that Ibn Khaldun was a changed man after the time he spent in seclusion, for he showed no interest whatsoever in politics. See Enan, *Ibn Khaldun*, pp. 161-62.
harassment, Ibn Khaldun asked the sultan for permission to go on pilgrimage to Mecca.

Ibn Khaldun's residence in Egypt: 1382-1406

Ibn Khaldun arrived by sea to Alexandria in 1382, and after staying there for a month, he traveled to Cairo, where he settled for the rest of his life. Cairo, a metropolis, bustling with people and economic activity, profoundly impressed Ibn Khaldun. He was not a stranger to the Cairenes, for his reputation preceded him to Cairo. Students immediately flocked at his private sessions to study the Mugaddimah.

Ibn Khaldun soon had the opportunity to meet with the Mamluke Sultan, al-Malik az-Zahir Barquq, who had been in office only a little over a month. Barquq liked Ibn Khaldun, allowed him to teach at al-Azhar university, and interceded on his behalf with the Hafsid sultan of Tunis, Abu Abbas, to bring Ibn Khaldun's family, who were kept in a hostage status, to travel to Egypt. Barquq also appointed Ibn Khaldun as professor at the Qamhiyyeh college, and bestowed upon him the post of a Maliki Qadi (Chief Justice of the

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40 Enan, Ibn Khaldun, p. 74.
Ibn Khaldun executed his job with utmost efficiency, cracking down on corruption and favoritism, which, according to him, had hitherto been the hallmark of that office. Opposition to Ibn Khaldun, especially from "influential circles," began rising, and many openly requested his removal from office and even doubted his credentials. The mounting pressures and the news that his family, and all their worldly possessions, had sunk in the sea near Alexandria, sent Ibn Khaldun into a deep depression. He needed time to recuperate from all this, so he requested, and was granted, permission to resign from the office of Qadi in 1384. Three years later, he set out to finally perform his pilgrimage.

Barely a year after his return from Mecca, a revolt took place, dethroning Barquq for a little less than a year. Along with other dignitaries, Ibn Khaldun signed, under duress, a legal opinion declaring that Barquq was unfit to govern. This episode was remembered by Barquq, and his relationship with Ibn Khaldun was never the same. Ibn Khaldun's teaching position was not affected, however. And, only a month before his death (June 1399), Barquq was to offer Ibn Khaldun the post of Maliki judge for the second time.

Faraj, then only ten years old, succeeded his father to the throne. Upon learning that Tamerlane was on his way

41 Ta'rif, pp. 254-60.
to capturing Damascus, Faraj asked Ibn Khaldun again to accompany him to defend Syria. In early 1401, Faraj was informed of a plot against him in Cairo, the sultan decided to return hastily. The uncertain situation, as well as the rumors which spread concerning sultan Faraj's sudden and secret return to Cairo, affected the morale of the inhabitants and defenders of Damascus. Tamerlane, who was well aware of what was happening, increased pressure on the city. Consequently, Damascus was completely cut off and seriously threatened with total destruction, for which the Tatar hordes were famous.

In spite of the reluctance on the part of the defending army, the opinion of city dignitaries, including Ibn Khaldun's, was to declare the city open in return for a pledge from Tamerlane to spare the city. Ibn Khaldun was the party called upon by Tamerlane to negotiate with him. It appears that Tamerlane had been briefed by his advisors on the presence of Ibn Khaldun in the city. And, so it was an historic meeting between one of the world's greatest "history makers" and one of the world's greatest historians.

Ibn Khaldun remained in Tamerlane's camp thirty-five days, during which he was interrogated by Tamerlane himself

42 Ibn Khaldun had traveled once before to Syria, also with Faraj. Following this first visit, Ibn Khaldun had the chance for the first time to see on his way back the holy places in Palestine.

43 Ibid., pp. 366-76.
on the affairs of North Africa as well as on personal matters. Enchanted with Ibn Khaldun's oral account, Tamerlane requested that Ibn Khaldun write a handbook on the politics and geography of North Africa, which Ibn Khaldun did. The handbook was translated into Mongolian and read to Tamerlane, who perhaps thought that the information contained in it could be invaluable should he decide in the future to invade Egypt and North Africa. Upon completing his delicate assignment, Ibn Khaldun obtained Tamerlane's permission to return to Egypt.

Back in Cairo, Ibn Khaldun was met with a hero's welcome. During the following years Ibn Khaldun served as Qadi for the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth time, dying only a few days after the last appointment.

Summary and Conclusions

It is important to extract the main elements in Ibn Khaldun's life and times which appear to have influenced his practical and theoretical work.

Social conditions in Muslim lands were of great significance in Ibn Khaldun's thought. He was aware that Muslim power everywhere was on the decline: the Muslim world was encroached upon and "encircled" by the Christians in the West and the Tatar in the East. Muslim societies were experiencing incessant internal political and social strife; corruption, intrigue, and conspiracies were widespread. In
North Africa, in particular, there existed two types of society which were starkly different from one another: tribal and sedentary.\(^{44}\) In North Africa, also, Ibn Khaldun witnessed dramatic political and economic fluctuations associated with frequent rise and fall of dynasties. The 

*Mugaddimah* was almost certainly inspired in part by Ibn Khaldun's burning desire to uncover the underlying causes of the politico-economic change in the Muslim world in general and in North Africa and Spain in particular.

Ibn Khaldun belonged to a high ranking family, whose members' great influence for many centuries, first in Southern Arabia and later in Spain and North Africa, was undeniable. His father, grandfather, and great-grandfather all held important political appointments. It was due to this family record that Ibn Khaldun was showing his unease about accepting the low-level post under Abu Inan.\(^{45}\) Family position reflected in Ibn Khaldun's life economically (by allowing him to live in luxury) and educationally (by giving him access to the best educators and schools in Tunis).

As we have seen, Ibn Khaldun was not the type of scholar who theorized from an "ivory tower." He was a practical man, unlike Plato or Aristotle.\(^{46}\) Therefore the

\(^{44}\) See Gaston Bouthoul's *Ibn Khaldun: His Philosophy of Sociology*, (tr. into Arabic by Adil Zu'aitir), Cairo, 1955, p. 40.

\(^{45}\) *Ta'rif*, p. 59.

\(^{46}\) See Wardi, *Mantiq*, pp. 8, 10.
theoretical and practical aspects coexisted in Ibn Khaldun's life. But, one can conclude that, there was constant internal struggle between his desire to be a great political leader and his desire to be a great scholar. He held teaching posts while he held political positions, something unusual for that time. Frequent political retirements and seclusion for three years in Qal'at Ibn Salameh indicate the presence of this tension, which was apparently resolved in favor of scholarship after the seclusion.

The influence of teachers, in particular, al-Abilyy on the intellectual growth of Ibn Khaldun was unquestionably great. Through them he mastered the thought of previous philosophers, like al-Razi, al-Farabi, Ibn Sina (Avicenna), Ibn Rushd (Averroes), Ibn al-Haytham, al-Ghazali and other. He understood quite well the philosophical underpinnings of the "great debate" (Revelation and Reason) that took place in Muslim history between the ulama' and the philosophers, and he was influenced by them. We will elaborate on this in the following chapter "Philosophy of History: Reason and Revelation."

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48 It is important to note that Ibn Khaldun has written many books, which were for the most part philosophical commentaries on Muslim and Greek major works. For this, see Abdul-Rahman Badawi's Mu'allafat Ibn Khaldun (The Writings of Ibn Khaldun), Cairo, 1962.
CHAPTER II

PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY: REASON AND REVELATION

More than anything else, the reason versus revelation debate influenced Ibn Khaldun's thinking, and inspired his methodology. One can indeed view the profound system Ibn Khaldun built as in some way a reaction to the intellectual currents which dominated Muslim intellectual life until his day. Nothing can exemplify this debate better than traditional historiography, with its emphasis and dependence on revelation, and what can in general be called Muslim rationalism, with its emphasis on reason as a divine instrument designed to reveal truth.

Traditional Muslim Historiography

From the outset, history occupied an honored place in Islam. Clearly for Muslims, the experiences of other

nations were relevant to their own: Islam, the religion, was a culmination to all previous revelations; and, as a culture, it inherited Hellenic, Greek, Byzantine, Roman, Egyptian, Babylonian, Hindu, Chinese and Persian civilizations.¹ The role of the Persians is especially important in the genesis of Muslim historiography.² The Qur'an is full of historical accounts of previous nations. The purpose was to teach the Muslims the ʿibar which are contained in such accounts. The Qur'an uses the term ʿibar numerous times; the term which is interestingly enough a key term in the full title of Ibn Khaldun's Universal History.

Historical research developed in various forms.³ The simplest was the narratives (akhbar), which is essentially short stories and descriptions of individual events. By the beginning of the tenth century, chronologies were the dominant form. al-Tabari's famous Tarikh al-Rusul wa'l-Muluk (History of Prophets and Rulers) is a good example of

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³ I am following F. Rosenthal's classification. See, Muslim Historiography, pp. 66-69. See also Qureshi, "Historiography," pp. 1207-1213. Evaluating advanced Muslim historiography, Lacoste says it "was without doubt one of the most distinguished and brilliant branches of Muslim intellectual life." See his Ibn Khaldun, p. 174.
this. The last form of historical research followed a system of periodization, and within this three types emerged. The first is dynastic histories, such as Ibn Ishaq's *History of the Caliphs*. The second type is the tabaqat division, which was commonly used in the religious sciences to classify degrees of authority in the chain of isnad (reference) according to the generation to which a narrator belonged. For example, Abu Ishaq as-Sirazi's *Tabaqat al-Fugaha* (classes of scholars) gave higher authority and credibility to accounts by Prophet Muhammad's companions than to later generations of followers. The third type of periodization was the genealogical arrangements of tribes and families, such as az-Zubayr Ibn Bakkar's *Nasab Quraysh* (genealogy of Quraysh).

With the rise of sects in Islam, some Hadiths (or Traditions) were distorted and new ones were made up, as each new sect tried to justify its political dissent by invoking the authority of the Traditions. Some factions were selective concerning the Traditions, as for instance the Shiites, who "judged Hadith from their own standpoint and

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4 Edited by M.J. de Goeje and others, Leiden, 1879-1901.

5 They are "what the Prophet said or did, or of his tacit approval of something said or done in his presence." See *Encyclopedia of Islam* (EI; New Edition), vol. III, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1971, pp. 23-28.

6 *SEI*, p. 117.
only considered such traditions reliable as were based on the authority of Ali and his adherents." The need arose for critical evaluation of the traditions. Consequently, the traditionists developed the method of al-jarh wat-ta'dil. This method was originally the method for collecting the Hadiths. The historian used this in order to establish the credentials of the transmitters and, thereby, to prove the accuracy and reliability of his transmission. According to this, a reliable transmitter must be a believer, intelligent, truthful, honest, and trustworthy. The method called for the collection of data (such as character testimonies) on all individuals mentioned in the isnad. The isnad method, however, entailed the cumbersome task of attaching to the historical material biographies of the narrators that appeared in the text.

In the transmission process, isnad affected matters of form, the traditions credibility being established only if transmission was unbroken. But al-jarh wat-ta'dil also dealt

7 Ibid., p. 120. See also Rahman, Islam (2nd ed.), Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979, p. 65.


9 Isnad in simple terms means statements of reference in which those making the statement are recorded in a chronological order. This was a scholarly method followed to ensure accuracy and legitimacy of what is being said.

with the **matn** (substance) of texts. Yet, like *isnad*, the **matn** method focused on subjective considerations. At any rate, on the basis of *al-jarh wat-ta'dil*, the religious scholars were able to classify the Traditions into three main categories:11

1. Traditions whose substance and form are established to be completely faultless are called *sahih* (or sound);12
2. Traditions whose either matn or isnad is not deemed perfectly faultless are called *hasan* (or good but not strong);
3. Traditions which are inferior to all others because serious questions of reliability are raised against them are appropriately called *da'if* (or weak).

The cornerstone of this subjective method was the assumption that if a particular authority is known to people to be truthful, he will unfailingly tell the truth. The possibility that the individual transmitter may sometime simply forget or that he may unconsciously let his biases influence his memory of what was being transmitted is not considered.

The fundamental shortcoming of traditional historiography was methodological: historiography focused exclusively on the procedure of transmission. Even al-__

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11 See SEI, p. 119.

12 In this category, two were held in high esteem: *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*.
Tabari, the most prominent of the traditionists, believed his task to be merely a procedural one, that is, making sure that he did faithfully, albeit blindly, transfer what was being transferred to him.\textsuperscript{13} Ibn Khaldun argued that this method logically leads to errors of judgment, since it privileges the form at the expense of the substance in historical writing. It shows ignorance of historical laws and processes, leading historians to report fables and fantastic stories. The method \textit{al-jarh wat-ta'dil} needed to be supplemented by a critical mode of analysis. The historian needed to ask such questions: Is it possible that the reported information, under natural (i.e., without divine intervention) circumstances, could have taken place? And, what is the probability of occurrence?

Ibn Khaldun insisted that the crux of the problem was the lack of "an instrument" by means of which historians could discern truth from falsehood in their data. In order to prove his contention, he examined a few illustrative examples in which respected historians (such as al-Tabari, al-Mas'udi, al-Bakri and others) committed grave errors because of this grave deficiency.

It will suffice for us to take one example from \textit{Muruj adh-Dhab} (golden meadows) of the famous historian al-

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\textsuperscript{13} Mahdi, \textit{Philosophy of History}, p. 135.
\end{flushright}
Al-Mas'udi reported that when the Israelites left Egypt to Palestine under the leadership of Moses, their army numbered 600,000 or more, from men twenty years or older. For Ibn Khaldun, this was a fantastic figure. Ibn Khaldun critically studies this example from various angles to show the absurdity, or logical impossibility of the figure reported by al-Mas'udi.

First, he asked, is it possible that the Sinai desert could have economically sustained such a large army and their dependents and animals for forty years? Also, in terms of the spatial and physical capacity of Egypt and Syria to hold and feed an army of such a size, he asked: is it possible that the figure is correct?

Second, in terms of military strategy, he raised the question of whether such a large number of troops can be mobilized in a coordinated strategy in as a confined area as the Sinai peninsula.

Third, can the figure be accurate in light of the fact that Nebuchadnezzar's Persian army, which defeated the Israelites, did not have such a large size? In the Qadisiyyah battle, he compared, the Persians, who had their greatest number of troops they have ever had, counted no more than 120,000. So, is it possible that an army of 120,000 troops

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or less could have defeated the Israelite army of 600,000?

Fourth, if the Israelites' numbered that many, would not they have conceivably controlled larger areas, since the area under the control of an empire must be directly proportional to the size of its army?

Fifth, since only three to four generations separated between Moses and Israel, he asked: Is it conceivable that the descendants of one man proliferate to such a large number in such a short time?

Therefore, argued Ibn Khaldun, the method of political economy with its empirical proofs demonstrates that the figure is impossible. If the figure 600,000 was accurate, accordingly, it would be only a result of a miracle. Taking an exception to his method, Ibn Khaldun raised the possibility that the figure might indeed be correct because the God promised proliferation of their nation.

Ibn Khaldun's other examples are used to deduce other criteria for judging the reliability of historical data. His examples interpretation of the Qur'an, political events, and fables and fantastic stories. These show that all areas of knowledge are subject to error under traditionists' method. They are also intended to identify a multitude of


16 Ibid., p. 15-17, 21.

17 Ibid., pp. 36-37.
error sources, which he enumerated as follows:

1. The historian's unjustified trust in the sources of his data.
2. The historian's ignorance of the purpose for which data were originally collected.
3. The historian's tendency to exaggerate in order to impress the readers, or in order to highlight a point.
4. The historian's neglect of the context within which events took place.
5. The historian's inattention, when developing analogies and comparisons, to the differences between places and time periods.\textsuperscript{18}
6. The historian's political bias to one ideology or another. Partisanship, in Ibn Khaldun's opinion, impairs judgment because the historian considers only the side he is on.
7. Intentional corruption of the data by the historian to please, or obtain favors from, the ruler.
8. The historian's ignorance of "how the conditions conform with reality. Conditions are affected by ambiguities and artificial distortions."

\textsuperscript{18} His statement that "the past resembles the future more than one (drop of) water another" would appear a little confusing if one forgets that in it he is speaking of the general laws and not of particulars which may be seen differently in different eras. \textit{Mugaddimah}, vol. I, p. 17.

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., vol. I, p. 72.
9. The final, and most important source of error, is the historian's ignorance of the nature of change processes and the laws governing human affairs. Ibn Khaldun believed that: "...every single thing, whether it be an object or an action, is subject to a law governing its nature and any changes that may take place in it."²⁰

It is important to emphasize that Ibn Khaldun held especially al-Tabari and al-Mas'udi in high regard and used their material extensively. His criticisms were not so much against their integrity, moral character, or scholarship. Their shortcomings were understandable from Ibn Khaldun's viewpoint because they did not have the science of political economy, which would have provided them with the needed "yardstick" by which they could ascertain the reliability of historical data.

**Muslim Rationalism**

The rise of new sects in Islam no doubt contributed significantly to the advancement of historiography. "Unorthodox"²¹ sects by virtue of their existence questioned and challenged Sunni historiography, and, consequently, the assumption that revelation was a sufficient basis for

²⁰ *Arab Philosophy*, p. 28.

²¹ I am not using the term pejoratively, rather only to denote divergence of these sects from the sect of the majority--Sunni.
knowledge. Revelation, itself was being subjected to differing, even at times conflicting, interpretations. For example, the corporeity of God was derived from the Qur'anic verses which spoke of God's hand, eyes, hearing and vision. Thus a group of interpreters found it permissible to make an analogy between God and man. This was especially the case regarding the few verses in the Qur'an which were ambiguous.

Whereas traditional theologians asked that verses referring to the attributes of God be accepted bila kayfa (i.e., at face value, for granted), the corporealists sought to emphasize the verses' literal meanings. Like man, they argued, God possesses eyes and hands, and can hear and speak. Such an analogy logically implied that God, like man, was imperfect.

If earlier forms of historiography were based on revelation, later intellectual developments based themselves on reason. The defence of the 'aga'id (articles of faith) developed in time into a full fledged discipline, "ilm al-

22 For instance, Qur'an 55:27, Qur'an 38:75, Qur'an 36:71.

23 "Ibar, p. 463.

24 See Mugaddimah, vol. III, pp. 55-64.

25 In spite of their saying His body is unlike any the human body and His voice is unlike the human voice, and so on.
Kalam. This discipline is defined by Ibn Khaldun as a science which uses reason to safeguard Muslim basic beliefs. But while addressing the same subject matter, al-Mutakallimun (exponents of 'ilm al-Kalam), differed from the philosophers in that the latter were interested in establishing "laws of motion," while the former in tracing back the chain of causes to God—the ultimate causer of causes.

Influenced by Greek rationalism, the Mu'tazilah developed and refined 'Ilm al-Kalam. They attempted through Usul al-Din (or principles of faith) to build a worldview based on rational categories. Their main purpose was to "safeguard the idea of Divine transcendence." They gave precedence to reason over revelation because they believed in God's absolute rationality and justice. They felt that man was free to determine his actions, and that he was capable of arriving at knowledge—even of God and the spiritual world—through the application of logic. Among the most prominent

26 *Ibar, p. 458.

27 Ibid., pp. 458, 466.


29 See Rahman, Islam, p. 89.

scholars in this school were al-Mas'udi, Biruni, the natural scientist, and Averroes, who was perhaps the last of the great rationalist philosophers.

In attacking the corporealists, the Mu'tazilah insisted on God's complete freedom from human attributes (or tanzih). They argued that reference to God's attributes was to be interpreted metaphorically. For them, the reference to God's hand was actually a reference to His might and power. Furthermore, they denied that God possesses "the ideal attributes of knowledge, power, volition, and life...." Their negation of God's attributes was so extreme that they, in the opinion of a contemporary writer, "denuded God of all content and rendered Him unsatisfactory for religious consciousness." The Mu'tazilites insisted on the strict adherence to Islamic moral laws, a position not too dissimilar to that of the Kharijite sect. One of their most controversial conclusions, however, was that the Qur'an


The Muʿtazilites were closely associated with the Abbasid caliph, and, under al-Ma'mun, their worldview was adopted by the state. The result of this was the Mihnah or consternation (833–849), "during which government officials...were required to make public profession of their adherence to the theological doctrine that the Qur'an was created." The "createdness" notion essentially negated the claim that the "Islamic community (was) divinely constituted."

The rise to power of al-Mutawakkil, coupled with popular agitation against the Muʿtazilah orientation, led to spread of persecution of the Muʿtazilites. Traditional theologians emerged victorious from the Mihnah, thanks to the "heroism" of Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (d. 855), founder of the Hanbalite school of jurisprudence. The Muʿtazilah had become essentially alienated from the masses. And, by the early 10th century, "the Muʿtazilites had in fact become a


37 Ibid.

38 Ibid., p. 93.

39 Ibid., p. 102.
group of academic theologians who had retired for an ivory tower remote from the tensions and pressures of ordinary life."\(^{40}\)

In addition to Ibn Hanbal and other traditional theologians, a new school of thought had emerged to ward off the danger of the Mu`tazilah onslaught, the Ash`arite school. Traditional Islam, now championed by an ex-Mu`tazilah, al-Ash`ari, the founder of the Ash`ari sect. He defended traditionalism using the same method used by the Mu`tazilah: logic and analogical reasoning. His critique was sweeping and effective against the dogmatism of the Mu`tazilah.\(^{41}\) Al-Ash`ari took a medium approach, however.\(^{42}\) As against the traditionists, al-Ash`ari invoked passages from the Qur'an to defend his use of the principle of analogy.\(^{43}\) To him, while revelation was superior to reason, reason was a divine instrument to demonstrate truth.\(^{44}\) In contrast to Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, who taught people to accept principles of faith *bila

\(^{40}\) Ibid., p. 65.

\(^{41}\) See Ibish, *Bagillani*, pp. 72-76.

\(^{42}\) See his *al-Ibanah fi Usul al-Diyana* (tr. as *The Elucidation of Islam's foundation, Philadelphia, 1940.*).


\(^{44}\) Watt, *Islamic Philosophy and Theology*, p. 65.
kayfa, al-Ash‘ari wanted to answer the doubter through reason.45

In contrast to the Mu‘tazilites, he advocated the uncreatedness of the Qur’an; insisted that the anthropomorphic expressions of the Qur’an must be simply accepted on their face value; and rejected the free will doctrine.46 Following the teachings of the traditionists, especially Ibn Hanbal, al-Ash‘ari insisted on the absolute power of God, which indicated that all causation of all acts, events, and natural phenomena is traced back to God.47 Moreover, in contrast to the Mu‘tazilites, al-Ash‘ari proclaimed:

Inasmuch as none among human beings can be performing actions unless he is living and knowing and powerful, it must necessarily follow that the Creator, who is the author of all things, is living and knowing and powerful.48

Over half a century after the death of al-Ash‘ari, the influential Abu Bakr al-Baqillani emerged. Al-Baqillani refined al-Ash‘ari's method, utilizing logical premises. He elevated the position of logical proofs to that of 'Agai'd

45 Wensinck, Muslim Creed, p. 86.

46 Watt, Islamic Philosophy and Theology, p. 66.

47 See Rahman, Islam, p. 93.

and belief in them, arguing that the latter's accuracy is dependent on the former. Al-Baqillani applied his rational method to not only theological questions but also to ideological ones, as, for instance, his systematic critique of Shi'ah doctrines.

Al-Baqillani was followed by Abu al-Ma`ali, Abdel Qahir al-Baghdadi, al-Mawardi, al-Jwaini, and al-Ghazali (d. 1111). Al-Gazali indeed dealt the death blow not only to the Mu'tazilah, but to philosophy as well. Under his influence, Falsafa (philosophy) was replaced by Hikma (Sufism). The Sufis, however, went into extremes in rejecting reason, and instead relied on intuition.

Ibn Khaldun's Critique of the Rationalist Philosophers

Ibn Khaldun distinguished between 'ilm al-Kalam and philosophy on the basis that their ends diverge. However, he was aware, both addressed similar questions and, most importantly, 'ilm al-Kalam borrowed from philosophy the method of logic. After all, the aim of al-Mutakallimun was

49 'Ibar, p. 465.

50 See his al-Tamhid fi al-Radd 'ala al-Mulhida al-Mu'attila wa al-Rafida wa al-Khawarij wa al-Mu'tazilah (eds. Khudairi and Abu Rida), Cairo, 1947. A concise and excellent exposition of al-Baqillani's critique may be found in Ibish, Baqillani, pp. 86-107.

51 Watt, Islamic Philosophy and Theology, p. 91.
to prove revelation through reason—and not vice versa. Hence, it was easy for Ibn Khaldun to develop a single critique of both, which he addressed mainly to the philosophers.

Logic, it was believed, can produce knowledge of reality as it is. For the philosophers, reality included the metaphysical world.\(^{52}\) They conceived the "celestial body" as possessing a soul and a mind, like the human being.\(^{53}\) Since logic is sufficient for the understanding of the natural world, it is, likewise, sufficient for the understanding of the metaphysical world. Ibn Khaldun outlines his critique along three major themes.

First, by emphasizing the intellect, the philosophers confused their mental abstractions with the happenings of the real world. He writes:

> Conformity between the results of thinking—which, as they {the philosophers} assume, are produced by rational norms and reasoning—and the outside world, is not unequivocal. All the judgments of the mind are general ones, whereas the existentia of the outside world are individual in their substances.\(^{54}\)

Second, the metaphysical world is inaccessible to the human mind. Spiritual essences do not lend themselves to abstracting "because the senses constitute a veil between us

\(^{52}\) *Ibar*, p. 514.

\(^{53}\) Ibid., p. 515.

\(^{54}\) *Mugaddimah*, vol. III, p. 251.
Accordingly, we can only formulate conjectural—and not essential—logical premises. In the metaphysical sphere, philosophical knowledge is not superior to knowledge derived from religious sources.56

Third, it is not possible to perceive through logic reality (both physical and metaphysical) as it is. Man, according to Ibn Khaldun, is composed of two parts: corporeal and spiritual.57 Each part has its own perception. But while the spiritual perceptions portray things as they are, corporeal perceptions do not. Corporeal perceptions are mediated by the "organs of the body, such as the brain and the senses."58 Hence the philosophers' claim that perception of reality as it is brings joy and happiness is false, since logic does not lead to this. Spiritual perceptions bring greater happiness than corporeal ones.59 The Sufis recognized this, which led them to develop their intuitive skills on the expense of their intellect.60

55 Ibid., p. 252.
56 *Ibar*, pp. 252-3.
57 Ibid., p. 253.
58 Ibid., p. 253.
59 Ibid., p. 254.
60 Ibid., p. 254.
Ibn Khaldun's critique of logic must not be construed as rejection of logical reasoning. On the contrary, logic is essential for acquiring valid knowledge of human reality. Logic is an indispensable tool for the scholar, for "it sharpens the mind in the orderly presentation of proofs and arguments, so that the habit of excellent and correct arguing is obtained."61 It is an honest scale to discern truth from falsehood; but it is, in the hands of the rationalist philosophers, a misused one. It is simply inappropriate to use logic for arriving at perceptions of the spiritual world or the understanding of the nature of God.62

To the Mutakallimun, Ibn Khaldun's advice was that they can best protect the articles of faith by the emphasis on exemplary practices and sincere belief, rather than through rationalism.63 His advice to the philosophers was that they should limit the domain of their enquiry to the corporeal world, which they can properly understand through rational means. A comprehensive discipline is required in order to accurately study the physical and metaphysical worlds.64


63 Ibid., p. 460.

64 Ibid., p. 458.
Ibn Khaldun's New Science of Political Economy

While a large number of people considered themselves experts on past events, Ibn Khaldun argued, only a few could really grasp the essence of history. This is so because history has the deceptive quality of embodying external and internal meanings. Most often historians were contented with the external side of history. They were scientifically unequipped to meaningfully study history, al-jarh wat-ta'dil being their only method. The inner side of history required a wholly new science by which historical research can be guided and gauged. Ibn Khaldun believed that his 'ilm al-`umran was that new science.

Ibn Khaldun believed that God, the causer of all causes, created the world and man, who was endowed by Him with `aql (intellect). In this divine scheme, order had to prevail in nature. However, while God's will exists, human conditions and affairs are man-made—except such major interventions as floods, volcanoes, and earthquakes. The nature of history and the factors determining historical unfolding can be studied systematically and grasped by human intellect.

Knowledge, according to Ibn Khaldun, is derived from two complementary elements: material, which can be attained

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65 Ibid., p. 5.
by the mind through human senses and experience; the other is spiritual, which can only be attained (since the mind, and therefore logic, is limited) through revelation. The complementarity of these two elements is derived from the belief that the universe is a unified system, in which everything is related to everything else. Ibn Khaldun's epistemology therefore prescribes two methods through which knowledge can be obtained.

To understand the metaphysical world, the first, is the method of al-jarh wat-ta'dil. Since the concern here is with religious law and injunctions, it is necessary to establish "the probity...and exactness of the transmitters." Ibn Khaldun's analysis was concerned primarily with the physical world, requiring a different method: the political economy method. His insistence on a rational approach for the natural phenomena is due to his belief that revelation concerned in the first place knowledge

66 Ibid., p. 37.

67 B.C. Busch writes of this: "Nothing could be more revealing of the dualism of Ibn Khaldun's intellectual framework. It is a dualism, not so much of pragmatic historian and speculative theorists, but of speculative theorist and practicing Muslim." See his "Divine Intervention in the Mugaddimah of Ibn Khaldun," in History of Religions, vol. 7 (4), 1968, pp. 317-29; here, p. 328.


of the transcendental domain. In defending this he writes: "Muhammad was sent to teach us the religious law. He was not sent to teach us medicine or any other ordinary matter. {The Prophet told his companions}: 'you know more about your worldly affairs (than I)'.”

The second method is what we call the political economy method. This political economy method may be characterized as a critical mode of enquiry that is based on empirical data. Its aim is to ascertain the possibilities and probabilities of occurrence of historical events. It uses deduction and subjects natural phenomena to logical questioning. But, while logicians concentrated on form, Ibn Khaldun sought to explain both form and substance of social phenomena. Ibn Khaldun uses inductive methodology to account for political change and the existence of different modes of production.

Ibn Khaldun made superb use of the dialectical as well as the ideal type methods. Hadara and badawa (primitiveness) are ideal types, the level of 'umran being the variable in between. On the basis of this, he formulates another ideal type: country and town, which provides the subject matter for

70 *Mugaddimah*, vol. III, p. 150.


72 Wardi, *Mantig*, p. 81.
his dialectical method. Ibn Khaldun argues that the
dialectical relationship between country and town is
essential for 'umran. Ibn Khaldun is, thus, forerunner in
the use of the dialectical method.

Praising Ibn Khaldun for following the empiricist
method, A.A. Isa argues that Ibn Khaldun's extraordinary
contribution to sociological analysis is that he moved it
from the realm of philosophical speculation to the realm of
demonstrative knowledge based on observation and
experience. In the same vain, al-Husari claims that Ibn
Khaldun's method is superior to Vico's method, for it relies
principally on empirical—rather than theological—data.
Finally in terms of objectivity, Ibn Khaldun won praise from
many scholars.

How generalizable are Ibn Khaldun's propositions?
Their is no clear-cut agreement among scholars on this point.
True Ibn Khaldun's source of data was confined to Arab Spain,
North Africa and the Muslim world, yet his powerful judgement
gives his conclusions an air of universality. He "gives

73 See his, "Manahij al-bahth al-‘ilmi ‘inda Ibn
253-64; here, pp. 253-4.

74 Husari, Dirasat, p. 199.

75 Isa, for example, claims that objectivity should be
attributed to him rather than to Francis Bacon's Novum

76 Richard Walzer, "Aspects of Islamic Political
Thought: al-Farabi and Ibn Xaldun," Orients, vol. 16, 1963,
pp. 40-60; here, p. 57.
examples from major and minor events in Islamic history," writes Walzer, "but it is not difficult to apply his views to history throughout and to events of the present day."77

The epistemological/ontological principles of Ibn Khaldun's political economy include:

1. The origin of society requires the understanding of the nature of production and effects of material aspects of life.
2. There is a natural and inevitable process of unfolding.
3. Evolution is propelled by political and social forces, yet what sets the stage for it is economic, in particular the dialectical interaction between nomadic and urban modes of life.
4. Economic activities constitute the substance of civilization.
5. Ordinary people (as an aggregate) play a determining role in civilization.

Unlike the elite-centered traditional historiography, the political economy method places equal emphasis on the study of *Khassa* (the elite) and *`amman* (common people).78 And, unlike both historiography and philosophy, it is concerned with the real—not the ideal. The distinction between "what ought to be" and "what is," according to Wardi,

77 Ibid., pp. 58-9.

78 For instance, in Miskawayh's *Tajarib al-Umam* (Experiences of Nations), the focus was on political elites and events as though nothing else mattered. See *`Ibar*, p. 40.
is what sets Ibn Khaldun apart from all previous philosophers.79

Ibn Khaldun explained that the subject matter of his new science was the study of the rise and fall of states and the conditions which make the cycle possible. The purpose of this science of political economy was to discern truth from falsehood in historical research.80 This appears to be a modest aim, but the revolutionary character of the science must not be underestimated. Through this science we can understand all social forces operating in society. We can understand the origins of human association. The new science reveals the dynamic forces behind historical unfolding.

Dynamism in history is captured by his two fundamental concepts: 'asabiyya (derived primarily from political processes) and mode of production (portraying the consequences of economic determinants on society). The dynamic (or dialectical, if you will) character of history transforms primitive society in due time into a sedentary one. The normative orientation of political economy is quite apparent, since it is intended to teach us historical lessons (or 'ibar). Ibn Khaldun's inclusion of the term 'ibar in the

79 Mantig, 10. It is worth mentioning here that this was the case with, for example, al-Kindi, al-Farabi, Avicenna, and Ibn Miskawayh, who, fearing to have the fate of the Mu'tazilah, were "ivory tower" intellectuals. Ibid., p. 203. Also, Watt, Islamic Philosophy and Theology, p. 65.

80 'Ibar, p. 38.
title of his *Universal History* is proof of this. Consequently, history supplies historians with data to be ultimately benefited from in the present and in the future. Ibn Khaldun, therefore, starts his analysis by considering first the origins of human society.

He asks the question: Why do people congregate? Ibn Khaldun agrees with the philosophers that human society is both natural and necessary. But, unlike them, he attributes this to the will and wisdom of God: God made man inherently gregarious. To prove his contention, Ibn Khaldun analyzes the simple task of acquiring daily food which is, needless to say, prerequisite to sustenance of life. The act of preparing raw wheat to bread requires numerous operations: after plantation and cultivation (which requires many steps and tasks), the wheat needs to be ground, kneaded, and baked. Each task "necessitates utensils, potmakers, and other craftsmen." Similarly, other human endeavors, such as defense, require the same efforts and processes. Ibn Khaldun deduces from this the necessity of human collaboration, for it is beyond a single individual to produce all s/he needs to sustain life. As a corollary, Ibn Khaldun admits the


82 Arab Philosophy, p. 99.

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necessity of the family, the tribe, society, and the state. He skillfully shows the character of power relations in human association, and the necessity of the division of labor.

How did Ibn Khaldun arrive at his new science of political economy? Ibn Khaldun claims that he arrived at it as a result of divine inspiration. He was not sure why others did not stumble over it before him. However, he was sure that it was a new, independent science, in spite of its apparent resemblances to political science and the science of rhetoric.

Although distinguished by its methodology and purpose, the new science dealt with matters and addressed problems that were dealt with by other sciences. Ibn al-Muqaffa' studied similar questions, but, in Ibn Khaldun's opinion, he did not provide rigorous proofs and contented himself with mere rhetoric. The judge Abu Bakr al-Tartushi, in his Siraj al-Muluk, followed a similar topic outline but his treatment was a superficial one, and, thus, "he did not

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83 Here one can see the obvious influence of Nasir ad-Din Tusi. See Tusi's The Nasirean Ethics (tr. G.M. Wickens), George Allen & Unwin Limited, 1964, pp. 153-54.

84 *Ibar*, p. 40.

85 Ibid., p. 38.

86 Ibid., pp. 38-39.

87 Ibid., p. 40.
achieve his aim or realize his intention."88

Conclusion

As we have seen, Ibn Khaldun provided a scathing critique of the traditionists as well as the rationalists. He viewed their struggle as "a struggle between the suspension of reason and the perversion of reason...{choosing in religious matters} to suspend reason rather than pervert it."89

The question concerning the originality of Ibn Khaldun preoccupies many students of the 

*Mugaddimah*. Surely, Ibn Khaldun benefited from the traditionists' method *al-jarh Wat-ta'dil*.90 And, even those whom he criticized most supplied (e.g., al-Mas'udi) him with his subject matter and historical data. From the rationalists, on the other hand, he adapted logic as a method. It would be, therefore, a grave error to deny such influences on Ibn Khaldun's thought.

However, while most previous scholars dealt with similar issues and used all kinds of methods, they did so in


90 It is important to note that Ibn Khaldun was influenced by this method especially where he needed to establish the moral character of al-'Abbasah, sister of Harun al-Rashid, in his analysis of the Caliphate, and the Mahdi (Messiah). See his other examples, *Ibar*, pp. 15-21.
unsystematic manner. They achieved only a limited progress because they did not have a proper science to provide them with frameworks and modes of analysis. Consequently, Ibn Khaldun's originality lies in the conception of a new science that delineates the natural from the metaphysical and sets the proper method of enquiry for each sphere.

This new science is comprehensive, encompassing within its purview all objects and factors determining human phenomena. It is a synthesis of hitherto scattered and unlinked formulations. This is indeed Ibn Khaldun's real contribution and originality, "though," in the words of Nathaniel Schmidt, "his keen mind broke new paths in many directions."91

91 See his Ibn Khaldun, p. 19.
CHAPTER III

IBN KHALDUN'S ECONOMIC IDEAS

This chapter focuses on Ibn Khaldun's economic concepts and ideas. Many of the concepts treated here, as we will see later, did not originate with Ibn Khaldun. Our contention is that Ibn Khaldun developed these concepts and, unlike his predecessors, Muslim and non-Muslim thinkers who saw economics as a science for management of the household, he treated them within the context of the state and international society at large. It must be noted that this chapter and the rest of the dissertation essentially deal with the subject matter of Ibn Khaldun's new science–the science of political economy.

At the outset two points are in order: First, Ibn Khaldun did not treat economics in isolation of social and, particularly, political phenomena, as the structure and method of this chapter might imply. Such a treatment would contradict our overall thesis: that Ibn Khaldun's new science was in fact the science of political economy and that he must be considered as the founder of political economy. The
analysis in this chapter is synchronic intended to highlight Ibn Khaldun's mastery and genius in respect to fundamental concepts which are still studied and pondered by today's economists. Synchronic analysis calls for taking snapshots of concepts, then studying each one in detail, without neglecting the intra-relationships within the elements of each concept and the inter-relationships between concepts. The important thing is that the elements are not in motion.

To reiterate, however, Ibn Khaldun's system is built on, and its real contribution is due to, his political economy. While this chapter focuses on the economic branch, the following chapter will focus on the political branch of this "new" subject. The diachronic interaction of the two branches of this science will be dealt with in the last section, in conjunction with the rise and fall of the state.

The second point to keep in mind is the fact that we are using scientific concepts and categories which are in their present meaning only understandable in light of recent material and scientific developments. It is thus undoubtedly more meaningful to speak of such things as production, exchange, and distribution in reference to capitalist and post capitalist eras. The element of time hence is rather an important consideration, for ideas develop in relation to time and in response to problems that arise along the way. Wesley C. Mitchell writing about the history of European political economy concludes: "from the time when it began to
be organized with some pretensions of being a science (it) was in large measure a reflection of current social developments, that in the hands of its most notable founders it was a series of dealings with current problems of outstanding importance. It was worked into conclusions of a substantial sort regarding public and social matters."¹

This should not imply, however, that it is unfruitful to study what Ibn Khaldun had to say six centuries ago about politico-economic matters. If his ideas may seem rather primitive by today's standards, let us not forget that such ideas reflected the state of the art of the fourteenth century. In light of the material facts (i.e., mode of production) of his day, it would have been impossible for Ibn Khaldun to refine his economic concepts further.

**Mode of Production: Town and Country**

"You must know that differences between levels of *umran are a reflection of their different modes of production," writes Ibn Khaldun.² Those of us familiar with


² *Ibar*, p. 120. Rosenthal's translation of the statement is inaccurate: "it should be known that differences of condition among people are the result of the different ways in which they make their living" (*Mugaddimah*, vol. I, p. 249). The tone is less emphatic than the one conveyed in Arabic, and this is important since the sentence, being the opening statement of the second chapter, sets forth the chapter's main theme. Second, "differences between levels of *umran," I believe, is more accurate than "differences of condition among people." The sense Ibn Khaldun tries to
Marxian economic thought must be struck with amazement at the stark resemblance between this and the "materialist conception" of history. But, I believe, and herein lies the difference between Ibn Khaldun’s and Marx’s conceptions of political economy, the resemblance is only partial. A careful and comprehensive reading of the *Mugaddimah* would reveal that Ibn Khaldun mentioned this statement only to underscore the importance of economic and material factors and to convince fellow scholars who were metaphysical and idealist. In no sense did Ibn Khaldun wish to assign to economic factors primary in the determination of all human phenomena. The same statement, I believe, holds true in reference to *'asabiyya*, as a political factor, because Ibn Khaldun makes it crystal clear that the degree of *'asabiyya* (partially) determines differences between levels of *'umran*.

The fact that Ibn Khaldun should start the second chapter with such a statement is not only significant but points to the fact that the distinction between town and country is central to his political economy. While country life comes after, and is more advanced

convey is that the differences between levels of *'umran* are due to the fact that they represent successive generations in the life of the state, that such generations dwell in different environs, that their economic orientations are different, and that they lead different life styles.

than, nomadic life, Ibn Khaldun's usage of the term country in this distinction seems to subsume nomadism, for he makes repeated reference to desert conditions. Therefore country stands on the opposite pole from town—that is, town and country serve as ideal types. If country stands for primitive conditions, town (or city) stands for 'umran.

According to Ibn Khaldun, the nomadic stage is prior and prerequisite to the sedentary stage. The economic basis for nomadic life is animal husbandry, hunting and fishing. Meager resources and harsh physical environment restricts nomadic society's economic production to what is necessary for its subsistence. In fact, this is the most essential characteristic feature of this mode of production; hence when such a society produces surplus foodstuffs, clothing, weapons etc., it no longer remains nomadic. The transformation from nomadic to sedentary life takes place in a gradual manner, and shows itself in objective as well as in subjective developments.4 Such evolutionary transformation is primarily propelled, and shaped, by political economy factors: namely, the mode of production and 'asabiyya. Successful transition to the sedentary stage should culminate in the establishment of royal authority or state.

Like nomadic life, sedentary life is also natural

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4 'Ibar, p. 120. Faghirzadeh claims that Ibn Khaldun's analysis of the phases of society parallels those of such scholars as Comte, Toennies, Durkheim, Marx, Simmel, Weber, Spencer, Mead, and Parsons. For a concise description, refer to his Sociology, pp. 39-40.
(i.e., born from innate societal forces). Essentially historical progression proceeds from simpler to more complex ways of living. Emergent states build cities and towns and erect political and economic organizations. The economic life of sedentary people depends principally on commercial and industrial activities. It is in relation to this historical progression that Ibn Khaldun developed his economic concepts.

Not only objective conditions differ between town and country, on the subjective level, there are basic differences that distinguish their inhabitants. Countrymen are generous, not greedy, courageous, confident, honest, religious, homogeneous, and communitarian. However, townspeople are cowardly, greedy, stingy, heterogeneous, individualistic, corrupt, and licentious. This should not indicate that Ibn Khaldun's view of human nature is skewed in favor of country people. He believes that human nature contains good and evil, relying on such Qur'anic verses: "(We) shown him the

5 Akhtar H. Siddiqi ("Ibn Khaldun's concept of Urbanization," International Journal of Islamic and Arabic Studies, I (2), 1984, pp. 41-55), claims that "Ibn Khaldun was the first scholar to show the relationship between urban development and economic system...," p. 51.


7 'Ibar, pp. 371-4.
two paths;"8 and, "And (He) inspired (in man's nature) its evilness as well as its goodness."9 Therefore, it must be the case that habits and patterns of behavior are acquired things, and that objective conditions, and the level of 'umran, have a great deal to do with them.10 Ibn Khaldun, for example, makes the assertion that some attitudes, such as townsmen's submissiveness and lack of fortitude are due to long subjection to state laws and regulations. The 'ibra (lesson) derived from this is that civilization corrupts.

Ibn Khaldun contends that the city is magnet for country people.11 But, the expensive life in towns, compounded with country people's lack of money, is an obstacle, albeit not insurmountable, in the way of the latter's quest to join town life.12 While the town has a decided advantage over the countryside, the relationship is one of mutual dependence (interdependence).13 The country supplies conveniences in exchange for supplies of necessities from the town.14

8 Qur'an 90:10.
9 Qur'an 91:8.
10 In Chapter VI, we will have chance to discuss in detail the effects of luxury on life style, attitudes, and behavior of town people, and on the growth of the state.
11 'Ibar, p. 122.
12 Ibid., pp. 364-5.
13 Arab Philosophy, pp. 82-3.
14 'Ibar, p. 153.
A Labor Theory of Value

Perhaps the most significant feature of Ibn Khaldun's economic analysis is the assumption that human labor is the essence of value, one which gives it contemporary flavor and relevance.

Ibn Khaldun writes: "...human labor is necessary for every profit and capital accumulation....Without (it), no gain will be obtained, and there will be no useful (result)."\(^{15}\) Even in the instances where nature supplies the necessary elements (i.e. fertile soil, water etc.), labor is still credited for the gain. He argues: "Springs flow only if they are dug out and the water drawn, (which) requires human labor."\(^{16}\)

Specialization and Division of Labor

Division of labor lies at the heart of Ibn Khaldun's

\(^{15}\) *Mugaddimah* II, p. 313.

\(^{16}\) *Mugaddimah*, vol. II, p. 314. Nashat ("Pioneer Economist," p. 468) contends that Ibn Khaldun did not develop a labor theory of value, although he understood the significant role of labor in production. This is, however, contested by many scholars, including Jean D.C. Boulakia, "Ibn Khaldun: a Fourteenth Century Economist," *Journal of Political Economy*, vol. 79 (5), Sept./Oct. 1971, p. 1110. Contrary to Nashat, I also believe that Ibn Khaldun did indeed elaborate a labor theory of value; his analysis is sophisticated enough to warrant such judgment. He can not be expected to establish the distinction between useful and abstract labor, as Marx and others did, because of the simple nature of labor in his time.
theory of production. He points out that cooperation and division of labor are necessitated by the need to provide for man's survival requirements. Ibn Khaldun makes this clear in the following passages:  

"(E)ach individual's capacity for acquiring food falls short of what is necessary to sustain life. Even taking a minimum, such as one day's supply of wheat, it is clear that this requires operations (grinding and kneading and baking) each of which necessitates utensils and tools, which presuppose the presence of carpenters, smiths, potmakers, and other craftsmen. Even granting that he eat the wheat unground, he can only obtain it in that state after many more operations, such as sowing and reaping and threshing, to separate the grain from the shaft, all of which processes require even more tools and crafts.

"...Hence it becomes necessary for him to unite his efforts with those of his fellow men who by co-operating can produce enough for many times their number."

Cooperation of individuals allows them to divide labor and specialize in different professions and tasks. For he has strong faith in human reason, Ibn Khaldun is confident in man's ability to cope with and improve his conditions. Therefore, he traces the origin of cooperation to human reason (intellect). He argues that intellect is what distinguishes man from animals. As animals vary in their physical power, men likewise vary in their mental power (intellect) from one another. But individuals' ability to

17 *Arab Philosophy*, p. 99.


19 *Ibar*, p. 42.
acquire and excel in a trade, craft, or task is not equal. Consequently, according to Ibn Khaldun, functional specialization is facilitated and enhanced by the divergence of human proclivities and aptitudes. In accordance with this, he classifies the kind of people suitable for practicing one craft or another.

The division of labor depends on: (1) size of population; (2) demand for goods, which is in turn connected with the size of population and the level of `umran. The consequences of specialization and division of labor may be summed up as follows: First, greater efficiency and productivity. Second, improved quality production which is achieved, along with efficiency, through repeated practice. Third, now that production time is decreased, the ratio work/leisure decreases. Fourth, free labor which can be allocated to production of luxury items. Sedentary life pays a disproportionate amount of effort and time to the production and consumption of luxuries. Overall, the effects of the division of labor lead to higher standards of living for the population. However, relatively prosperous and increasingly idle, people turn to luxuries and to

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20. *Ibar*, pp. 360-2. It is worth mentioning here that Emile Durkheim, the French Sociologist, expresses a similar view, namely, that division of labor increases and becomes more complex as society progresses. See his *The Division of Labor in Society*, (tr. George Simpson), New York: The Free Press, 1933.

satisfaction of their ambitions and become greedier and more aggressive. This results in an environment that breeds social conflict.22

Types of Occupation

Ibn Khaldun found that income may be earned in two ways: One, by a profession, craft, pursuit of agriculture, or any other occupations. Two, by the help of such things as rain, inheritance, and hidden treasures. The second source is relatively less important than the first because less labor (labor being the primary production factor) is required.

Ibn Khaldun divided the natural means of securing a livelihood into three major kinds of occupation:23

(1) Agriculture is the simplest and oldest occupation known to humans. Humans had to learn and practice it because it is essential for his survival. It prevailed among countrymen who are characterized with humility and simple mindedness.24 Moreover, as 'umran increased, interest in agriculture declined relative to interest in industry and commerce.

(2) Industry comprises the crafts and services, "which

22 This perceptive observation will be developed further in the following chapters.

23 Al-Hariri's (1054-1122) influence is quite apparent here. See 'Ibar, p. 383.

are secondary and posterior to agriculture."\textsuperscript{25} Crafts and services, like agriculture, are productive.\textsuperscript{26} They are divided into honorable and mean categories. He points out that the mean crafts are "of secondary rank, and in the main despised."\textsuperscript{27} They include: alchemy, astrology, and the search for hidden treasures.

His attitudes towards the labor of servants, treasure hunters, and astrologists is based on ethical as well as economic grounds: servants not only characterized by unmanliness, but they give their masters the opportunity to remain idle; treasure hunters pursue such an occupation only because they are lazy and misfits who in fact shrink from the pursuit of real professions; and astrologists base their predictions on uncertainty and unscientific grounds.\textsuperscript{28}

On the other hand the honorable crafts are essential to society. They include: architecture, carpentry, ironwork, medicine, midwifery, papermaking, singing, tailoring, weaving, and writing. Crafts requiring a certain level of scientific background, and a sufficient demand for their

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., p. 316.

\textsuperscript{26} Nashat argues that Ibn Khaldun is "one of the first economists to acknowledge the productive character (of) services." ("Pioneer Economist," p. 390). It is obvious, thus, that in contrast with Francois Quesnay and other physiocrats that Ibn Khaldun does not confine productive labor to agriculture.

\textsuperscript{27} Arab Philosophy, p. 84.

\textsuperscript{28} 'Ibar, pp. 385-6.
products, prevail only in urban areas.

(3) The third major occupation is commerce. It involves trade locally and internationally. Ibn Khaldun points out the advantages of trade.\textsuperscript{29} He maintains that through trade people can fulfil their needs, that is, they can acquire needed products which are lacking in their locales from areas which can supply them. There is also profit to be made from trade, for trade is simply buying cheaper and selling dearer.\textsuperscript{30} Trade, according to Ibn Khaldun, raises the standard of living of such areas open to it. Ibn Khaldun is therefore in favor of free trader.

Ibn Khaldun maintains that trade is a very demanding occupation; only few are psychologically fit to practice it. He points out that businessmen and merchants have to be highly competitive in order to earn profit.\textsuperscript{31} The greediness of a good number of merchants is so great that if it were not for the existence of government regulations exploitation would be widespread. In other words, while in theory Ibn Khaldun is for free trade, being a realist, he is aware that individuals' irrational behavior (such as breaking established norms and laws) can undermine free trade in

\textsuperscript{29} Ibn Khaldun's view on the benefits of trade of all participants contrasts sharply with mercantilists' views on the subject, since they were motivated by narrow nationalism rather than free trade.

\textsuperscript{30} \textit{Ibar}, pp. 394-5, 398.

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., p. 395.
practice.

Factors of Production

Except for the labor of servants, treasure hunters, and alchemists, all labor is productive, according to Ibn Khaldun. Labor occupies such a central place in production that Ibn Khaldun considered it the source of value. Consequently, profits represent human labor. Ibn Khaldun points out the areas with abundant supply of labor enjoy greater prosperity than others with little supply of labor. The reason for this is his important insight that the international division of labor is such that labor migrates to wherever it is demanded, and greater demand comes from prosperous regions.

Ibn Khaldun is vehemently against forced labor not only because he stands for individual liberty, but also because of the negative economic consequences of such a practice. He conceived human labor power to be a commodity like any other subject to market forces, and, thus, forced labor would disturb the supply and demand of labor, resulting in an inefficient allocation of productive factors.

Moreover, forced labor makes workers little more than slaves,

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32 Arab Philosophy, p. 71.
33 Ibid., p. 72.
35 Ibar, p. 289.
whose occupation he condemns as unnatural and unproductive. Indeed the government can do no greater injustice than forced labor except seizure or confiscation of private property.

Ibn Khaldun maintains that profits are proportional to investment capital. Yet he did not see an independent role for it; ultimately the capital generated is nothing but the value of the labor expended. Likewise is the role of the third factor of production—land. Productivity of land, thus, is attributed to the amount of capital and, especially, labor invested in it.

Before closing this section, we must elaborate on the importance of population, security, and knowledge and earning.

**Population:** Population size is important because, according to Ibn Khaldun, it largely determines: (1) the size of the labor market; (2) the degree of specialization and division of labor; and (3) the volume of demand. Ibn Khaldun finds that the standard of living in a state (or city) is affected by the size of its population. Ibn Khaldun disagrees with the popular belief that prosperity of Egypt and Cairo is due to the amount of gold and silver in the possession of their inhabitants. He argues that "the real cause being that Egypt, and Cairo, are more populous than (North Africa)" (emphasis mine). Population size, in turn,

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36 Ibid., p. 281.
37 *Arab Philosophy*, p. 94.
is dependent on economic, moral, social, and hygienic factors. Heavy taxation and air pollution are detrimental to population growth.38

Security: Not only does Ibn Khaldun consider security, like food, crucial to the survival of the human species but he considers it prerequisite to man's welfare and prosperity. The quest for security necessitates the emergence of the wazi (leader) and organization of government.39 The government is an instrument capable of guaranteeing property and ensuring an atmosphere of tranquility conducive to private initiative, investment, and economic activity in general. To illustrate the importance of security and political stability, Ibn Khaldun provides us with examples showing how prices of real estate drastically fluctuated with security conditions.40

Knowledge: "Knowledge and teaching are natural to human society," writes Ibn Khaldun.41 Man's knowledge does not only lead him to accept God's revelations, but also it is central to his economic life. Knowledge also enhances man's ability to acquire and perfect skills much needed in the crafts. Once he has mastered a skill, Ibn Khaldun insists, an individual could not excel to the same degree in another,

38 *Ibar*, p. 302; *Arab Philosophy*, pp. 96-98.
39 *Ibar*, p. 43.
41 See *Arab Philosophy*, p. 140.
since the second comes only after the first has "sunk deep and coloured his mind." Ibn Khaldun conceives knowledge as a two edged blade: degree of knowledge influences the degree of 'umran and vice versa.

Exchange and Market Forces

"God created for man all that is in the world.... And men possess in partnership everything in the world. Once, however, an individual possesses any thing, no other person may appropriate it, unless he give an equal value in exchange for it," Ibn Khaldun writes. This statement informs the premises upon which he grounds his ideas concerning exchange.

In relation to exchange, we will analyze his thoughts on money and wealth, the market, supply and demand, prices, and the role of government.

Money and Wealth

Ibn Khaldun points out that production of money is a governmental function. And, because the government is "the greatest market," money essentially circulates between the government and the people. Coins are made up of precious metals, gold and silver. The sikkah office (mint) takes

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42 Ibid., p. 142; 'Ibar, 405.
43 Arab Philosophy, p. 71.
44 Ibid., p. 91.
every effort to safeguard the genuineness of its coins by instituting severe penalties against alchemists who illegally turn base metals into precious ones through chemical processes.45

Ibn Khaldun does not consider precious metals commodities as such, therefore he argues that they are not "subject to the fluctuations of the market...."46 For this reason he considers them as the monetary standards. Although the supply of silver and gold can be increased through human labor, the standing of precious metals is not considerably affected.47

Money, according to Ibn Khaldun, serves three functions: (1) as medium of exchange; (2) as measure of value, and (3) as store of value.

The government must not hoard money, because abundance of money in circulation stimulates economic activity and promotes the welfare of the subjects. On the issue of maintaining national fund reserves, Ibn Khaldun draws attention to the positive effects of keeping money in permanent circulation. It is in the interest of the state to

45 'Ibar, p. 226.

46 Arab Philosophy, p. 77; 'Ibar, p. 381.

47 Ibid., p. 77. Ibn Khaldun's view of the stability of the value of precious metals may be attributed to the fact that reserves of gold and silver were very limited and remained so till recent discoveries of large quantities of gold in America and other parts of the world. Nashat, "Pioneer Economist," p. 410.
use such reserves to improve public services and to institute welfare programs.

Ibn Khaldun makes the distinction between money and wealth. National wealth is not merely possession of large sums of money. In order to prove his contention, he asks the readers to compare the poor conditions of the Sudan, which is the source of gold, with those of other areas, such as Europe, Egypt, Syria, India, and China, which are prosperous in spite of the fact that they all import the Sudani gold. National wealth, according to Ibn Khaldun, consists of total "production of goods and services and a favorable balance of payments."

The Market

Ibn Khaldun speaks of the co-existence of a local and an international markets. Local markets specialized in agricultural products, seasonings, clothes, utensils, tools, dyes, precious woods and stones. The international market non-perishable and light weight but expensive items, such as, brocades and silks, paper, leather, and the precious metals (gold from the Sudan was traded to North Africa, Europe and the Middle East.

48 This contrasts with Thomas Mun's and other mercantilists' views that money especially gold and silver is wealth.

Supply and Demand

Except for gold and silver, the price of all commodities is determined by the law of supply and demand.\textsuperscript{50} Ibn Khaldun points out that demand plays an important role in the labor market. Demand not only determines which crafts could survive, but also if labor was worth expending in the pursuit of such crafts.\textsuperscript{51} Consequently, demand determines the direction of investment. He points out the demand must be strong enough to allow the producers, laborers, and merchants to make profit.

Ibn Khaldun furthermore argues that products are variably demanded depending on the degree of ʿumran. He points out that demand for goods is dependent on, among other things, personal habits and psychological factors. As for supply, Ibn Khaldun points out that supply of goods and labor is determined by the cardinal principle of scarcity.

Prices

Ibn Khaldun maintains that prices are interdependent.\textsuperscript{52} Consequently, price fluctuations of a particular product affect all related goods' and services' prices. Yet city prices generally differ from country prices. In cities, Ibn Khaldun points out, prices of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{50} Ibar, pp. 365-7; Boulakia, "Ibn Khaldun," p. 1111.
\item \textsuperscript{51} Ibar, 403.
\item \textsuperscript{52} Arab Philosophy, p. 75.
\end{itemize}
necessities are low because, since everybody engages in their production, and, in spite of their general demand, supply overstocks develop. On the other hand, prices of luxuries and services are high because at the same time demand for them is high, their production is left to a few.

The reasons for differential prices in prosperous towns (cities) are:

1. High demand because of luxury;
2. Labor is expensive because of strong competition and luxury;
3. Purchasing power of city dwellers is strong.
4. As a rule, luxury prices in towns are high because the state levies sales taxes and customs duties on them.

However, the opposite is true in the countryside and in sparsely inhabited areas. Inhabitants of these areas are under the constant threat of food shortages, hence they store food to build their reserves. Thus the high demand keeps food prices high. Conversely, luxuries and services in these areas have low prices due to weak demand for them.

Ibn Khaldun points out that production costs affect prices of commodities. For instance, the application of fertilizers and "other costly materials" to improve planting conditions in the arid, hilly lands of Muslim Spain caused

53 ibid., p. 363.
54 Ibid., p. 364.
55 Ibid., p. 363.
prices of foodstuffs to be relatively high.\textsuperscript{56} Ibn Khaldun also figures in the level of prices such things as transportation costs, customs duties, labor costs, and scarcity of material.

Ibn Khaldun stands against monopoly of goods.\textsuperscript{57} It is not only immoral, but also uneconomic to hoard goods in the hope that a time will come and their prices will rise. Ibn Khaldun makes a distinction between monopoly of essentials and monopoly of not-essentials, singling the first for vehement condemnation.\textsuperscript{58}

Ibn Khaldun, finally, warns against excessive prices--low or high--because of their negative effects on the economy. The ramifications especially of low prices are extensive since they impact on all businessmen and producers who are connected with products affected by such low prices.\textsuperscript{59} The economy will be depressed as investors' capital dwindles. But Ibn Khaldun is strongly against price fixing, for that is explicit intervention by the government in market operations.\textsuperscript{60}

\textsuperscript{56} Arab Philosophy, p. 73; 'Ibar, p. 364.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., p. 397.
\textsuperscript{58} Nashat, "Pioneer Economist," p. 393.
\textsuperscript{59} 'Ibar, p. 398.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., pp. 289-90.
The Role of Government

According to Ibn Khaldun the government is the most significant not only political but also economic actor in the market. Through its spending, the government can stimulate and strengthen economic activity. Ibn Khaldun singles out the upper "class" (i.e., the ruler and his courtiers) for the important role they play in the economy. Like Keynes' middle class, writes Gellner, Ibn Khaldun's upper "class" plays the vital role of "causing the upward or downward swing in economic fluctuations by its spending or refraining from spending."61

Luxury and civilization are greater, the closer one is to the center of government, because inhabitants of the capital (as well as large cities) presumably have strong purchasing power.62 He further points out that there is a direct correlation between the health of the market and the income of the government; if the economy is healthy, government income is high, since it takes in more taxes, and if the economy is depressed, the opposite is true. Therefore, a sound fiscal and monetary policies on the part of the government is imperative. If the king, courtiers, and government officials hoard or run out of spending money, the economy will suffer: "business would slacken and the profits

62 'Ibar, p. 369.
of traders would diminish; tax revenue must necessarily, also contract, for taxes are levied principally on transactions, market purchases, and profits."

The government kept the local market under the surveillance of the muhtasib (general inspector). The office of the muhtasib, which is basically a religious one, covered a wide range of responsibilities. Among such responsibilities are enforcement of the moral code, ensuring sanitary conditions, prevention of fraud, illegal manipulation of weights and measurements, usury, monopoly, as well as resolution of all kinds of disputes.64

Public Finance and Government Intervention

The problem of distribution was not as paramount in the 14th century as it had become in 18th and 19th centuries. The simple reason for this is that, while labor, as treated by Ibn Khaldun, was a commodity, it was not so to the degree that labor was in the industrial era. Far from being deprived from the fruits of his labor, the worker, according to Ibn Khaldun, earned the "value of his labor."65 Usually

63 Arab Philosophy, p. 91.

64 'Ibar, pp. 225-6. For more details, see Ibn Taimiyyah's (d. 1328) al-Hisbah, Cairo: Matba'at ash-sh'ab, n.d., pp. 20-51.

65 The Marxian thesis that the laborer does not earn the value of his labor because the capitalist takes the larger segment of it does not apply here, for industrialization,
agreements worked out among workers, landowners, and capitalists to divide up profits in an equitable manner.

**Taxation**

Ibn Khaldun does neither directly justify taxation nor question its necessity. The obvious explanation is that he takes the necessity of taxation to be given, because the basic taxes are demanded by the Shari'ah. This is an adequate explanation for the religiously minded individuals, of course. Being a realist, however, Ibn Khaldun must have relied on a purely rational, utilitarian argument. His rationale must be based on the assumption that if government is natural and necessary, it follows that the means for its preservation are also necessary. In exchange for the security and welfare which the government is expected to provide, the subjects concede to the government part of their income, in the form of taxes.

Ibn Khaldun insists that taxes should not become burdensome or injurious to the welfare and prosperity of the

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hence, capitalism, came centuries later. Thus Ibn Khaldun's position is understandable in light of fourteenth century North Africa.


67 This is similar to al-Ghazali's conception of the government; he conceived of the government in economic terms, as an investment in *al-iqtiṣad fi-l-iʿtīqad*.
people. He points out that a low rate of taxation is not only assured but even fixed by the Shari'ah. The basic taxes are three: zakat (religious tax), kharaj (land tax), and jiziya (poll tax) "levied on non-Muslim subjects, in return for exemption from military service." Almost from the beginning of its creation, the Muslim state maintained Diwan al-A'mal wal-Jibayat (ministry of finance). Along with the defence ministry and ministry of correspondence and foreign affairs, the ministry of finance was considered as an important component of the government. This ministry expanded under the Turkish dynasty to include a large number of departments, the most sensitive of which was the sultan's privy purse office.

Ibn Khaldun maintains that there has always been a tendency on the part of governments to impose and increase extra-Shari' i taxes, even to the point where they become unjust and injurious to the citizens. Backed by empirical evidence, Ibn Khaldun illustrates the detrimental effects of heavy taxes on all aspects of economic life and even on the wellbeing of the state. It is vitally important for the government to observe two conditions: equity and moderation. In order to do so, the government must:

68 It is relevant to note that President Reagan cited Ibn Khaldun at his Oct. 1, 1981, news conference, in support of the administration's supply-side economics.

69 Arab Philosophy, p. 87.

70 'Ibar, pp. 243-6.
(1) maintain a tolerable rate of taxation, which requires fair distribution among the populous.

(2) treat equally its citizens, by eliminating tax exemptions to noblemen and government officials, and by enforcing tax laws fairly.

(3) eliminate corruption, and maintain an efficient apparatus for tax collection.

Government Intervention

The universal method for governmental intervention is through laws and regulations. Ibn Khaldun points out the need to protect investors and merchants against government censure and against envy of the masses.\(^{71}\) Injustice and oppression by the government have disastrous consequences for the whole economy.\(^{72}\) One, if businessmen cannot guarantee just treatment and liberal conditions for their enterprises, they would lose their incentive to make further investments. As a consequence, two, the economy would be depressed and unemployment would rise sharply. Also, finally, investors would take their capital and move to a more liberal and more profitable atmosphere.

The second method through which governmental intervention takes place is the direct participation of the

\(^{71}\) Ibid., p. 368.

\(^{72}\) Ibid., pp. 286-7.
ruler in business ventures. Although the ruler maintains his own privy purse, he may capitalize on his prestige to draw unjust profits. Ibn Khaldun comments in detail on the role of prestige in the acquiring of wealth. For a ruler to engage in economic activity is harmful because he often does not adhere to market regulations, and because he can forcibly purchase or sell commodities at a distorted price. Ibn Khaldun maintains that only the shortsighted ruler engages in business activities. The ruler, he argues, can derive more revenues from taxes than from his business engagement. Furthermore, even in the unlikely event that he makes more from commercial activities, his gain is far outweighed by the negative consequences, such as: loss of subjects' profits and, hence, incentive to engage in business which ultimately lead to emigration of capitalists to better

It is noteworthy that some Persian and Greek philosophers forbade the king and his officials from holding private property lest they become unjust and indulge in divisive competition. In Islam, the ruler is not prohibited from holding property or practicing a trade. However, for prudential and practical purposes, the ruler has implicitly understood that his trade is rulership, which should exclusively command all his time and energies. The story relating to Abu Bakr's attempt to return to his business the day following his selection as the First Caliph, and the objections raised against it, is illustrative.

Ibn Khaldun is thus in agreement with al-Ghazali's (1058-1111) opinion that prestige produces material gain. On this point see, Nashat, "Pioneer Economist," p. 419.

Ibar, pp. 281-3.

Ibid., p. 283.
areas; general weakening of the economy which could be occasioned with business failures and bankruptcies; and social and political unrest which could put his rule and the survival of the state in jeopardy.

Nashat outlines Ibn Khaldun's reasons as to why government intervention in the economy is detrimental. The reasons are: (1) Intervention leads to more intervention which might perpetuate itself and over spills to other area. (2) A laissez faire economy allows for free competition which permits maximum utility for producers and consumers. (3) Governments' operations involve a great deal of waste and corruption. (4) The purchasing power of individuals is adversely affected. (5) Finally, the government can earn higher levels of income from taxation—especially if the economy is healthy—than from its enterprises.

Economics Before Ibn Khaldun

Most of the economic ideas outlined in this chapter did not originate with Ibn Khaldun. However, Ibn Khaldun had undoubtedly refined many and enriched them with valuable insights. Of course, the same thing may be said of all other pioneer political economists. It is worthwhile to recall in this connection J.A. Schumpeter's view that Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations "does not contain a single analytic

Western Economics:

The study of economic phenomena is as ancient as man himself. Barry Gordon contends that economics was first taught by the sophists around mid-eighth century B.C. The sophists instructed their pupils that division of labor is a source of efficiency, that abundance of resources decreases the value, and that growth's prerequisites are hard work and law and order. Their preoccupation with growth is probably responsible for their mercantilist tendencies against which their brilliant successors, Plato (427-347 B.C.) and Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), sharply reacted.

Plato and Aristotle were chiefly concerned with citizens' good (i.e., happy) life. Thus they were in favor of economic growth only to the extent growth raised standards of living and eliminated a major source of discontent and revolution. Individuals from only three classes qualified for citizenship: rulers, priests, and soldiers. Farmers, traders, artisans, and, needless to add, slaves were excluded from citizenship. Workers were despised and wages, along with usury, were held to be a mean source of income.

78 See Lekachman, Economic Ideas, p. 71.


80 Ibid., p. 21.
Aristotle identified two functions of money beyond being medium of exchange: unit of account, and store of value.\textsuperscript{81} But he considered money to be barren and its accumulation uneconomical.\textsuperscript{82} Aristotle, furthermore, made the distinction between use- and exchange-value.\textsuperscript{83}

To be free of bias and properly administer justice, rulers, soldiers, and intellectuals were deprived of private property by Plato.\textsuperscript{84} Furthermore, while he minimized the real impact of the division of labor on national product, Plato acknowledged that it increases productivity, efficiency and quality of products.\textsuperscript{85} Essentially, however, Plato and Aristotle were concerned with household and city management, which according to Aristotle: "attends more to men than to the acquisition of inanimate things, and to human excellence more than to the excellence of property which we call wealth."\textsuperscript{86}

There was also another trend in Greek economic thought, namely, that which was chiefly concerned with practical applications. Xenophon (440-355 B.C.) may be the best representative of this trend. His immediate concern was

\textsuperscript{81} See Lekachman, \textit{Economic Ideas}, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{82} Gordon, \textit{Economic Analysis}, p. 37.
\textsuperscript{83} Lekachman, \textit{Economic Ideas}, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{84} Gordon, \textit{Economic Analysis}, p. 52.
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., p. 28.
\textsuperscript{86} From \textit{Politics}, quoted in Ibid., p. 34.
how to lure people to Athens by emphasizing the city's many attractions.\textsuperscript{87} He advocated that merchants were "valuable citizens because they brought wealth to the city." \textsuperscript{(emphasis added)}\textsuperscript{88} But he accredited agricultural pursuits the highest honors, since he considered human activity nowhere else more meaningful than in agriculture.\textsuperscript{89} He believed that division of labor was determined by the size of the market.\textsuperscript{90}

Little, if any, real contribution to economic thought was made between Greek philosophers and the Middle ages. St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) was probably the best representative of the wave of intellectuals who considered economic matters from a theological point of view.\textsuperscript{91} Because he was interested in establishing the just price, he opposed exchange since it could result in profit.\textsuperscript{92} He considered usury sinful, except when borrowing at usury was necessitated by a hardship.\textsuperscript{93}

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{87} Lekachman, \textit{Economic Ideas}, p. 13.

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., p. 14.

\textsuperscript{89} Gordon, \textit{Economic Analysis}, pp. 40-1.

\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., p. 41.

\textsuperscript{91} See his \textit{Summa Theologica} in A.E. Monroe (ed.) \textit{Early Economic Thought}, Harvard, 1924.

\textsuperscript{92} Lekachman, \textit{Economic Ideas}, p. 25.

\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., pp. 27, 29.
\end{footnotes}
Muslim Economics:

Prior to Ibn Khaldun, Muslim economics was in the main a practical field chiefly concerned with law and regulations as based on the holy scriptures. Economics, in other words, was an adjunct to practical politics and theology. As an illustration, al-Ghazali defined economics in terms of moderation, or equilibrium, in the sense of balancing material with spiritual needs. Thus, he advises those engaged in business to observe religious laws and dictates, which forbid monopoly, cheating, and defrauding. Economic writings, consequently, are replete with injunctions setting standards of behavior, not only to ordinary people but also to their rulers.

A second major shortcoming is related to the scope of Muslim economics. Some of the outstanding figures, such as Tusi (1201–1273) confined economics, like Greek philosophers, to the field of household management. Tusi appears to have been acquainted with Greek ideas. It is quite clear to us that Ibn Khaldun was greatly influenced by Tusi's economic

94 In this category, we can list: Ibn al-'Awwam's Kitab al-Filahah; Abu Yusuf's (Ya'qub b. Ibrahim) Kitab al-Kharaj. We do not claim, however, that Ibn Khaldun did not benefit from this group, or that none such scholars had more advance ideas than he. Joseph J. Spengler argues that the Twelfth-Century scholar Ja'far al-Dimashqi in his Kitab al-Ishara 'Ala Mahasin at-Tijara treated accumulation of wealth and trade more favorably than Ibn Khaldun. See Spengler's "Economic Thought of Islam: Ibn Khaldun," Comparative Studies in society and History, vol. 6 (3), 1964, p. 282.

95 See his Ihya' 'Ulum ad-Din, Cairo: Dar ash-Sh'ab, vol. 4, n.d., pp. 754-86.
thought—albeit indirectly, through his mentor al-Abilyy.96

Tusi contends that the necessity to produce, collect and prepare food compels people to functionally collaborate and to herd together.97 To ensure security, they build houses. And, according to God's wisdom and purpose in human procreation, people mate and establish families.98 To sustain the structure of the family, tasks are divided among family members. Also as members of the family increase, their needs and tasks increase, requiring some sort of management. The father was most fitted for the leadership role in the household and his assignment is to help members of the family achieve their best, procure food, and attain security. He should also be prepared to take difficult decisions, like the surgeon who does not hesitate to amputate the sick limb, which if remained poses detrimental consequences on the unaffected organs.99

Money serves as a flexible medium of exchange, and plays an essential role in society by being "the preserver of


97 Tusi, Nasirean Ethics, p. 153.

98 Ibid., pp. 153-4.

99 Ibid., pp. 155-6.
Income is gained either from inheritance or by acquisition through work. He warned against gaining wealth through tyranny (domination, cheating), disgrace (impudence, tomfoolery), and meanness (practice of a base craft). Ministers, intellectual, soldiers have noble crafts. Monopoly, gambling, menial work comprised base crafts, and agriculture, carpentry, dyeing and the like were intermediate.

Sound management is needed to make productive investments. It required that income must always be greater than expenditures. Tusi was against greediness, extravagance, ostentatiousness, but for moderation, generosity and helping the poor.  

Conclusion

In this conclusion, we must emphasize that Ibn Khaldun differed in significant ways from his predecessors. First, he differed from them on the level of analysis: while theirs was the household or, at best, the city, his was the state and the international economy. Second, Ibn Khaldun, unlike nearly all his predecessors, Muslim and non-Muslim, was not interested in ethical or moral evaluations, nor was he making practical prescriptions for the administrators and rulers to follow. His interest was to provide the elements and subject

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100 Ibid., p. 157.
101 Ibid., pp. 159-60.
matter of a science, which can identify the causes of political and economic phenomena. Finally, Ibn Khaldun's economics was clearly economics of growth, unlike most notably the economics of Plato or Aristotle.

To conclude, Ibn Khaldun clearly influenced some Muslim economists, including Ibn Hajar, as-Sakhawi, and the famous al-Maqrizi (b. 1364), who was indeed his pupil in Cairo. al-Maqrizi, a prolific writer on political, social, and economic subjects, elaborated his economic ideas in two important works: Ighathatu-l Ummah and Shothour al-`Ugood fi Zikr al-Nugood. He differed from Ibn Khaldun in that he narrowed his investigation to Egypt.
CHAPTER IV

IBN KHALDUN'S POLITICAL IDEAS

The "new" science of political economy starts from a simple notion which forms the cornerstone of Ibn Khaldun's analysis: God made man gregarious. There is truth, Ibn Khaldun says, to the philosophers' assertion that "man is political by nature," for human's organized and purposive actions are his means to a more fulfilling and complete life. Two essential needs are fulfilled as a result of human association: provision of food and security. Cooperation and conflict are two natural consequences of this association. We have seen in the previous chapter how Ibn Khaldun masterfully uses human association to develop his economic ideas. In this chapter our objective is to understand how he develops his political ideas, and to identify his main concepts and technical terms.

The contention here is that if the core of Ibn Khaldun's economic ideas is the mode of production, the core
of his political theory is 'asabiyya.\(^1\) Through it, Ibn Khaldun is able to explain the choice of wazi' (leader), and the rise and disintegration of the state. He uses 'asabiyya to prove that the emergence and sustenance of states do not necessitate the pre-existence of Divine Law. He, furthermore, uses 'asabiyya to "rationalize" what is perhaps the greatest controversy in Islamic history, the birth of the caliphate and its subsequent transformation into kingship.

**Anarchy and the necessity of the Wazi'**

Human beings realized early on the need to organize in order to survive. This was the basis for the earliest society, which lived at a subsistence level; it was, according to Ibn Khaldun, mujtama'ul-kifayya (i.e., society of necessity).\(^2\) In this society, humans developed tools and weapons in order to hunt and defend against animals. According to Ibn Khaldun, primitive society is accommodating and peaceful, for the nomads, since they are close to nature (fitra), possess fine qualities. In due time, as humans cooperated with one another, they produced more efficiently, sparing sometime to meddle around and get their hands on the possessions of others. Pursuit of power and material gains

\(^1\) It suffices here to define 'asabiyya as the feeling which binds a filial or an ideological group and motivate it to act for the common good of the group. Modern nationalism is somewhat analogous to 'asabiyya.

\(^2\) See Mahdi, *Philosophy of History*, p. 188.
led humans to use the weapons now at their disposal against fellow men.

In such a state of affairs conflict threatened the livelihood and security of people. To curb the inevitability of conflict, individuals looked for a wazi' (political leader) who possessed the instruments of power necessary to restrain and check transgressions, and who can arbitrate conflicts and enforce a state of peaceful cooperation. Ibn Khaldun demonstrates that a Hobbesian state of nature arises not in the primitive stage but in more advanced stages. This becomes the basis for Ibn Khaldun's theory of conflict. The core of this theory is that as human's lot improves, they become increasingly apt to "ask for more," to want to change the status quo, to revolt.

If the choice of a wazi' is not a haphazard one, the question which must be asked: what kind of attributes must an individual possess in order to qualify for the role of wazi'? For Ibn Khaldun, determination is simply on the grounds of whether or not, and to what extent, the prospective wazi' commands the 'asabiyya of his group or tribe. Therefore, within a tribe or group the person commanding most 'asabiyya is the only individual worthy of the leadership role. It goes without saying that such a person must in the first place be charismatic, intelligent, courageous, generous, in addition to possessing other fine qualities. Ibn Khaldun points out that mere possession of
good attributes is not in itself sufficient for leadership. They all are secondary when compared with `asabiyya. Ibn Khaldun applies the same logic to show that the waziʾ of the tribe or group which possesses more `asabiyya than any other emerges either by force or persuasion as the leader of all tribes or groups.

The waziʾ is somewhat similar to Weber's charisma. Both notions assume that extraordinary (in some instances, supranatural) qualities to be a requirement for the waziʾ or the charismatic leader. They also affirm that emergence of such a leader often coincides with situations of danger and distress.

Yet, the waziʾ can be distinguished from charisma in two respects. First, unlike appeal in charisma, which initially rests on "ultimate values," the source of appeal for the waziʾ comes from ideological as well as material interests. It is true, however, that, as in the routinization of charisma, when the state of the waziʾ transforms into dawlah `ammah (i.e., national as opposed to tribal or regional), material considerations dominate. Second, while the source of legitimacy for charisma is exclusively personal, for the waziʾ it is personal as well as patrimonial.

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There is a consensus among scholars regarding the centrality of the concept of 'asabiyya in Ibn Khaldun's political theory. Yet there has been universal misreading of the meaning of 'asabiyya, as evidenced by the rendering of it into different terms: solidarity, group feeling, esprit de corps, esprit de clan. To be sure, these are not so much inaccurate nomenclature as they are individually inadequate for conveying the rich meaning and dynamic nature of the Arabic term. 'Asabiyya, in our modern language, is analogous in a general sense to nationalism. It contains two essential elements: the feeling (i.e., sense of belonging and identity) and the action (to translate this feeling into reality, in order to preserve, to promote, to increase power of, etc.) the group. Therefore, most translations represent only one element of 'asabiyya (i.e., the feeling). Thus throughout this study we will stick to the Arabic term.

The term 'asabiyya has in pre-Islamic times (Jahiliyya) been associated with bias, prejudice, blind support, and racism. Islam is a universal religion. It professes

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6 When emphasis is placed on action, 'asabiyya becomes equivalent to Machiavelli's virtu, in the sense of will power.

7 According to Majid Khadduri, Islam, like Christianity, adopted universal orientation because in a sense it represented a protest against tribal parochialism. See his War and Peace in the Law of Islam, Baltimore, MD: The Johns
equality and justice for all its adherents, irrespective of their economic status or ethnic origin, condemns the 'asabiyya Jahiliyya. Ibn Khaldun is aware of this, for he makes 'asabiyya a technical term, distinguishing between its negative and positive types. He argues that Islam rejects only the negative aspect of 'asabiyya. However, positive 'asabiyya is not only beneficial to society in worldly matters, but also the spread of religion and the enforcement of the Divine Law require it.

Ibn Khaldun also draws a distinction between lesser and greater 'asabiyya. Lesser 'asabiyya emerges from filial ties and rests on the emotional attachment (bond) one feels towards one's relatives. Close relatives feel affection and love toward one another, and view it their responsibility to come to one another's aid. Lesser 'asabiyya produces n'ura (zeal, power). The closer the relationship is, the stronger are 'asabiyya and the resultant n'ura. Thus, 'asabiyya's first prerequisite is purity of lineage. But, according to Ibn Khaldun, pure lineages rare, and if they exist at all, they may be found only in the countryside, where inter-group marriages are rare and specific and detailed knowledge of

Hopkins University Press, 1955, p. 17. Khadduri further compares Islam with Christiana: "The universal nomocracy of Islam, like the Respublica Christiana in the West, assumed that mankind constituted one supra-national community, bound on law and governed by one ruler." Ibid.


9 Ibid., p. 203.
ancestry is common. Hence, on the conceptual level, the pure lineage requirement is used only an ideal type.

Lesser 'asabiyya can expand to incorporate individuals and groups outside the tribe, for longstanding associations and friendships engender similar 'asabiyya. Hence, ruler's clients often share in his 'asabiyya. Ibn Khaldun contends that in some instances clientship ties become as strong as kinship ties. Their close association and mutual dependence foster sincere mutual affection: the clients surrender complete loyalty to, and even readiness to die for, the ruler, the latter, in return, lavish on them all kinds of favors in gratitude.

The second condition necessary to make 'asabiyya effective (i.e., translatable into purposeful action), is the size of the tribe or group. The larger the tribe is, the more men it can put under arms. However, Ibn Khaldun insists that the strength of 'asabiyya itself is more important than the number of troops, since a tribe may be weak and divided in spite of its preponderant size. Consequently, Ibn Khaldun refutes al-Tartouchi's claim in Siraj al-Muluk that victory automatically belongs to those with the greater number of troops.10

10 'Ibar, pp. 156, 278. A contemporary example which supports Ibn Khaldun's thesis is provided in the Arab-Israel conflict. The Arab nation in spite of its population size, being approximately thirty times the size of Israel's, was defeated several times in the past forty years. The obvious, yet erroneous, explanation for Israel's victories, is its technological advantage over the Arabs. The more plausible
The second type is greater 'asabiyya which arises out of common religion. Unlike filial 'asabiyya, it emerges from spiritual and abstract rather than ethnic origins. Religion provides common belief structure, common purpose, reduces internal tension and rivalry; it can unify all forces, and augment and direct the energies to achieve the sought goals.

Interestingly, at the outset, religion requires the force of filial 'asabiyya, according to Ibn Khaldun. He argues that this is the reason that religions have arisen first among groups with strong 'asabiyya. It is no coincidence that prophethood came to Muhammad who belongs to Banu Hashim, the strongest clan within the tribe of Quraysh which itself was the most powerful of all Arab tribes. The simple reason for this is that in its infancy, religion needs protection and promotion which only strong tribes can afford. Examples of aborted rebellion attempts by explanation, using Ibn Khaldun's insight, would attribute Arab defeats to greater 'asabiyya on Israel's part.

Distinguishing greater 'asabiyya from 'asabiyya jahilyya, Ibn Khaldun calls the former 'asabiyya tabi'yya (i.e., natural).
In terms of its contemporary relevance, religion may be substituted for by ideology, since the analysis holds equally for both.

The similarity in this respect between our author and Machiavelli is striking as the following statement from The Prince shows: "...armed prophets have conquered, and unarmed prophets have come to grief." See, The Prince, (tr. George Bull), New York: Penguin Books, 1975, p.52. However, the comparison between both scholars with regard to the role of religion does not go any further: in contrast to Machiavelli,
evangelists and political dissenters who lacked the backing of strong tribes abound. Ibn Khaldun says their ignorance of the role of filial ʿasabiyā led them to believe that strong religious conviction and good intentions were in themselves sufficient to cause change.

Contrary to the claim of some writers, religion has never intended to abolish filial ʿasabiyā altogether. Religion organically integrates filial ʿasabiyā's under its umbrella. Filial ʿasabiyā's which vary in levels of intensity and sizes of groups, become "tamed" and tempered by religion; but they never disappear. While both types of ʿasabiyā produce the required zeal, they differ in scope and goal. While the end of the filial ʿasabiyā is the promotion of parochial interests (e.g., for the self or tribe), the ends of the one based on religion (i.e., ʿasabiyā tabiʿyya) are the enforcement of the divine law and the promotion of universal values.

Since filial ʿasabiyā never disappears, it only lays dormant so long religion is strong. However, Ibn Khaldun points out that if religious sentiment declines among people, their filial ʿasabiyā becomes stronger and stronger. This simple, yet powerful, insight informs Ibn Khaldun's analysis

Ibn Khaldun would not approve of the use of religion to pacify the people—although as a realist, Ibn Khaldun was aware that rulers use religion for this purpose. See Richard Walzer, "Aspects," p. 58.

13 ʿIbar, pp. 190-92.
of particularly the transformation of the caliphate into a temporal state.

There is yet another type of *asabiyya, one that is, unfortunately, least developed in Ibn Khaldun's analysis, namely, functional *asabiyya. Functional *asabiyya emerges in the cities in the advanced stages in the life of the state, as people participate more and more in professional associations.14 The simultaneous presence of competing types of *asabiyya15 and the moral degeneration of urban populations, particularly in the final stages, prevent functional *asabiyya from becoming a dominant force in society.

Using *asabiyya as a technical term, Ibn Khaldun is able to accomplish two objectives: first, he shows that *asabiyya serves as a constructive force in human affairs. Second, he demonstrate that *asabiyya, as an analytic concept, is an appropriate approach to understanding Muslim political history. Ibn Khaldun treats *asabiyya as a natural law, which we must understand in order to identify and comprehend the underlying causes and effects of human association. The focus on the role of *asabiyya led Erwin I.J. Rosenthal, among others, to call Ibn Khaldun's political

14 Durkheim has somewhat a similar notion, namely, organic solidarity which is based on the division of labor in society.

15 Types of *asabiyya appear in this sequence: (1) ethnic, (2) ethnic-religious (or ideological), and (3) ethnic-ideological-functional.
theory a theory of power politics. This is justified by Ibn Khaldun's examples, methodology, and by the fact that Ibn Khaldun makes 'asabiyya, in contradistinction from religion, the sole natural cause for the establishment of states and royal authority. Force and not faith is the determining factor. How else can we explain the emergence of states and mulk among nations which did not receive any revelation, he argues?

**Mulk (Royal Authority)**

The goal of 'asabiyya is mulk, writes Ibn Khaldun.¹⁶ The term mulk, like 'asabiyya, is rich in meaning. Different authors refer to it in slightly different senses, depending on the element in their analysis they want to emphasize. Muhsin Mahdi uses it in the sense of rule or governing, as when he discusses types of government.¹⁷ In other instances, the term becomes the equivalent of state, as when Mahdi establishes the distinction between mulk a'zam (i.e., great empire) and mulk asqhar (i.e., small state).¹⁸ The term is used by C. Issawi in the sense of a particular form of government, namely, kingship. Issawi, also, translates it in some instances into sovereignty, as in the sentence: "the end

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¹⁶ *Ibar*, p. 139.
¹⁷ *Philosophy of History*, p. 263.
¹⁸ Ibid., p. 209.
of social solidarity (\textit{\'asabiyya}) is sovereignty.\textsuperscript{19} And, E.I.J. Rosenthal employs it in the sense of: power, domination, and rule.\textsuperscript{20} In order to avoid confusion, we will in this study employ here mainly the Arabic term, substituting for it alternate terms only to highlight the specific aspect intended in a given situation.

Mulk is a natural outcome of the leadership of the wazi\textsuperscript{\*}. The wazi\textsuperscript{\*} leads his clan to dominate other clans within the tribe, and to subjugate other tribes and conquer their lands. The success of such quest depends on his decisive leadership as well as on his negotiations skills. Once every one has completely surrendered, the next step for the wazi\textsuperscript{\*} is to form a government and establish a state. He must be prepared to use brute force or win his round by forming coalitions and signing treaties to ensure other tribes' support or neutrality.

\textbf{Types of Mulk}

Ibn Khaldun identifies three types of Mulk (forms of government). The first is Siyasa Shar'iyya, or a government based on Divine Law. In Islam this was known as the Caliphate. The second type is Siyasa \textsuperscript{\`A}gl\textsuperscript{i}yya, or a rational

\textsuperscript{19} Arab Philosophy, p. 108.

\textsuperscript{20} E. Rosenthal, Political Thought in Medieval Islam, Cambridge, 1958, pp. 87-88.
government. The third is Siyasa Madaniyya, or the state of affairs is such that harmony and peace prevail without the presence of government. The third type has of course never materialized, and is only discussed in the course of the philosophers' theorizing about the ideal city-state (al-Madinah al-Fadilah). Thus Ibn Khaldun mentions it only by way of listing possible types. Of the other two, Ibn Khaldun comes out in favor of a religious or nomocratic government. The aim of the nomocracy is the good of the people in both this and the thereafter worlds. By contrast, the aims of the rational government is the satisfaction of ruler's needs and only the material needs of the subjects. A nomocracy is also superior to a rational government because, unlike the latter which relies on brute force to get citizenry's compliance with the law, a nomocracy relies on the inner restraint (wazi') engendered by the faith to observe the law.

Muslim history reveals a gradual transformation from siyasa shar'iyya to siyasa 'agliyya. According to Ibn Khaldun, the Caliphate in the initial period existed without mulk, however, when the Umayyads established their state, it co-existed with mulk for sometime, but by the middle of the

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21 The reader must bear in mind the distinction between theocracy and nomocracy: the first assumes the rulership of God, while the latter denotes to a rule of (divine) law. While in Islam absolute sovereignty belongs to God, the application of the law is entirely in the hands of the state rulers. Hence the Muslim state is nomocratic and not theocratic. For a legal interpretation of this, refer to Khadduri, War and Peace, pp. 14-18.
Abbasid period, it existed only in name, for the caliphs were preoccupied with power (i.e., 'asabiyya). In fact, the Arabic term dawlah (i.e., temporal state) "came into vogue (only) in the early 'Abbasid period."22

A Theory of the State

Muslim conception of the state is similar to the Western conception of the state. The state is based on political and legal foundations. The major difference, however, is that the notion of territoriality in the Western conception is emphasized. According to this, a state is not a state unless it has a well defined territory. The Muslim state, however, takes the political regime as its reference point. Dawlah, the Arabic equivalent of state, embodies the notion of cyclical change, as set in the Qur'anic verse: Watilka al-ayyamu nudwiluha baynan nas ("And those days, We (God) dispense them by turns to people.")23 Regimes come and go. Hence, the fluidity of borders was never a hindrance to the state's sovereignty. Such a conception allowed Arabs, Persians, Berbers, and Turks to establish their states on the same territories. 'Asabiyya by and large determined which of the ethnic groups was capable of mulk at a particular time.

Ibn Khaldun provides us with an organic conception of

22 See Khadduri, War and Peace, p. 7.
23 Qur'an 3:134.

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the state: like man, he state has a life cycle. Its growth is marked by distinct stages. 1. Conquest (Dafar): This is the stage in which the old regime is defeated and dislodged from power by a new vigorous regime. Clearly Ibn Khaldun presupposes the existence of an old state. Ibn Khaldun calls the ruler in this stage: Baniv (i.e., state-builder). 2. Absolutism (Istibdad): This stage is characterized mainly by the ruler's sovereignty over, and distance from, the rest of his group which propelled him to power and achieved his victory. Here, the ruler is simply an inheritor (Mubashir). 3. Self-indulgence (Faragh wa-Da`a): In this stage the ruler and his clients turn their attention to cultivating the fruits of mulk, such as accumulating wealth, erecting cities, monuments, factories, schools etc. 4. Imitation (Gunoul): The inheritor of the royal authority shows satisfaction by what his predecessors have achieved and resigns himself to mere imitation of them. The ruler in these two stages is an imitator of predecessors (Mugalid). 5. Corruption (Israf): The ruler now plunders what his ancestors have gained and spends his time in luxury and in satisfying his needs. The ruler in this stage is the chief contributor to destruction of the state, so he is Hadim (destroyer).

The state is necessary for civilization, for it preserves society and makes `umran possible, according to Ibn

24 Ibar, pp. 170, 371-74.
25 Ibid., pp. 175-6.
Khaldun. It is, he writes, "to society as form is to matter, for the form by its nature preserves the matter and ... the two are inseparable." 26 "Preserving the matter," which allows for the growth and spread of civilization, is indeed the raison d'être of the state.

Ibn Khaldun distinguishes between two types of sovereignty: sovereignty of the state and sovereignty of the ruler. Sovereignty of the state is strongly correlated with state's strength which is measured by the size of territory under its control. Therefore, state boundaries are not necessarily fixed, which implies that there is really no absolute state sovereignty. Maximum sovereignty is achieved only when there is a proportionate correspondence between the size and strength of the state. The state's highest strength is concentrated in its center, but as the state grows weaker and weaker, it loses territory at the periphery. Since sovereignty of the state is relative to its strength and size, such a conception of sovereignty is applicable most to Muslim history. Even today, in the Arab World, state boundaries are still fluid, at least ideologically. Nasser's appeal in 1950's and 1960's transcended the geographical boundaries of Egypt, even some made revolutions in some Arab state in order to hand over their country to him. The fluidity of political borders remains an obstacle to the sovereignty of the state (as modelled after the Western

26 Arab Philosophy, p. 101; Ibar, p. 376.
nation-state) in the Arab world. By contrast, in modern Europe, nationalism's triumph gradually caused state boundaries to coincide with ethnic ones.

According to Ibn Khaldun, sovereignty and viability of the state hinge upon the functions the state performs. Whatever the form of the government, the state requires institutions and a bureaucracy to carry out its functions and to translate government ideals from potentiality into actuality. In its early stages, the Muslim state had few institutions.27 Power was delegated by the caliph directly to province governors. The caliph himself led the general prayer, that is, until they ran the risk of assassination, as happened to few during the prayer. The caliph was also a judge, commander-in-chief, and political leader. Gradually, as the responsibilities increased, the caliph had to appoint a police chief (sahib ash-shurta) and a minister of justice (mazalim), and even to delegate to qualified individuals the leading of the prayer.

Permanent organizations and institutions became inevitable as the boundaries of the state expanded rapidly, and as more and more peoples were incorporated into the state. The scope of the caliphate covered both spiritual and temporal matters, but as the transformation into royal authority was taking place, more emphasis was placed on

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27 Ibid., p. 237.
temporal functions. According to Ibn Khaldun, the state had to have the following essential organizations: Ministry of defence, ministry of finance, ministry of correspondence (foreign affairs), and the office of the prime minister.

Addressing the question of ruler's sovereignty, Ibn Khaldun makes a distinction between mulk and ria'sa (chieftainship). Ria'sa rests on the willingness of subjects to follow the orders of the tribal chief. The tribal system is egalitarian, for the tribal chief is essentially primus inter pares. On the other hand, mulk rests on coercive power and the subjects have no choice but to obey the orders of the ruler. The ruler is sovereign, for he is neither answerable to the subjects nor is he burdened by rivals, particularly at the peak of his power. However, complete sovereignty rests on the competence of the ruler to execute the functions of his office: providing for the external and internal security of the state, collect taxes, and make foreign policy decisions, and applying the law of the land. But if the ruler is not in complete control, his sovereignty is partial (mulk nagis). In such case, the influence of ruler's courtiers and clients increases at his own expense, signaling the end of his state.

28 Ibid., p. 223.
29 Ibid., pp. 226-36.
30 Ibid., p. 188.
The Ideal Ruler

Physical qualities of the ruler are not in themselves important to the subjects; neither are his intelligence, knowledge and skills. What is in their interest, according to Ibn Khaldun, is the very fact of his existence as a wazi'. Therefore, what emerges as especially significant is how his relationship with his subjects is conducted. Ibn Khaldun points out that the best relationship is one which is characterized by compassion and leniency. It is more like a partnership in which there is no place for use of excessive force by the ruler. Harshness and use of force engender apathy, hate, deceit, and a sense of betrayal. Ibn Khaldun finds a correlation between harsh conduct and degrees of intelligence. Intelligent rulers are not only demanding of themselves but of their subjects as well. Thus high intelligence, like other extreme qualities, is a liability.

In order to maintain the right kind of relationship with his subjects, the ruler must, according to Ibn Khaldun, have the following qualifications: First he should be knowledgeable in all important matters. This is

31 Ibid., p. 188.

32 Ibid., pp. 192-4. Here, Ibn Khaldun seems to be greatly influenced by Tahir b. Hussein's letter which he quotes in full. The letter was originally written by Tahir to his son, Abdallah, who was appointed by al-Ma'mun as governor of al-Raggah, Egypt. It is an impressive manual on wise leadership and political administration. al-Ma'mun ordered the letter be printed and distributed to all of his aides and governors, when it was read to him. See 'Ibar, pp. 303-11.
necessary because the ruler's responsibilities are significant to the well-being of the nation, and because it is necessary for him to form his independent judgments and make final decisions. Second, the ruler should be just (ʿadil). Third, he should be the kind of individual that does not shrink from making difficult decisions in peace as well as in war times. Fourth, the ruler should be physically and mentally free of handicaps which could impair his ability to carry out the functions of his office. Finally, the ruler must come from a group with a preponderance of power (superior ʿasabiyya). The first four qualifications are obvious enough that Ibn Khaldun did not see the need to elaborate them in greater detail. However, he found Qurayshite requirement, the last qualification, worthy of a lengthy discussion. We will discuss this last requirement when we deal with specific questions answered by Ibn Khaldun's analysis of the caliphate. It would suffice here to say that according to this requirement, the prospective ruler had to be from the noble tribe of Quraysh, Prophet Muhammad's tribe.

The Caliphate

Ibn Khaldun starts his analysis by defining the Caliphate in contradistinction to other types of government. "The Caliphate," he writes, "is the ruling of the people according to the insight of religious dictates in other-
worldly matters as well as in worldly matters derived from them, for in the eyes of the Lawgiver all worldly matters must by judged from the angle of the interests of the afterworld. Ibn Khaldun then considers the necessity of the institution of the Caliphate.

He says the views differed on this. A segment of Muslim scholars argued its necessity on the basis of the consensus (ijma') reached when Abu Bakr was selected. The necessity of the caliphate was argued by another group on rational grounds. They claimed that the caliphate, like prophethood, was necessary for human association and survival, which are of primary concern to the Lawgiver. It is necessary, they further argue, in order to restrain people and encourage them to obey God's ordinances. Ibn Khaldun refutes these claims by arguing that: (1) Human association and survival do not necessarily require religious law. History provides us with numerous examples of nations which established royal authority without their receiving revelation. (2) Restraint of aggression and deterrence of wrong-doing can be achieved by the ruler's power.

On the other hand, rationalists such as the Mu'tazilah and Khawarij argued against its necessity on the grounds that it is possible for the ummah (society) to live in accordance with Islam without it. Ibn Khaldun says that they argue

33 Arab Philosophy, p. 136.
34 Ibar, p. 186.
against its necessity because they are essentially against mulk. He says to them:

The (attempt to) dispense with [mulk] by (assuming) that the institution (of the caliphate) is not necessary, does not help you at all. You agree that observance of the religious laws is a necessary thing. Now, that is achieved only through [\_asabiyya], and [\_asabiyya], by its very nature, requires (the existence of) [mulk]. Thus, there will be [mulk], even if no (caliph) is set up. Now, that is just what you (wanted to) dispense with."\(^{35}\)

Therefore, the question for Ibn Khaldun is not whether a particular form of government should survive but whether mulk as such is inevitable. Ibn Khaldun demonstrates that royal authority is necessary due to humans desire to satisfy their basic needs and to achieve 'umran. However, when it comes to choosing the type of government, Ibn Khaldun favors the caliphate for a number of reasons: 1. because its purpose is to serve both spiritual and temporal needs; 2. the caliphate is ultimately sanctioned by God; and, 3. the companions of Prophet Muhammad reached a consensus on its necessity.

The Succession Crisis

When Muhammad assumed leadership of the new state (ummah) his authority was never contested by any rival. He was prophet, political leader, judge and commander in chief of the army. However, upon his death, a successor (caliph) had to be found and a constitutional crisis immediately ensued. The matter was left to ahl al-hal wal'aqd (a select

committee of dignitaries; it literally denotes to the individuals who loosen and tie)\textsuperscript{36} to find a solution. They consulted the Qur'an and the prophetic Tradition, but neither provided explicit instruction in this regard. We say "explicit instruction" because a group of Muslims, the Shi`ah, or supporter of Ali, argued that the prophet did indeed appoint his son-in-law, Ali, to succeed him, and they point to indirect, albeit weak, evidence to back their argument. To the Shi`ah, the question of the necessity of the Imamate (Caliphate) is not so much a question of public interest that can be addressed directly by the people, but a basic principle of Islam.\textsuperscript{37} In fact, this is the point of contention that split Islam into two worlds: Sunni and Shi`ah. While the Shi`ah felt that the succession question was already decided by the prophet, when he appointed Ali as Imam, the Sunni's believed that in such a matter consensus (\textit{ijma`}) of the people was sufficient.\textsuperscript{38} In other words, contrary to the Sunni's, the Shiites made the Caliphate a fundamental part of the religious doctrine.

The companions, after some deliberation and weighing

\textsuperscript{36} Members of this council usually come from eminent families and are backed by strong \textit{`asabiyya}. Also, \textit{`Ibar}, pp. 223-4.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., p. 465.

\textsuperscript{38} The shi`ah developed, as a consequence, the doctrine which professes the infallibility of the imam, while the sunni's adhered to the infallibility of the ummah (community). See, Fazlur Rahman, \textit{Islam}, p. 173; also, see Gibb, \textit{Studies}, p. 141.
the options, decided to select Abu Bakr. The crisis, at least temporarily, was resolved, and the caliph Abu Bakr assumed all but the prophetic responsibilities of the prophet. To be sure, the matter was resolved within hours of Muhammad's death, and even before his burial—it was in today's terminology a smooth transition of power. The bay'ah (pledge of allegiance)\(^{39}\) was taken by all except Ali and Fatimah, the prophet's daughter. Six months later, when Fatimah died, Ali came to Abu Bakr to pledge his support of him. However, withholding of the bay'ah was not so much an objection to the selection of Abu Bakr as an expression of resentment by Fatimah toward Abu Bakr's confiscation of the prophet's personal possessions. Fatimah felt she had right to her father's belongings, while Abu Bakr believed that the prophet himself was explicit on the matter when he stated that "prophets are not inheritable." Some cynical interpretations charged that what Abu Bakr really wanted was to undermine the house of the prophet (Ahl al-Bayt).

The succession of Omar, the second caliph, was an even smoother feat, which was due to the fact that before his death, Abu Bakr, designated him as successor, and ahl al-hal wal 'aqd, or by both. This pledge or oath is contractual since it implicitly makes loyalty and obedience by the subjects contingent upon the ruler's living up to his responsibilities —i.e., doing his best to promote the welfare of society and treat them fairly and justly.

\(^{39}\) Bay'ah is essentially a pledge of obedience to the ruler, and it is made either by the subjects or by their representatives, ahl al-hal wal 'aqd or by both. This pledge or oath is contractual since it implicitly makes loyalty and obedience by the subjects contingent upon the ruler's living up to his responsibilities —i.e., doing his best to promote the welfare of society and treat them fairly and justly. (For the bay'ah contract, see Khadduri, War and Peace, pp. 7-13.)
wal-'aqd gave their stamp of approval. However, when it was his turn to decide, Omar simply delegated the matter to ahl al-hal wal-'aqd to choose among themselves. He justified his decision by arguing that "if I leave it (the appointment of a successor), it is because someone else better than I left it (i.e., the prophet); and if I appoint a successor, it is because someone else better than I did that (i.e., Abu Bakr). Omar chose the example of the prophet. The prime candidates were Othman and Ali. ahl al-hal wal'aqd decided on Othman. Othman, in turn, had not made up his mind on what to do before he was assassinated. But Ali won the bay'ah of those dignitaries still present in Madinah.

Muslim political theorists, including Ibn Taymiyya and al-Ghazali, constructed on the basis of the experience of the first four caliphates, the procedure followed in the selection process. The caliphial candidate must first be nominated, he then must receive bay'ah from ahl al-hal wal-'aqd, and if approved, a majority of members of the community must "vote" in favor of the nomination and of the bay'ah.40

The controversy surrounding the assassination of Othman, was exacerbated by Ali's refusal, against the demands of Banu Umayya (Umayyads), to whom Othman belonged, to punish the assassins. Added to this is the questioning by some of the legitimacy of Ali's Caliphate, since they believed that

not all important dignitaries were present for the bay'ah. The controversy waged on, and led to open insurrection by the Umayyads in Syria against Ali. Eventually, the Umayyads succeeded and established their state in Syria and Damascus became their capital.

The Confrontation Between Ali and Mu'awiyah

The selection criteria, in the succession process, were not haphazard. These four caliphs were first rate Muslims (four rashidun) and companions of the prophet. In addition of belonging to Quraysh, they possessed high moral character, knowledge of Islam, and devoted themselves to the service of the religion. Moreover, they shunned worldly ends, preferring to live in simplicity and purity. Besides, they were all given the bay'ah. Yet notwithstanding the smooth transition of power particularly in the first three caliphates, the people were not agreed on a specific method for the succession process. 'Asabiyya, according to Ibn Khaldun, played a major role in the problem and specifically in the sad confrontation between Ali and Mu'awiyah. 41

Unlike those who viewed the controversy in religious terms, Ibn Khaldun argued that it was a political matter in which power considerations were the only ones that mattered. In order not to be misunderstood, Ibn Khaldun argued in detail that neither Ali nor Mu'awiyah was at fault. Their

41 'Ibar, p. 205.
bloody confrontation was merely an expression of their genuine but different perspectives. Each of them, says Ibn Khaldun, had a worthy cause and meant well for the interest of the Muslim state.

The nature of mulk is such that power is made in the exclusive control of the few. Mu`awiyah, who was at the time the commander of the Syrian army, understood the nature of mulk and the role of `asabiyya, which led him to found the Umayyad state. Mu`awiyah's clan unquestionably, according to Ibn Khaldun, possessed the strongest `asabiyya of any Quraysh clan. Therefore had Mu`awiyah ignored the crucial factor of `asabiyya, and surrendered power to Ali or any other leader outside the Umayyads, the consequences would have been disastrous: ahl al-hal wal`aqd of the Umayyads would have opposed him, creating division and internal squabbling within the clan. Moreover, the Muslim state would have been in jeopardy since it is imperative for the ruler to be successful to secure behind him strong `asabiyya and free himself from rival competition—else how could he make the crucial decisions of the state.

Lack of agreement on a clear mechanism led to disastrous consequences to the young state: two civil wars and the assassination of the last three of its first four caliphs. This was compounded by problems associated with the phenomenal growth of the Muslim state, close association

42 Ibid., pp. 205-6.
between the caliphs and the army, and the fact that the army was composed of bedouins who were atavistically resistant to centralized authority. All this convinced Mu'awiyah that: 1) The state must have a strong seat of government, so he transferred the capital from Madinah to Damascus. 2) Idealism of, particularly of the Shi'ah, was impractical and counterproductive for the pursuit of power and state interests. 3) In order to establish a clear-cut mechanism for the transfer of power, he made succession hereditary in his own family—the Umayyads. Mu'awiyah's actions, looked at from a realist point of view, must be highly considered, for they essentially saved the institution of the caliphate. He was the first political realist in Muslim history.

Primoqenitural Succession

Ibn Khaldun approaches Mu'awiyah's appointment of his son Yazid to succeed him in a similar manner. Ibn Khaldun says this too is not unusual, for even the prophets Solomon and his father David were supported by the 'asabiyya of, and held exclusive power over, the Israelites. Mu'awiyah appointed Yazid in good faith and sincere belief that he will do what is best for the ummah. Yazid became corrupted, some Shi'ah in Kufah sent for Hussein and pledged to support him. Believing that it was his duty to stand up against corrupt leaders and convinced that Bunu Hashim's (his clan)

43 Ibid., p. 206.
reputation and strength will be to his advantage, Hussein decided to fight Yazid. In the battle field, on which Hussein was tragically killed, the strength of Banu Hashim proved dismal in comparison to that of Yazid's clan, Banu Umayya, notwithstanding the good reputation of Bunu Hashim.\(^44\)

The majority of the prophet's companions did not withdraw support of Yazid on the grounds that bloodshed would be the consequence, which indeed did happen, culminating in Hussein's murder at the hands of Yazid's supporters.\(^45\)

However, they did not consider fighting along side Yazid because in their opinion Yazid was an unjust ruler. Thus, argues Ibn Khaldun, it is a mistake for Ibn al-'Arabi (d. 1240), the great Sufi scholar, to think that the killing of al-Hussein was right since he overlooks the condition of just ruler. The same goes for the revolt of Ibn az-Zubayr.

Therefore while Ibn Khaldun does not automatically endorse primogeniture succession, he justifies its happening on the basis of *asabiyya*. He argues that Abdel-Malik, Suleiman, al-Jaffar, al-Mansour, al-Mahdi, and al-Rashid, who were beyond reproach, all appointed either their sons or brothers to succeed them. And while Ibn Khaldun is not automatically in favor of political appointments, he finds a precedent to the appointment of Yazid in the appointment of Omar by Abu Bakr, which was accepted by people's consensus.

\(^{44}\) Ibid., pp. 215-6.

\(^{45}\) Ibid., p. 217.
Indeed the realism of Ibn Khaldun leads him to go so far as to think it legitimate to "(pass) over the superior person in favor of the inferior one,"\footnote{Mugaddimah, vol. I, p. 432.} in order to keep peace and prevent division within the community.\footnote{Ibar, p. 210.} This all was natural and, according to Ibn Khaldun, though not done by the four rashidun (first four caliphs), it was in accordance with the power of royal authority (al-wazi' al-sultani). If might does not make right, it does at least guarantee peace and order.\footnote{See F. Baali and A. Wardi, Ibn Khaldun and Islamic Thought-Styles, Boston: G.K. Hall and Co., 1981, p. 26.}

Ibn Khaldun in this connection deals with the question of whether the appointment of two caliphs (or rulers) is legitimate. He agrees with the Prophetic Tradition which stipulates that only one individual be given the bay'ah. He argues that the matter is analogous to the fact that there is only one God—else, as the Qur'anic verse argues, if there is a multiplicity of gods, each one could insist in doing things his own way and the world will be destroyed. However, Ibn Khaldun does not discount the possibility of two ruler, each governing a different land.

Must Caliphate Succession be Confined within Quraysh?

This question was, of course, raised and as far as the
Sunni majority was concerned settled immediately after the death of the prophet. Invoking the prophet's saying: "the imams are from among Quraysh," Quraysh leaders were able to dissuade other tribes from pressing their claims to the caliphate.49 When the consensus was reached, Abu Bakr was selected as first caliph. This in itself is a convincing argument for the Qurayshite requirement, maintains Ibn Khaldun. However, there is yet a rational (logical) explanation as to why the caliph must be Qurayshite, and this explanation has to do with the role of 'asabiyya—which the prophet and his followers were aware of, according to Ibn Khaldun.

Qurayshite descent was not made a condition of the caliphate because of any inherent quality Qurayshites have over the other people. What distinguished Quraysh from other tribes is the fact that Quraysh at the time of the birth of Islam had superior 'asabiyya, which made it the most dominant tribe in Arabia. Quraysh's 'asabiyya enabled the new Muslim state to conquer neighboring nations and spread Islam. More importantly, however, it made other tribes obey and rally behind Quraysh. A superior 'asabiyya enables the caliph not only to unite the nation but also to carry out the duties of his office.

Since Qurayshite descent was made a requirement because of 'asabiyya, it is only logical that Quraysh would

49 Ibar, p. 194.
lose its right if its *asabiyya declines. In fact, toward
the end of the Abbasid period, Quraysh and the Arabs in
general had lost to non-Arab groups who came to possess
greater *asabiyya. Hence, according to Ibn Khaldun, it was
justified for the eminent judge Abu Bakr al-Baqillani to drop
the Qurayshite descent requirement.

Conclusion

We have just seen how Ibn Khaldun has masterfully
rationalized Muslim political history using the simple, yet
powerful, concept of *asabiyya. Ibn Khaldun admits that his
mentor, al-Abilyy, must be credited for pointing out the
importance of the *asabiyya factor in Muslim history.50 Taha
Hussein writes: "with the exception of the first forty years
of Islam, Arab history, before and after Islam, is nothing
but a chain of tribal rivalries the cause of which is
*asabiyya.51 In a different place, Hussein argues that
without *asabiyya, it would be impossible to explain the vast
empire the Arabs established in the first forty years of
Islam.52

As we have seen, Ibn Khaldun is a pioneer in treating
the state as an end in itself, as well as in elaborating the

50 Ibid., pp. 328-9.

51 Hussein, Falsafat Ibn Khaldun al-Ijtima`iyya: tahlil
wa-naqd, (tr. from the French by M. Enan), Cairo: Matba`at
al-I`timad, 1943 (1925), p. 86.

52 Ibid., p. 98.
notion of sovereignty.\footnote{E. Rosenthal, Political Thought, p. 84.} His conception of the state is original, but his ideas on the caliphate are congruent with those of other Sunni political theorists, namely, al-Ash'ari and his famous successor al-Mawardi. They simply wanted to rationalize the crisis that took place immediately following the death of Muhammad. Ibn Khaldun accepts the notion that the Caliphates of the first four caliphs were governments based on the Shari'ah. He, however, differs from his Sunni colleagues in arguing that after the fourth caliph, Ali, a new type of government was born: i.e., the Caliphate was transformed into rational government (or mulk).\footnote{Gibb, Studies, p. 142.}
CHAPTER V

IBN KHALDUN'S CYCLE THEORY

It is established in chapters III and IV that mujtama'ul-kifaya (society of necessity) evolved, through the stimuli of economic cooperation and political leadership, into a more advanced form of society. Ibn Khaldun shows us how this society was able to organize itself under the leadership of a wazi to defeat rival groups and establish a state. The state, like an organism, passes through determinate life stages. These stages will be the subject of this chapter.

The state is the form which makes `umran, its substance, possible. The state, however, is not the only prerequisite for `umran. According to Ibn Khaldun, the ecological factors play an important role in determining the geographical location and extent of `umran. Thus, before discussing the growth of the state, we must address the role of the ecology.
The Role of Ecological Factors

It would be misleading to give the impression that Ibn Khaldun's science of political economy focuses on the economic and political factors to the exclusion of everything else. The *Mugaddimah* deals with practically all types of human and physical phenomena—some of it, it is true, remotely relates to the new discipline. Geography, climate and other ecological factors are considered by Ibn Khaldun relevant to the science of *umran*. Ibn Khaldun deals with such phenomena as the climate, air pollution, availability of food, and fertility of land in order to "show their effects on human life and social organization."2

In the tradition of early Muslim geographers, Ibn Khaldun divides the cultivable part of the Earth into seven zones.3 While the boundaries separating the zones are only imaginary, the zones are distinctly different from one another. Temperature, day/night length, and light variations, the distribution of rivers, seas, and oceans as

1 In the *Ibar*, Ibn Khaldun discusses such things as metaphysics, dream interpretation, sorcery, and alchemy.


3 *Ibar*, pp. 44-52. Ibn Khaldun seems to have relied heavily on the famous geographer al-Idrisi. Ibid, p. 53. While this geographic information is scientifically inaccurate, it has enabled Ibn Khaldun to provide a fairly perceptive analysis relevant to his subject-matter. See, *Arab Philosophy*, p. 43.
well as degree of fertility of land all figure in the
distinctions between zones.

The level of 'umran is partly determined by this
differentiation of zones. Humans are affected by the
ecological phenomena of these zones psychologically (in their
modes and attitudes) and physically (in their heights,
weights and skin colors).4

In the central zones (i.e., third, fourth, and fifth),
there is abundance of humans, animals, and plants. Science
and life-styles are relatively advanced. The inhabitants of
these zones are:

characterized by temperance and moderation....(they) are
more temperate in their bodies, colour, manners [and
religiosity]....They are moderate in their dwellings,
clothes, foods, and crafts. They make extensive use of
tools and utensils and have abundance of metals such as
gold, silver, iron, copper, lead, and tin....5

On the other hand, inhabitants of the extreme zones (i.e.,
first and second in the South, and sixth and seventh in the
North), are:

far removed from moderation in all respects. their
dwellings are of mud or reeds; their food consists of
millet and wild fruits; their clothes, of leaves or
skins; most of them, indeed, go about quite naked....They
use copper, iron, or hides, instead of gold or silver, as
a basis for their transactions. Their nature is very
close to that of brute beasts....6

4 *Ibar, pp. 82-91. Also, MR, pp. 225-31. Montesquieu
held similar ideas on the effects of nature on history.

5 Arab Philosophy, pp. 42-3.

6 Arab Philosophy, p. 44.
The Organic Conception of the State

Ibn Khaldun starts his analysis by asserting the unity of the universe notion which assumes that all created things are connected in an organic-like manner. The world of creation is composed of circles, each representing a different species, linked to one another in a sequence, ascending from simple to complex: minerals, plants, animals, humans, and angels. According to Ibn Khaldun, the highest, or lowest, form in each species is fully prepared to transform into the next one adjacent to it. Additionally, the unity of the universe premise implies that each species (or stage) in this continuum serves as prerequisite to the one above it and complementary to the others.

Passing through a life-cycle (birth, infancy, juvenility, and senility) seems to be the common characteristic of all organisms. Ibn Khaldun takes this and applies it to the life of the state. The state, like the human, an "organism" once born, goes through the normal life cycles, ending in disintegration and death. Ibn Khaldun's cycle theory no doubt was influenced by the experience of North Africa in the 13th and 14th centuries.

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7 *Ibar*, pp. 95-6. It is evident that Ibn Khaldun is influenced by the works of Miskawayh (936-1030) and the Ikhwan al-Safa writers. See, M. Talbi, "Ibn Khaldun," pp. 205-19; here, pp. 207-9.

Life Stages of the State

The human analogy goes even further, as Ibn Khaldun estimates the age a state can expect to live. He contends that the average age of the state is about 120 years. He arrives at this by establishing that the average age of the state equals the average ages of three generations, each generation being equal to the age at which an individual reaches maturity, or forty years. He validates his claims by making reference to the Qur'anic story on the Israelites' forty-year sojourn in the Sinai desert after their exodus from Egypt. He says: "Those forty (years) were intended to bring about the disappearance of the generation then alive and the growth of another generation, (one) that had not witnessed and felt the humiliation (of slavery in Egypt)... (This new) generation (retained) the desert qualities, desert toughness, and desert savagery...they (were) brave and rapacious."9 Unlike the older generation, this generation possessed strong 'asabiyya which prepared them to conquer Palestine.10

Ibn Khaldun divides the life of the state into five stages. See Figure I, next page.

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10 'Ibar, pp. 170-2.
Figure 1

Stages of the Rise and Decline of the State

Third Stage
(Da`a)

Second Stage : : Fourth Stage
(Istibdad) : : (Sukun)

First Stage : : Fifth Stage
(Dafar) : (Israf)
First Stage: Conquest (Dafar)

The State

Ibn Khaldun calls this stage dafar because the state starts its life through victory over and conquest of another state. The establishment of a state is the culmination of the efforts and strategy of the 'asabiyya group. Two prerequisites prove to be decisive in the long process: 1. Complete 'asabiyya, which implies that the 'asabiyya group is highly motivated and united in the effort, and that there is unity of purpose. Glory of the tribe, or, more crucial, glory of God and spread of religion, or both, can supply the ideological impulse of this unity. Ibn Khaldun here emphasizes the role of religion in "uniting the hearts" of the believers, something difficult to achieve if the ends are worldly, for human greed and competition inevitably lead to disunity and defeat.

2. Leadership of the wazi*. As important as it is, 'asabiyya does not automatically lead to statehood. The zeal of the 'asabiyya group requires a wazi* in order to provide the needed guidance and direction. Hence, the wazi*, as we mentioned in the previous chapter, must be, in addition to fulfilling the filial prerequisites, a decisive army commander, a skillful diplomat, and a farsighted strategist. The extent to which he can maintain group unity and outdo rivals and enemies, the wazi* can guarantee success in
establishing royal authority.

However famous or mighty he might be, however, the wazi' must abide by the egalitarian system of the tribe. As chief, he is only first among equals; he is a counselor whose doors are always open to members of the group; and, when he arbitrates disputes, his decisions are made after extensive consultation with all concerned parties and are binding only by their consent. \(^{11}\) Authoritarianism has no place in intra-tribal politics.

Desert (or countryside) life still characterizes this stage. \(^{12}\) 'Asabiyya is still at its zenith. The 'asabiyya group still adheres to its tribal customs and simple life. Members of the group still call their chief, who is now ruler of the new state, by his first name and approach him as freely as they did before. In accordance with tradition, the ruler shares his power with influential members of his group, appointing them as governors, tax collectors, and army commanders. \(^{13}\) Whether because of religion or tribal customs, the ruler is benevolent, maintaining a kind and just administration.

City Life

Cities serve two main purposes: (1) comfort, and (2) comfort, and (2)

\(^{11}\) Ibid., pp. 290-2.

\(^{12}\) Ibid., p. 172.

\(^{13}\) Ibid., p. 175.
security. Migration to the new cities increases dramatically; the new dwellers are those associated with the new dynasty and who were hitherto living in the desert and countryside. State-builders immediately realize the significance of cities to the economic, political and social organization of the state. New states prefer to build new cities and urban centers, rather than revive those built by their predecessors, because cities serve as monuments commemorating the legacy of their dynasty.\textsuperscript{14} City-building requires deliberate planning. Ibn Khaldun lists the requirements of the ideal city:\textsuperscript{15}

- be strategically located so that it will be easily defended, yet remains accessible for trade and commerce;
- be situated near (or on) a river for transportation and large supplies of water;
- have or be close to cultivable lands and pastures to ensure food supplies for humans and animals;
- maintain high sanitary standards, and pay special attention to elimination of air pollution;
- have adequate raw material supplies, firewood, and building equipment and material;
- have access to the international market, which is why it is best to be a coastal town.

Ibn Khaldun's sophisticated analysis of city-building makes him forerunner to today's city planners, according to Saba G.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p. 375.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., pp. 347-9.
Shibr.16

The Economy

The new dynasty inherits the riches of the previous state, giving the economy a great financial start.17 In accordance with religious instruction and tribal tradition, taxes are maintained very low.18 The new settlers still maintain habits of frugality and simple life-styles, making the satisfaction of their need a simple task for the state.19 At this stage, security is such that the state can afford to reduce expenditures on the military, freeing extra funds for economic purposes.

The strength of the economy can be also attributed to the general growth of the services and the crafts rather than simply to demand and individuals' purchasing power. The state directs its attention to economic expansion, and to the building of infrastructure.

The Arts and Sciences

Ibn Khaldun writes: "The crafts are perfected through

17 'Ibar, p. 167.
18 Ibid., pp. 175-6.
19 Ibid., p. 170.
science and repeated practice." 20 The sciences at this stage are directed toward practical purposes, such as production of necessities.

The state promotes arts and sciences at first as an imitation of the previous dynasty, but eventually to promote economic prosperity, cultural revival, and to gain power and prestige. The state builds schools and training centers, and encourages private initiative to promote the sciences.

Second Stage: Absolutism (Istibdad)

The State

This is the sedentary stage. 21 The chief characteristic of this stage is the emergence of the ruler's absolute sovereignty (al-infirad bil-mjdt). 22 The ruler, writes Ibn Khaldun, "will...disdain to share with any one his rule over his (subjects); nay, he will soon think himself a God...". 23

Since `asabiyya is the only thing that can seriously prevent the ruler from achieving his absolute rule, the ruler's first objective is the destruction of `asabiyya, the very thing which brought his dynasty to power. He establishes a national army and brings clients to establish a

20 Ibid., pp. 399-400.
21 Ibid., p. 172.
22 Ibid., p. 175.
23 Arab Philosophy, p. 114.
new power base. With the aid of the national army and his clients, the ruler eliminates centers of power within his group. He does not only deprive his relatives of the fruits of power but humiliate (jad'ul-unouf) and exile the most influential among them. The clients do not in the short run pose a threat to the ruler; he is still able to eliminate or replace them at will.

Ibn Khaldun cites two reasons for the ruler's monopoly of power. The first has to do with human nature. People have an innate desire for maximizing their power and claiming all glory to themselves. The second has to do with requirements of sound politics. The interest of the state lies in centralized authority and undivided loyalty.

At this stage, the ruler is primarily interested in the welfare of his immediate family, gaining new adherents and clients, and promoting industry. Access to the ruler is controlled by a doorkeeper and is more restricted than in the previous stage. A magsorah (a cubical in the mosque reserved for the ruler to perform prayers) is built to protect and isolate the ruler from the public.

Significantly, the state achieves true independence

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24 *Ibar*, p. 175.
25 Ibid., pp. 184-5.
26 Ibid., pp. 175-6.
27 Ibid., pp. 290-1.
28 Ibid., p. 269.
from, and takes precedence over, the 'asabiyya group or tribe. The dynasty crosses from parochial to national leadership (dawlah `ammah).

The City

Good and kind administration by the government raises the hopes of the population. Consequently, the cities experience dramatic population growth through high birthrates and immigration. The government builds public buildings, baths, mosques, market-places, and other public facilities. This is a period of tremendous expansion in the economy.

The Economy

Demand for conveniences gradually increases the production of conveniences. The economy is reasonably healthy. Governmental budget exceeds public expenditures. The government, however, increases the taxation rates to meet the especially high spending of the military.

Arts and the Sciences:

The dynasty imitates its predecessor in extravagant banquets, festivals, and marriage parties. Also, interest is still directed to teaching and training of the crafts. A new craftsmen is expected to master a simple craft and become

29 Ibid., p. 301.
carpenter, smith, tailor, butcher, or weaver.\textsuperscript{30}

Third Stage: The State at Peak (Da'\textsuperscript{a})

The State

In this stage, rulership transforms into kingship, as a new generation inherits power from their elders. "The rulers are invested with the aura of leadership, and the subjects obey them almost as they obey the precepts of their religion, and fight for them as they would fight for their faith..."\textsuperscript{31} Thus, the authority of the ruler as well as of the state are at their zenith. The ruler does not need to rely on an armed forces since at this stage he is "accepted as the will of God..."\textsuperscript{32}

The simple office of the doorkeeper becomes the office of the Hajib, who now has greater responsibilities, the most significant of which is control over access to the ruler.\textsuperscript{33} Only the most important personalities can now hope to have an audience with or meet the ruler.\textsuperscript{34}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{30} Ibid., p. 401.
\item \textsuperscript{31} Arab Philosophy, p. 110.
\item \textsuperscript{32} Ibid., p. 110.
\item \textsuperscript{33} Ibid., pp. 240-43.
\item \textsuperscript{34} Ibid., pp. 290-2.
\end{itemize}
military shifts in favor of the intellectuals. Boundaries of the state are now stabilized, reaching state's territorial limits.

The ruler is preoccupied with satisfaction of his needs and wants; he accumulates wealth, builds monuments and pursues ways to promote his prestige. This is the stage in which the ruler and his courtiers can achieve their greatest wealth. The ruler sends embassies to other nations, displays generosity towards foreign dignitaries and tribal chiefs. The army become a showcase for the power and prestige of the dynasty, and the ruler makes every effort to reward his troops with ranks and gifts.

The wedding of the caliph al-Ma'mun and Buran, daughter of al-Hasan b. Sahl illustrates the sumptuous life pursued by members of the dynasty.

On the wedding day, al-Hasan b. Sahl gave a lavish banquet that was attended by al-Ma'mun's retinue. To members of the first class, al-Hasan distributed lumps of musk wrapped in papers granting farms and estates to the holders. To the second class, (he) distributed bags each of which held 10,000 dinars. To the third class, he

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35 Arab Philosophy, p. 116. In times of founding the state or when the state is facing security problems, military men get the upperhand, while the intellectuals take a back seat. In times of tranquility and prosperity, the intellectuals become relatively more important. See, 'Ibar, p. 257.

36 Arab Philosophy, pp. 127-8.

37 'Ibar, p. 283.

38 Ibid., p. 176.

39 Ibid., p. 176.
distributed bags with the same amounts in dirhams....Also, al-Ma'mun gave Barun a thousand... (rubies) as her wedding gift (mahr)....He burned candles of amber each of which weighed one hundred mann... (a mann equals one and two-thirds pounds)... (The) carpets (were) woven with threads of gold and adorned with pearls and hyacinths...[30,000 boats were used] to transport the distinguished guests on the Tigris from Baghdad to the royal palaces in the city of al-Ma'mun for the wedding banquets.40

The City

The state builds great cities and factories.41 The vacuum created by the destruction of filial ʿasabiyya is by now filled by functional ʿasabiyya, a new type of solidarity based on the sense of belonging to a particular profession.42 Prosperity and opulence are evident everywhere. At the time of al-Ma'mun, Baghdad and its suburbs had 65,000 public baths, according to Ibn Khaldun.43

The Economy

The economy is at its best. Industries built in this

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41 ʿIbar, p. 176.
42 We disagree with Gellner's observation that "...social cohesion and the life of the cities are incompatible." "Pendulum Swing Theory," p. 132. There is nothing to indicate this in the Mugaddimah. Ibn Khaldun's analysis indicates that at least in this stage religious, filial, and occupational ʿasabiyya's exist side by side. In the last two stages, however, instead of gaining grounds on the expense of others, occupational ʿasabiyya crumbles due to corruption and luxury life-styles in the cities.
43 ʿIbar, p. 343.

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and the previous stage provide the state with opportunities for maximum employment. Consumption of luxuries increases demand for and investment in the crafts.

Taxes are now managed by a special department staffed with professionals. But taxes are higher than in the previous stage. As consumption spending continues to increase, balancing the budget becomes an important objective for the ruler.44

The Arts and Sciences

Education and training of the crafts reaches its peak. In large towns, a fairly sophisticated industrial knowledge develops.45 The new craftsman may become a cobbler, tanner, goldsmith, or silk weaver.46 Interest in the arts is also at its peak. This is a stage of fine expression and innovation.

Forth Stage: Beginning of Decline (Sukun)

The State

The ruler follows the footsteps of his ancestors by imitating their every custom, believing that such conduct is the only way to preserve their achievements.47 He begins to

44 Ibid., p. 176.
45 Arab Philosophy, pp. 140-1.
46 Ibar, p. 401.
lose some of his authority.\footnote{Ibid., p. 176.} Challenges and security threats from other states increase. Correspondingly, the relative importance of the military increases.

**The City**

Standards of living are high. demand for luxuries is strong. Preoccupation with material things that bring glory and prestige to the dynasty and the ruler is still the chief characteristic: music, flags, seals and stamps of government, expensive robes, rugs and fine clothes.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 260-67.}

Cities are beautified with gardens and irrigation canals. As an expression of the luxury culture, "Orange trees, lime trees, cypresses, and similar plants having no edible fruits and being of no use, are planted in gardens only for the sake of their appearance...."\footnote{Mugaddimah, vol. II, p. 295.}

**The Economy**

Expenditures are too high. State's income barely meets its expenditures. The high standard of living cannot be maintained. At this stage, the economy experiences diversification of luxury production.\footnote{Ibar, p. 371.}
The Arts and Sciences

Lucrative crafts make their appearance. The craftsman may be a perfumer, coppersmith, bath attendant, cook, dessert baker, teacher of singing and dancing, or musician.52

Fifth Stage: Senility and Corruption (Israf)

The State

According to Ibn Khaldun, once the state enters the senility stage, nothing could be done to restore sovereignty of the state or the authority of the ruler to their former position.53 The luxury culture has taken hold, and people have accustomed themselves to the luxury life-styles which now seem second nature to them. "A person," writes Ibn Khaldun, "who...has seen his father and the older members of his family wear silk and brocade and use gold ornaments for weapons and mounts and be inaccessible to the people in their salons and at prayer, will not be able to diverge from the customs of his forebears in this respect. He will not be able to use coarse dress and apparel and mingle with people."54

Access to the ruler is restricted to the inner circle, even, in the case where a young ruler is exercising power while his dethroned father is alive, access of the father and

52 Ibid., p. 401.
53 Ibid., pp. 293-4.
his entourage is restricted. Yet, although the ruler might be a mere figurehead (real power being in the hands of the advisors or hajibs), no one shares in his titles or ranks, giving him semblance of authority. Governmental administration deteriorates, as the ruler increasingly relies on men of ill repute to run vital affairs of the state, and as incompetent bureaucrats dominate the scene.

Another characteristic of this stage is incredible waste and corruption. Much of state's income is spent on sustaining the luxury habits of the ruler and his entourage. The defense budget is adversely affected by dynasty's outrageous expenditures on luxuries. The armed forces suffer from mismanagement and from ruler's neglect of military affairs. Rebellions spring up everywhere in anticipation of the downfall of the dynasty.

The City

Public works are neglected. Factories become gradually deserted. An atmosphere of tension and uncertainty prevail in the cities.

The proposition that the state is to civilization what form is to substance, is beautifully illustrated not only in

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55 Ibar, p. 292.
56 Ibid., pp. 186-7.
57 Ibid., p. 176.
58 Ibid., pp. 292-3.
economic prosperity but in economic collapse. Once the state has collapsed, and a new state is emerging, the cities, too, fall into ruin and crumble, because:59

First, luxury and standard of living decrease, for taxes and expenditures in the new state are low.

Second, since the new dynasty comes into being as a result of struggle against the ancient regime, it necessarily rejects the luxury habits of that regime, which it had condemned in its propaganda.

Third, the new state establishes new centers of government and cities, allowing old ones to wither away.

Fourth, the new state transfers bureaucrats and followers of the previous regime to new places or exile them for security reasons.

The Economy

Burdened with exorbitant governmental waste, including the financing of a mercenary army, the economy becomes steadily depressed. Remote regions of the state challenge the authority of the state by uprisings and refusal to pay taxes.60 Many of the rich escape with their wealth because of the security situation and because of fear that the ruler might confiscate their property.61 Industries decline and

\[59\text{ Ibid., pp. 374-6.}\]
\[60\text{ Ibid., pp. 280-1.}\]
\[61\text{ Ibid., pp. 283-6.}\]
some relocate to neighboring states.\textsuperscript{62}

To remedy the situation, the government increase the rate of taxation and imposes yet new ones on imports (mukus) and sales. The new measures frustrate businessmen, whose incentive for investing is reduced further.\textsuperscript{63} Loss of incentive causes farmers to abandon farming. Grain prices rise to rates that many people cannot afford. The result is spread of horrible famines.\textsuperscript{64}

To worsen matters, the ruler and his clients engage in harmful business activities. Insecurity and uncertainty, conditions not conducive to healthy economics, prevail. Also, plagues and diseases spread as a result of air pollution and abandonment of health conditions by the government.\textsuperscript{65}

The Sciences

At this stage, one finds such eccentric crafts as teaching of birds and animals, making magical illusions, teaching of walking and dancing on ropes, and weight-lifting.\textsuperscript{66} But many intellectuals, artists, artisans, and other professionals immigrate to another country seeking

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., pp. 287, 403.
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., p. 283.
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., p. 302.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid., p. 302.
\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., p. 401.
security and prosperity.

The Downfall of the State

Ibn Khaldun identifies two "fatal diseases" which inflict the state and lead to its demise: (1) Absolutism by the ruler (al-infirad bil-roid). (2) Luxury. Due to human nature and the imperatives of 'umran, these "diseases" will inevitably occur, and once they occur, few states can survive them. 67

Absolutism, as mentioned earlier, delineates between the first and second stages. Absolutism does not necessarily imply dictatorship—although this may occur, especially in later stages. Absolutism has to do with the ruler's sovereignty and exclusive power. The ruler's objective is to deprive members of his 'asabiyya group and the population at large from sharing in his power. He wants all the glory and wealth to himself and a handful of closest associates.

In trying to achieve this, the indispensable thing is the destruction of the 'asabiyya of his group. He does that by persecuting and exiling the would-be rivals from among his group. But the elimination of the obligations of 'asabiyya (particularly, power-sharing) has the negative by-product of eroding the ruler's power base. To fill the vacuum, the ruler employs clients and mercenaries. The ruler becomes gradually dependent on strangers, whose loyalty is not

67 Ibid., pp. 184-5.
guaranteed in the long run.

Since Ibn Khaldun abhors absolutism and views it as a fatal disease, can it be safely assumed that he is for democracy? To begin with, democracy never existed before our times, that is, except in the philosophers' minds as in the "utopian city". Thus, Ibn Khaldun's understanding of democracy is of a more limited nature. For Ibn Khaldun, democracy is a process in which the ruler comes to power through the people (his group or tribe), shares with them the fruits of royal authority, and maintains a kind and just relationship with them.68

Luxury culture, the second "disease", implies that society is consumed by extravagant life-styles that are oriented toward comfort and self-indulgence. The terms used by Ibn Khaldun to express what we call luxury are: taraf, rifh, and da'a.69

After the dafar stage, the dynasty diverts its attention to the fruits of mulk and the amenities of 'umran. A luxury culture is born in the second and third stages and reinforced in subsequent stages. The principle behind this

68 Ibn Khaldun writes: "Know, then, that...the instrument by which a ruler achieves domination is his own people.... For they are his helpers in victory and his partners in public matters, sharing his work with him. Arab Philosophy, p. 121.

69 According to Wardi (Mantig, pp. 169-70), Ibn Khaldun's attitude toward luxury is influenced by the Qur'anic verses which state that luxury leads to corruption.
is that humans have insatiable desires. Ibn Khaldun sees this as being a natural outcome of mulk and the growth of 'umran. 'Umran, he argues, includes sophisticated life-styles and the use of refined methods in the arts, manufacture, architecture, furniture, kitchen appliances, clothes, weapons, and so on.

Today's luxuries are tomorrow's necessities, according to Ibn Khaldun—and this is a function of the degree of 'umran.

But, how does luxury production come about in the beginning? Initially people engage in the production of necessities. Repeated practice sharpens workers' skills, and with specialization, production becomes more efficient. Efficiency translates into leisure time. Workers begin to innovate, using this leisure time, or part of it, to the production of items of convenience or simple luxuries. Gradually, as demand for these luxuries increases, luxuries become complex and diversified.

Initially luxuries strengthen the economy, by higher rates of employment, incomes, national revenues, commercial activities, investments, and population growth. Craftsmen and skilled workers pour into the state seeking to benefit

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70 'Ibar, p. 286.
71 Ibid., p. 167.
72 Ibid., p. 172.
73 Ibid., pp. 364-5.
74 Ibid., pp. 371-3.
from this prosperity. Consequently, the state itself gains more prestige and power.  

In the long run, negative consequences of luxury, however, outweigh the initial benefits to the economy and to the standard of living. The dynasty as well as the people are simultaneously, albeit to varying degrees, affected by the luxury culture.

The population becomes complacent, selfish, lazy, cowardly, and corrupted. Certain vices spread: obsession with sexual pleasures, lying, gambling, cheating, fraud, theft, perjury and usury. These habits become part of the culture and second nature to the people. This reflects Ibn Khaldun's strong belief that humans are to a large extent a product of their environment and habit.

No longer can the population raise sufficient, well-disciplined troops to serve in the army. The dynasty, particularly toward the final stages, relies solely on mercenaries and foreign troops. The sole motivation of mercenaries is money, not love of fatherland. Mercenaries, needless to say, do more harm than good and can never substitute for regular army. The economy, also, suffers

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75 Ibid., 174-5.
76 Ibid., pp. 370-3.
77 Ibid., p. 170.
78 The same notion was echoed by Machiavelli, Prince, pp. 77-83.
from this reliance on mercenaries, for financing costs of a mercenary army are too high; Money.\textsuperscript{79}

The dynasty's attempt to breath life into the gasping state fails, as new insurmountable problems rise.\textsuperscript{80} The reforms are too little too late, eventhough they give the impression that the state is overcoming its senility. Ibn Khaldun says the power of the state "lights up brilliantly just before it is extinguished, like a burning wick the flame of which leaps up brilliantly a moment before it goes out, giving the impression it is just starting to burn, when in fact it is going out."\textsuperscript{81}

The fatal blow to the state, however, comes in one of two ways:\textsuperscript{82} (1) Break-up of the state into smaller entities, as province governors, sensing the inevitable outcome, rush to claim independence and sovereignty for the areas under their control. Or, (2) invasion by a neighboring leader who utilizes his \textasciitilde{asabiyya} group to expand or establish a new state.

Conclusion

In his analysis, Ibn Khaldun relies primarily on his own experience and his knowledge of Muslim political history.

\textsuperscript{79} \textit{Ibar}, pp. 168-70.
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., pp. 168-70.
\textsuperscript{81} \textit{Mugaddimah}, vol. II, p. 118.
\textsuperscript{82} \textit{Ibar}, pp. 298-301.
States have come and gone, and each one followed an evolutionary life-cycle. The empirical grounding of Ibn Khaldun's cycle theory is what makes him a realist. The realism of Muguaddimah is what gives the impression of his pessimism. It is erroneous, however, to argue, as some have argued, that pessimism leads Ibn Khaldun to stand against social reform.83

Those who focus on Ibn Khaldun's pessimism arrive at their conclusions by first establishing that he is a determinist thinker. They claim that his history is "closed and circular."84 Izat argues that Ibn Khaldun does not speak of linear progression (attatawur al-mutlaq) in history because the very idea is peculiar to modern history.85

Wardi makes a distinction between Ibn Khaldun's praxis and theory, claiming that while Ibn Khaldun is pessimistic in reality, he is optimistic in theory. According to Wardi, Ibn Khaldun believed that a state, at least in theory, can break its life-cycle by adhering to the religious law (Sharlíah).86 Ibn Khaldun does in fact make a distinction between a "natural" cycle and a cycle in which divine intervention


84 Hamaish, "tajribat at-tarikh."


86 Wardi, Mantig, p. 180.
takes place. The exodus of the Israelites, for instance, illustrates the latter type.

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87 See B. C. Busch, "Divine Intervention."
CHAPTER VI

IBN KHALDUN'S CONTEMPORARY INFLUENCE AND RELEVANCE

Interest in the Muqaddimah has been longstanding. According to Muhammad al-Menoni, important scholars, some of whom Ibn Khaldun's own students, were greatly influenced in their writings by the Muqaddimah.1 These include Abu Yahya b. as-Sakak, al-Maqrizi, al-Maqirri, al-Bisaili, and others. According to Sati' al-Husari, Ottoman historians were deeply impressed by the Muqaddimah and had it translated into Turkish in the mid-18th century, a century before the first full European translation.2 Interest in the Muqaddimah in the Ottoman state, according to Hourani, was due to Ibn


Khaldun's analysis of the rise and fall of states, which was of concern to those who saw the beginnings of decline of the Ottoman state.³

In Europe, as early as the beginning of 19th century excerpts from the Muaaddimah were translated into French and other European languages.⁴ The first scholarly edition of the Muaaddimah was published in French by E.M. Quatremere under the title: Prolegomenes d'Ebn Khaldoun, Paris, 1858. On the basis of this edition, W.M. de Slane published a complete French translation of the Muaaddimah under the title: Prolegomenes Historique d'Ibn Khaldoun (3 volumes), Paris, 1862-1868.⁵

In the English speaking world, the Muaaddimah won unqualified praise from the eminent scholars Arnold Toynbee and Robert Flint. However, the first complete English translation is Franz Rosenthal's The Muaaddimah (3 volumes), which appeared nearly a century after de Slane's French edition.

Ibn Khaldun's Muaaddimah primarily attracted the attention of European sociologists and historians. Al-Menoni argues that, benefiting from their advanced civilization,

⁵ de Slane had, also, translated into French "Autobiographie d'Ibn Khaldoun," Journal Asiatique, 1844.
Europeans were able to present Ibn Khaldun in a more relevant and modern way. Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that political economy was becoming quite popular in 19th century Europe, little interest, if at all, was paid to its ideas by political economists.

Arab Modernity and Nationalism

A cursory look at the impressive bibliography compiled by al-Azneh reflects the current burgeoning interest in the Muaaddimah. In the Arab World, such interest has been cultivated with an eye on the applicability of Ibn Khaldun's science of *umran to the present situation of the Arabs. The emphasis has historically been placed on two complementary ideas: Arab modernity and Arab nationalism.

In this chapter, we discuss the thought of two prominent authors, Sati' al-Husari (1880-1968) and Ali Abd al-Raziq (1888-1966), whose ideas, concepts, and method demonstrate the tremendous influence of the Muaaddimah on contemporary Arab scholarship. We come to the conclusion that only the political ideas of the Muaaddimah appear to have influenced Arab scholars. It seems to me, as our analysis of the thought of al-Husari and Abd al-Raziq shows, that the holistic nature of Ibn Khaldun's science of *umran

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6 MR, p. 415.

was not fully appreciated. Clearly, the cause for this is the faulty characterizations of Ibn Khaldun's science. Had this science been studied as primarily a political economy science, the analyses of al-Husari, Abd al-Raziq and all others would have been richer and more fruitful.

The roots of the contemporary intellectual environment in the Arab World go back to an earlier age, one that has been named by Albert Hourani "the liberal age," extending from 1798-1939.8 This was the age of direct European domination and influence. Witnessing their Ottoman state (derogatorily then called the "sick-man" of Europe), verging on collapse, and seeing themselves inspired and challenged by European progress and civilization, Arab intellectuals began to wonder: What are the causes of rise and decline of states? What is needed for the regeneration process? What does account for the tremendous gap between the Muslim World and Europe? In other words, what does make the West superior to the Muslim World? Do secularism and liberalism have anything to do with that? What about nationalism? And, so on.

To find answers for such fundamental questions, and in addition to absorbing Western thought, Arab intellectuals turned to the home-grown thinker, Ibn Khaldun, for insights.9

8 Hourani, Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939.
9 Ibid., pp. 343-4.
Hence, we see the surge of interest in the *Mugaddimah*, which was translated into Turkish in the mid-18th century. The first printed Arabic edition appeared in 1858, published by Bulaq, under the supervision of Rifa'a al-Tahtawi (1801-73). It is believed that al-Tahtawi's interest in Ibn Khaldun was stimulated during his stay in Paris. But the influence of Ibn Khaldun on al-Tahtawi is clear in the latter's concept of *hub-al-watan* (love of fatherland), which resembles Ibn Khaldun's concept of *'asabiyya* and plays the same role.

The father of pan-Islamism, al-Afghani (1839-97) as well as his famous pupil, Mohammad Abduh (1849-1905), the father of the Arab reform movement, were influenced by Ibn Khaldun's ideas. Abduh studied and commented on the *Mugaddimah*, and devoted the introductory section of his famous *Risalat al-Tawhid* to address Ibn Khaldun's ideas. Through Abduh, Ibn Khaldun's influence spread to successive generations of Muslim modernists reformers.

**Abd al-Raziq's Modernist Thought**

Ali Abd al-Raziq, while himself not an immediate

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10 Mohammad Ali, upon becoming ruler of Egypt, ordered the translation of the *Mugaddimah* into Turkish, and it is said that, he favored it over Machiavelli's *Prince*. See, Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, p. 52. Turkish was the first language to great many Arab intellectuals, including Sati al-Husari whom we will discuss in the second part of the chapter.

student of Abduh, is considered as an extension of the reform movement, albeit on the opposite pole from the traditionist Rashid Rida (1865-1935). The liberal-constitutionalist Abd al-Raziq served as a bridge between Islamic reformism and Arab nationalism, as represented by Sati' al-Husari. As we shall see later, al-Husari took for granted and used Abd al-Raziq's controversial argument for the separation of church and state in Islam to enhance his secular theory.

Al-Islam wa-Usul al-Hukm

Ali Abd al-Raziq was educated in literature, law, the religious sciences, and political science respectively at al-Azhar, Egyptian, and Oxford universities. At the age of 22, he lectured at al-Azhar and was appointed judge. Abd al-Raziq was not a particularly prolific writer. His claim to fame came through a single book, titled al-Islam wa-Usul al-Hukm (Islam and the Foundations of Governing).

Published in 1925, only one year after Kamal Ataturk formally abolished the nominal Ottoman Caliphate, the book


aroused a major political and religious controversy in Egypt. The book was seen as a "defence and justification of the Turkish Revolution and its divorce of religion from politics." At the same time, it was an indirect attack on King Ahmad Fuad's claim for inheriting the Caliphate. According to 'Amara, the book single-handedly demolished the King's hope of inheriting the Caliphate. Abd al-Raziq was tried before a twenty-five member committee from al-Azhar's leading *ulama who "found" him "guilty" of advocating separation of church and state in Islam, declaring that Prophet Muhammad was a spiritual leader (as opposed to political leader), stating that the governments of the first four caliphs (hitherto given an element of spirituality) were secular (non-religious), denying the canonical basis of the Caliphate, among others. The guilty sentence essentially rendered Abd al-Raziq a heretic and an outcast in the religious community. And, as a consequence, he was dismissed from his job and had to sever all associations with al-Azhar.

For months, the book was the center of political debate on the pages of Egypt's major political parties' newspapers and journals. Al-Mucrtataf praised al-Raziq's

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16 For a concise sample of this debate, see Dr. Mukhtar al-Tuhami's *Thalath Ma'arik Pikriyah* (Three Intellectual Battles), Baghdad: Dar Ma'moun Lil-Tiba'ah, 1976, pp. 51-143.
courage and compared him with such reformers as Luther and Mohammad Abduh.\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Al-Hilal}, the main voice of the Liberal Constitutionalist Party, the party to which Abd al-Raziq belonged, compared Abd al-Raziq's trial by the `ulama to that of the American evolutionist teacher of his day, Scopes, in the famous "monkey trial."\textsuperscript{18}

Summarizing the intent of his book to a reporter, Abd al-Raziq said that he wanted to prove that: "Islam did not stipulate a particular form of government, did not impose upon the Muslims a special political order, but that God gave (Muslims) the freedom to organize the state in accordance with (their) cultural, social, and economic conditions—which should take into consideration social evolution and requirements of (modern) times."\textsuperscript{19} Abd al-Raziq had to prove that the Caliphate system has no basis in religion, and as a form of government is not suitable for the nation-state of the 20th century. Abd al-Raziq presented his argument in a logical and systematic manner, addressing and refuting the arguments put forward in support of the Caliphate system one by one.

\textbf{Does the Caliphate have a religious basis?}

Abd al-Raziq says no. Relying on the \textit{Mugaddimah}, he

\textsuperscript{17} Abd al-Raziq, \textit{Usul al-Hukm}, p. 124.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., pp. 24-25.

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., p. 92.
argues that neither the Qur'an nor the Traditions say anything explicit about the necessity of the Caliphate. Reference to Imamah and bay'ah in both sources is analogous to the Biblical reference: "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's...." Jesus surely did not mean to give Caesar legitimacy or support his rule. Similarly mention of terms associated with the Caliphate does not constitute an argument for the Caliphate.

As for the Sunni claim that the Caliphate was initiated through consensus (ijma') and oath of loyalty (bay'ah), Abd al-Raziq argues, as did Ibn Khaldun, that the crucial factor was 'asabiyya. Abd al-Raziq does not object to the principle of ijma', for he believes it is a sound principle. Instead, he argues that ijma' never took place, not by Prophet's companions, nor followers, nor the 'ulama, nor the Muslims in general. The best illustration of this is the fact that many Muslims at the time (of Abu Bakr, the first caliph) rejected the notion of the caliphate and dissented, such as al-Khawarij (literally, the dissenters) and the so-called Murtaddeen (those who allegedly recanted Islam after the death of the Prophet Muhammad). If no

20 Ibid., pp. 123-5.
21 Ibid., p. 125.
22 Ibid., p. 133.
23 Ibid., p. 127.
24 Ibid., p. 127.
group dissented, argues Abd al-Raziq, then the claim of ijma' would be justified on the basis that silence (Sukut) legally constitutes acceptance.25

As for the bay'ah, Abd al-Raziq argues that the it was a political—not spiritual—act.26 Ibn Khaldun supplies Abd al-Raziq with numerous examples to prove this contention. The most telling is the one associated with the bay'ah of Yazid, Mu'awiyah's son.27 This is the entire speech of one of Yazid's strong proponents: "This is Amir al-Mu'mineen (pointing to Mu'awiyah), if he dies, this (will be, pointing to Yazid), and if someone disagrees, this (will take care of him, pointing to his sword)."28 So, what kind of bay'ah is this, asks al-Raziq? Is this not similar to the sham elections orchestrated by England in Iraq to secure rulership for Faysal Ibn Hussein in return for the favors he and his family rendered to Britain?29

Other sects, explains Abd al-Raziq, such as al-Khawarij and Mu'tazilah, argued that the Caliphate was not necessary, since what is important is the application of the Shari'ah law which can be done without the Caliphate.30

25 Ibid., p. 133.
26 Ibid., p. 175.
27 Ibid., pp. 129-33.
28 Ibid., p. 131.
29 Ibid., p. 133.
30 Ibid., p. 121.
only sect, however, that argued that the Caliphate (or Imamate) was one of the fundamental precepts of Islam, was the Shiʿah. Again drawing on Ibn Khaldun's analysis, Abd al-Raziq dismisses the Shiʿah claims on the grounds that they are not based on any concrete evidence, and that the Traditions cited in support of Ali's Caliphate are inaccurate and unauthentic.31

What does the historical record of the Caliphate show?

Abd al-Raziq argues that the Caliphate was the source of all ills in Muslim society. He characterizes it as Nakbah (catastrophe).32 In the name of Islam, Abd al-Raziq charges, Caliphs oppressed the Muslims and committed unspeakable atrocities against them.33 Since the final stages of the Abbasid Caliphate, the Caliphs were figure-heads, often manipulated by their own clients. When the Tatar destroyed Baghdad and killed the last Abbasid Caliph, Baybars, the then king of Egypt, appointed his own Caliph.34

The fact that there was no Caliph for three years after the Tatar invasion, argues Abd al-Raziq, is proof enough that Islam can survive without the Caliphate.35

31 Ibid., p. 172.
32 Ibid., p. 136.
33 Ibid., pp. 131-2.
34 Ibid., p. 137.
35 Ibid., p. 137.
did the corruption of the Caliphate cause the disintegration or abandonment of religion. Consequently, it is absurd to think that the fate of Islam is bound by the fate of the Caliphate.\textsuperscript{36} The Caliphate has historically been used as an instrument of legitimacy and a cover to camouflage ruler's oppression and corruption.\textsuperscript{37}

Was Muhammad really Prophet and king?

A vast majority of Muslims, admits Abd al-Raziq, believe that Prophet Muhammad was a founder of a political state. This is often used to argue the unity of church and state (Dean wa-Dawlah). Ibn Khaldun argues that Prophet Muhammad was both a religious and political leader.\textsuperscript{38} Ibn Khaldun's conception is based on the notion that a religious message is not complete if not put into action. Ibn Khaldun argues that the unity of theory and praxis in Islam is what distinguishes between Islam and other religions.\textsuperscript{39} Herein we find one of the few important differences between Ibn Khaldun and Abd al-Raziq.

Abd al-Raziq argues that if the Prophet was head of political state, he would have established the necessary institutions. Institutions of government, finance, police,
and other requirements did not exist. As for the claim that the Prophet was himself a judge and appointed judges, Abd al-Raziq claims that empirical evidence on this is not clear and often contradictory. The judicial system (Qada') during the Prophet's time was of a very limited nature, and cannot be compared with government institutions. Hence, asks Abd al-Raziq, if the Prophet was a political leader, why did he neglect to instruct the Muslims on the art of government? Why did he neglect to build the necessary institutions? Are not such matters necessary for human umran?

Then, how can one explain the status of the Prophet Muhammad? For Abd al-Raziq, the answer is simple: Muhammad took on the all-encompassing role of spiritual leader (Sultan 'amm), one which was necessitated by being Prophet of God. Muhammad was leader of the Muslims in the same sense Jesus was leader of the Christians; that is, while Jesus preached his message, he encouraged his followers to be loyal to the political government.

What about the Prophet's Jihad (holy struggle)? Was it anything but politics through other means? Abd al-Raziq

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40 Ibid., p. 143.
41 Ibid., pp. 142-3.
42 Ibid., p. 153.
43 Ibid., pp. 154-63.
44 Ibid., p. 145.
argues that Jihad was used by the Prophet for the purpose of religion—not in pursuit of political power. Moreover, the Prophet's wars were defensive wars. Abd al-Raziq is, of course, aware that inner conviction comes through persuasion, and that the Qur'an strongly condemns conversion through coercion. Abd al-Raziq reconciles this with the fact that Jihad implies force and violence, by accepting the notion, espoused as well by Ibn Khaldun, that sometimes a little evil is needed to produce good.

**Does not the Caliphate necessitate political union?**

Abd al-Raziq argues that the Prophet called only for religious unity upon which he presided and struggled for in words and deeds (bilisanih wa sinanih). Ample evidence proves that the Prophet had no political or material objective, and that he was no more or less than a Prophet. It is clear, maintains Abd al-Raziq, that after the Prophet an Arab state, secular to be sure, was established. With such a state we saw proliferation of governmental

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46 Ibid., p. 147.
47 Ibid., p. 166.
48 Ibid., p. 158.
49 Ibid., pp. 158-64.
50 Ibid., pp. 174-6.
It is entirely possible that the whole world would adopt one religion, or be organized under a religious union. But, is it possible for the whole world to be organized under a political union? First, it is beyond human capacity and in contradictory to their competitive nature. Second, the heavenly wisdom of diversity of people would have been violated by a political union; God would have created only one ummah, had he wanted a political union.

Separation of Church and State

By arguing that Prophet Muhammad was a spiritual leader, who had nothing to do with temporal power, by negating the canonical basis of the Caliphate, and by demonstrating that historical evidence shows that the real basis of the Caliphate was power, Abd al-Raziq's analysis amounts to an argument for the separation of church and state. As a result a case is made for rational government.

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51 Ibid., p. 182.
52 Ibid., p. 165.
53 Ibid., p. 165.
54 Muhammad al-Ghazali, responding to Abd al-Raziq's advocacy of separation of temporal and spiritual powers, argued, drawing on Ibn Khaldun's _asabiyya_ concept, that "religion without power...would be useless". See, E. Rosenthal, _Modern National State_, p. 109. On the other hand, Rashid Rida disputed the accuracy of the history constructed by Ibn Khaldun, and relied upon by Abd al-Raziq, arguing that Religion in fact subordinated _asabiyya_ to it, rather than vice versa. See, Hourani, _Arabic Thought_, p. 299.
(siyasa 'aqliyya), which according to Ibn Khaldun existed since Mu'awiyah's mulk. This is particularly obvious in the following statement: "The world is of too little concern in the sight of God, for Him to appoint for its management any other arrangement than the minds which he has bestowed upon us."\(^{55}\) (emphasis mine)

Unlike Ibn Khaldun, who refrained from calling the Caliphates of the first four caliphs rational governments, Abd al-Raziq declares that after the Prophet all Caliphates were rational governments, for the decisive factor was power --not religion. In a sense, therefore, the outrage of the 'ulama against Abd al-Raziq's book was understandable, for, "it is unheard of to apply the historical criticism to the golden age of the khilafa under the first four successors of the prophet, instead of beginning with Mu'awiyah and his mulk."\(^{56}\) Ironically, Abd al-Raziq reaches his conclusion that the first four Caliphates were rational governments by pursuing the logic of Ibn Khaldun's analysis more closely than Ibn Khaldun himself. After all, it was Ibn Khaldun who proved that 'asabiyya was the decisive factor in the caliphial selection process, even in the selection of Abu Bakr, Omar, Othman, and Ali.

The separation of church and state would have the effect of eliminating the Shari'ah as a source of civil

\(^{55}\) Quoted in Adams, Modernism in Egypt, p. 265.

\(^{56}\) E. Rosenthal, Modern National State, p. 87.
law. And, once the Shari'ah is put aside, the rational government (presumably liberal-constitutionalist to suit Abd al-Raziq's political orientation) can prescribe whatever it deems necessary to cope with modern times. The ultimate effect of the separation, according to Hourani, would be "to open another door to secular nationalism...."

Indeed, Sati' al-Husari, the father of Arab nationalism, relies on this to eliminate the role of religion in nationhood.

**Sati' al-Husari's Arab Nationalism**

Born in 1880 in Yemen, where his father was serving as an Ottoman civil servant, al-Husari received his education at the prestigious Mulkiye Mektebi in Istanbul. On his graduation in 1900, al-Husari was appointed in the Balkans to teach in the natural sciences. During the five years he served as teacher, al-Husari wrote several text books. In 1905, he abandoned teaching to take up the administrative position of Kayim-makam in Manastir province. Al-Husari became exposed to European nationalism and had personally come to know political activists, including members of the

57 Adams, Modernism in Egypt, p. 267.

58 Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 344.


60 Ibid., p. 17.
Young Turks movement. He soon became a member of the Ottoman reform Committee of Union and Progress (CUP).61

It is clear that his eight-year service in the Balkans, facilitated by his fluency in French and love for reading, gave al-Husari a golden opportunity to deepen his knowledge of European thought, particularly on nationalism. As a result, his intellectual and political awareness was raised, and his interest shifted from the natural to the social sciences. Back in Istanbul, he became increasingly involved in the CUP movement, albeit writing about education to disguise his political reform message.

He established a magazine and wrote for other journals to convey his message. During 1910 and 1911, al-Husari made extensive trips to Europe ostensibly to study European educational systems. These trips were important, for they for the first time introduced Arab nationalism to al-Husari through Arab activists in Paris and other European capitals.

In 1911, al-Husari participated in the famous debate with the Turkish nationalist Ziya Gokalp, addressing himself to the causes for the Ottoman state's decline and the actions necessary for it regeneration.62 He attacked Gokalp's collectivist doctrine, in which society—not the individual—was made the object of study and concern.63 He also attacked

61 Ibid., p. 20.
the premise that language could be the basis of Turkish nationalism, arguing that "we cannot accept the concept of the Germans because language is the least of the ties which bind the Ottomans to one another."64 What holds the Ottoman state together, argued al-Husari, is the bond of religion. And, Islam, contrary to the views of the nationalists, was not the cause of Ottoman backwardness; rather, it was those "who regard religion as a custom and view every innovation as evil and heresy."65

However, with every passing day, the Young Turks were gaining more power, gradually eliminating Ottoman control over the state. The new nationalist elite was not in the least interested in saving the Ottoman state, and immediately began a process of Turkification of the state. Al-Husari and other Ottomanist Arabs looked to the Arab countries for refuge. In the meantime, Faysal bin al-Husayn captured Syria and established a kingdom in which many of al-Husari's former students were serving. So al-Husari left for Syria in 1919.

It was at this time that al-Husari began championing Arab nationalism and unity. He worked in several Arab states, mainly in Ministries of Education. He never held any political appointment, notwithstanding the temptation of the great opportunities he had.66 He saw himself exclusively as

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64 Cited in ibid., p. 38.
65 Cited in ibid., p. 34.
66 See, Ibid., p. 163.
an educator, relying primarily on the written word to convey his doctrines. Unlike Abd al-Raziq, al-Husari was a prolific writer. In the following, we analyze al-Husari's theory of Arab nationalism and ascertain Ibn Khaldun's influence on it.

As an Arab nationalist, al-Husari praised Turkish nationalism, and welcomed Ataturk's decision to abolish the Caliphate. More striking was his change of mind on the role of language in nationalist theory. The German scholars whom he as an Ottomanist had criticized became intellectual mentors for him. Al-Husari was clearly impressed by such writers as Herder and Fichte, among others, and he often quotes from their writing to support his argument. Al-Husari's interest in the German theory of nationalism was not accidental; he finds the German experience relevant to the situation of the Arab states; and, hence, finds the unification of Germany as a model to be emulated by the Arabs.

Al-Husari refuted the French theory of nationalism as


68 Fichte's *Addresses to the German Nation*, according to Cleveland, *Making of an Arab Nationalist*, p. 86, especially influenced al-Husari.

expounded by Ernest Renan. Renan argued the notion that the nation is confined to the political entity called the state, that is, the nation is synonymous with the state and cannot exist outside it. Renan also argued that the nation comes to be on the basis of the free will of its individuals.\textsuperscript{70} Al-Husari, like the German theorists before him, contested the accuracy of both notions. For al-Husari culture and history are the real bases of the nation, and, thus, national association is organic rather than based on will. He argued that the French concept of nationalism does not stand close scrutiny and that in the final analysis it was no more than a justification for French imperialism.\textsuperscript{71}

The cornerstone of culture and history is language, which al-Husari made the basis of Arab nationalism. Thus, unlike other nationalists of his generation, al-Husari was the first to extend nationalism beyond the Fertile Crescent and the Arabian Peninsula to North Africa and Egypt, and to call for total Arab unity.\textsuperscript{72} He thought the most effective method to achieve Arab unity is through political education to raise Arab national consciousness. As minister of education in several Arab states, al-Husari attempted to restructure the educational system to better serve this

\textsuperscript{70} See, Hourani, \textit{Arabic Thought}, p. 313; Tibi, \textit{Arab Nationalism}, p. 124.

\textsuperscript{71} See Tibi, \textit{Arab Nationalism}, pp. 118, 124.

\textsuperscript{72} Cleveland, \textit{Making of an Arab Nationalist}, p. 85.
Moreover, he looked toward Cairo, rather than Baghdad, for leadership.74

Bases of Nationalism

By making language the core of his theory, al-Husari had to reject other possible ones: economic interests, geography, religion, and ethnic.

Though he admits the importance of economic interests, al-Husari belittles their role in the building of a nation.75 For al-Husari, it is inconceivable that material considerations, or prospects of gain, could make a nation.76 The nation cannot be bind together by uncertain, changing economic interests. Genuine nationalism is motivated by love for the fatherland—not by prospects of profit.77 Thus, al-Husari rejects the Marxian notion that solidarity is based on economic considerations, and, thus, the rise of the nation-state in Europe is due to the rise of capitalism.78 Likewise, he objects to equating of the term "Arab" with

73 Likewise, Fichte emphasized the role of political education. See, Tibi, Arab Nationalism, p. 108; Cleveland, Making of an Arab Nationalist, p. 145.
74 Hourani, Arabic Thought, pp. 315-6.
76 Ibid., p. 259.
78 Husari, Dirasat, pp. 151, 153-59.
"Bedouin" or "nomad". Arab is associated with the Arabic language, while Bedouin, or nomad, is associated with an occupational or economic "class".\textsuperscript{79} Arabs, he argues, form a nation not on the basis of an economic class but on the basis of language.\textsuperscript{80}

Considering the impact of economic diversity on prospects of Arab unity, al-Husari rejects the claim that diversity is a serious obstacle. He cites the example of the U.S., claiming that unity was achieved in spite of economic diversity.\textsuperscript{81} Indeed, he does not believe that conflict of interest among the Arab states is prerequisite for unification.\textsuperscript{82}

The geographical basis was advocated by Arab regionalists who defined the nation in terms of natural boundaries. Syrian nationalism is representative of this.

\textsuperscript{79} Ibn Khaldun used the term Arab rather loosely, especially when referring to the destructive nature of "Arab" raids in North Africa. Misreading this, some contemporaries claimed that Ibn Khaldun was of Berber origin and accused him of anti-Arab racism. However, al-Husari defended Ibn Khaldun and deplored such accusations. In 1924, while minister of education in Iraq, al-Husari circulated to all teachers a memo to clarify the double meaning of the term. He argued that Ibn Khaldun used the term Arabs to refer in the one case to the Arab nation, and in the other to refer to the nomads, whose mode of production is desert-based, whether Arab, or Berber, or Turk. See, Husari, "Dirasat 'an Ibn Khaldun," in MC, pp. 491-501. See, also, Abd al-Aziz Douri's, "Ibn Khaldun wal-Arab," in MC, pp. 501-515.

\textsuperscript{80} Cleveland, Making of an Arab Nationalist, p. 119.

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., pp. 108, 126.

Antun Sa’adeh (d. 1949), champion of Syrian nationalism, called for a union among Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq on the grounds that they form an integral geographical unit.

Ironically, a different group of regionalists, particularly Egyptian nationalists, argued for a separate Egypt on the basis of culture, the very element al-Husari used to bring Egypt into the Arab fold. The most prominent of Egyptian regionalists was Taha Hussain (1889-1973), the famous literary scholar, who argued that although geographically Egypt was part of the East, culturally it was part of the West. Al-Husari debated Taha Hussain, especially after the publication of the latter's controversial book, Mustaqbal al-Thaqafa fi Misr (The Future of Culture in Egypt), and denounced Hussain's claim that Egypt was culturally part of Western civilization.

The religious basis, one which continues to be a serious challenge to Arab nationalism, was advocated by the pan-Islamists, who thought that all those professing Islam, whether Arabs, Turks, Indians, Persian, and so on, form an ummah, or a nation. Representative of this were al-Afghani, Rashid Rida, the Muslim Brothers movement—even al-Husari himself when he was a devoted proponent of the Ottoman state. As the spokesman of Arab nationalism, al-Husari belittled the role of religion. He argued that the Arab states are

83 Tibi, Arab Nationalism, p. 161.
composed of many minorities whose religion is not Islam. Language, not religion, is the common denominator of all inhabitants of the Arab World. The Arab national consciousness and civilization, argued al-Husari, existed before Islam. For al-Husari, moreover, Arab history can be distinguished from Islamic history.  

Al-Husari was for Muslim solidarity, but not for a political union encompassing all the Muslims. He acknowledged the role of Islam in expanding the Arab nation, for it supplied it with what Ibn Khaldun calls greater 'asabiyya. Al-Husari also acknowledged the role of the Qur'an in preserving the Arabic language.

There are three possible explanations for al-Husari's attitude toward religion. First, al-Husari was not a religious individual; his education, unlike most liberal age Muslims, was secular. Second, al-Husari realized that nationalism, as demonstrated in the European models had to distance itself from religion. Religion, as popularly understood, was seen as an obstacle to progress and civilization. Al-Husari viewed universal religions, e.g. Christianity and Islam, as anti-nationalist.

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84 Cleveland, Making of an Arab Nationalist, p. 149.
85 Ibid., p. 150.
86 Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 315.
87 Ibid., p. 314; Cleveland, Making of an Arab Nationalist, p. 110.
Third, to make religion the basis of nationhood meant the exclusion of nationalism's pioneers and ardent supporters, namely, the Arabic speaking Christians. Thus, for al-Husari, and here we see the influence of Abd al-Raziq, Islam was a spiritual—not a political—message. Erwin Rosenthal expresses this clearly: "an accommodation with nationalism, a marching hand in hand of Muslim and Christian Arabs, the avant garde of Arab nationalism, is only possible if Islam is understood as a faith, not as the classical expression of that faith in law."88 This is clear in the writings of such nationalists as Abd al-Rahman al-Bazzaz, Qustantine Zuraiq, and Edmund Rabbath.89 For Rabbath and Zuraiq Islam is the Arab past, not the future.

The ethnic basis of nationalism was advocated by Salameh Musa, who believed that "the Egyptians, Syrians, and Iraqis were related by blood to the Aryans and should therefore be called Westerners rather than Easterners."90 Al-Husari argued that empirical evidence proves that pure blood nations do not exist.

Al-Husari's view is not dissimilar from Ibn Khaldun's argument that filial _asabiyya_91 incorporates within it

89 Hourani, _Arabic Thought_, pp. 308-10.
91 Ibn Khaldun refers to pure blood groups in his analysis only to set an ideal type of filial _asabiyya_.

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individuals and groups from other ethnic backgrounds as a result of clientships, alliances, and intermarriages. Therefore, al-Husari's rejection of the ethnic basis of nationalism, is merely a rejection of the ideal type which assumes the existence of a pure blood group or nation.

Looking closely at the substance of al-Husari's theory of nationalism, one finds that it is altogether based on Ibn Khaldun's concept of *asabiyya*. Al-Husari's theory, writes Tibi, "takes its central point of reference from the notion of *asabiyya...*, and attempts a synthesis between this and the German idea of the nation."92 Like Ibn Khaldun, al-Husari argues that the strength of a group, or nation, is measured not by its numbers but by the strength of its *asabiyya*.93

In arguing for Arab unity, al-Husari is only reviving Ibn Khaldun's assertion that an Arab State once existed, namely, the Umayyad and Abbasid states. That was the time during which Arab *asabiyya* overwhelmed other nations' *asabiyya's*. Thus, al-Husari's call for an Arab union is anything but new or unnatural. An Arab union, divorced from religion, would merely be an expression of the revival of the Arab *asabiyya*. Moreover, in refuting the religious basis of nationalism, al-Husari relies on Abd al-Raziq's notion of separation of religion and politics.

92 Tibi, Arab Nationalism, p. 101.

93 Cleveland, Making of an Arab Nationalist, p. 164.
The influence of Ibn Khaldun on al-Husari extends to personal matters; al-Husari named his eldest son Khaldun, born in Baghdad in 1923, apparently in honor of the great Arab thinker. Al-Husari also shared some similarities with Ibn Khaldun: both addressed themselves to the elite, the educated class, and both never developed any regional loyalties, feeling at home wherever they resided.

Misuse of Ibn Khaldun's Ideas?

We saw the influence of Ibn Khaldun on the thought of Abd al-Raziq and al-Husari. The influence was not only in the form of specific ideas, but also in the scientific methods used by both scholars. Notwithstanding the outstanding character of their scholarship, al-Husari and Abd al-Raziq failed to completely understand the purpose of Ibn Khaldun's "new science," or political economy.

Ibn Khaldun did not argue that the caliphate was based on power or that it transformed into mulk in order to reject the Caliphate or to advice against its establishment, as Abd al-Raziq did. Ibn Khaldun's analysis intended to:

1. state facts about the Caliphate and its fate;
2. bring attention to the essential point that the goal of political economy is achievement of 'umran, which can be realized equally under the Caliphate and under secular mulk.

94 Ibid., pp. 44, 103.
95 Ibid., pp. 182, 178.
Neither did Ibn Khaldun emphasize the role of *asabiyya because of its intrinsic quality, but because *asabiyya serves as a means for the establishment of the state, which in turn serves as prerequisite to *umran.

Ibn Khaldun emphasized that *umran must be achieved on the subjective as well as the objective levels, a fact few commentators of Ibn Khaldun fully understand. Al-Husari underestimates the role of economics. In emphasizing the role of education in his theory of nationalism, al-Husari does so not to highlight the importance of knowledge to the economic basis of society, but merely to raise Arab national consciousness for its own sake. Finally, a major shortcoming of al-Husari's theory of nationalism is its lack of addressing the ultimate objectives of Arab unity. Love of fatherland merely for its own sake is not sufficient for those who want progress, prosperity, liberty, democracy, that is, ideal *umran, or civilization.96

Conclusion

The questions asked by liberal age thinkers, to be sure, are still asked today, notwithstanding the fact that

96 One may argue that for various reasons more and more people are literally choosing their national identity, as is the case with immigrants to the "New World." Hence, as we approach the 21st. century, al-Husari's argument that nationalism is predetermined loses ground to Renan's voluntary notion.
political imperialism has been largely eliminated for some time. In fact, one only has to look at the books that have been recently published, or to browse the major political journals in the Arab World to find that the debate that started by 19th century thinkers continues. The problems of the Arab World are fundamentally the same, in the main concerning identity and modernity. The study of Ibn Khaldun has never seemed more relevant or appropriate than it is today, especially because colonialism, which was considered an obstacle to unity and progress of the Arab World, does not exist any longer.

While Ibn Khaldun did not advocate the separation of church and state as such, his analysis of Muslim political history proved that after the first four caliphs, power—not religion—was the determining factor. Therefore, it is clear that Arab intellectuals, while they may have been stimulated by Western thought and experience, were principally influenced by Ibn Khaldun, and his distant pupil, abd al-Raziq. Erwin Rosenthal writes:

"Neither Mustafa Kamil nor other nationalists view this intricate, delicate problem of the relationship between religion and nationalism as the ineluctable choice between the one or the other. They do so not solely under the influence of the West with its separation of state and Church, but also in the wake of Ibn Khaldun whom they have studied. From him they have learnt to distinguish between khilafa and mulk, either the mulk of Shari‘ah and Qanun, the Muslim power-state, or the naked power-state, the siyasa ‘agliya with political laws based on human reason. Religion is the central all-pervading factor in the khilafa, one of several equally important
Ibn Khaldun has influenced, as we have seen, numerous scholars. Yet, unfortunately, by and large most writers have looked at individual parts of Ibn Khaldun's political economy, treating each in isolation of the rest. Thus, the overall picture was missed; and, the true relevance and significance of Ibn Khaldun's political economy was lost.98


98 However much critical we are of the liberal age thinkers, we disagree with Hourani's assertion that, more or less, all such thinkers did was to adapt Western terminology to Arabic concepts in order to sneak in Western civilization in an acceptable form. See, Hourani's, *Arabic Thought*, p. 344.
CONCLUSION

Although much less known to Western political economists, than, for example, to sociologists or historians, Ibn Khaldun is the founding father of political economy. Centuries before his successors, the "classical political economists," Ibn Khaldun dealt systematically and masterfully with the relationship between economics and politics. He, furthermore, was able to integrate and define the subject matter of his "new" science by delineating the fundamental political and economic processes.

Born to an elite family, Ibn Khaldun was educated at the hands of North Africa's most accomplished scholars. He, also, had extensive practical training in politics, serving in a variety of important posts in several North African states. His negotiating skills with foreign leaders as well as with domestic groups gave him a unique experience and made him a prized asset. When he retreated to Qal`at Ibn Salameh to devote himself to writing, Ibn Khaldun thus brought with him a wealth of knowledge as well as a rich practical experience, the product of which was Kitab al-`Ibar. Ibn Khaldun could not in the least be accused of being an "ivory
tower" intellectual, for he did not merely theorize about reality, but in fact experienced it to the fullest extent. This was clearly shown and analyzed in the first chapter of this study.

Chapter II contains an analysis of the "great intellectual debates" in Muslim history. We have shown that Ibn Khaldun was influenced by these debates. The Mucaddimah, it was argued, is essentially a product of, and a synthesis for, centuries of Muslim experience and learning.

Chapters III, IV, and V constitute the core of this dissertation. Ibn Khaldun's economic and political ideas were analyzed, respectively, in separate chapters (chapters III and IV). The aim in these chapters was to identify and define the core ideas, concepts, and terminology developed by Ibn Khaldun. Second, in chapter V, Ibn Khaldun's political economy was diachronically examined, as we sketched out his cycle theory on the rise and fall of states. The purpose in this chapter was to lay out the conceptual framework for the life stages of the state. This chapter showed the dynamic nature of Ibn Khaldun's political economy.

In the last chapter, we have studied the thought of two outstanding writers in order to show Ibn Khaldun's influence on contemporary Arab scholarship.

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The task of providing a summary for Ibn Khaldun's
political economy is a simple one. Ibn Khaldun must have started with the simple observation that states seem to rise and fall in a cyclical pattern. The why and how of this obviously formed his research problematique.

To start with, Ibn Khaldun looked at existing sciences but found no satisfying answers. In an elaborate diagnosis of the science of history, he showed why such sciences were inadequate to full understanding of the rise and decline of states and other phenomena. Not only did the sciences have defective methodology, but their subject matter and units of analysis were partial and misleading. He held high regard for the scholars in these fields, proving that they went astray only because the did not have the "proper" science within which to study human phenomena. Therefore, he developed his science of ʿumran, or political economy.

History has two sides to it: an apparent and a hidden ones. Scholars, Ibn Khaldun argued, have been studying only the apparent, or the obvious, side of history. Their analysis thus were superficial and faulty. For Ibn Khaldun, the hidden side is relatively more important, for it contains the laws of motion and causal relationships that make the evolution of history orderly—thus, predictable.

Ibn Khaldun used the state his primary unit of analysis. How did the state come about? To answer this, Ibn Khaldun thought that the science of ʿumran must deal with the beginnings in human history, and the factors and process that

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led to the establishment of the state. Humans organized themselves into groups to fulfill two basic needs: security (against animals and, afterwards, against one another) and food. These become the bases for his powerful notions: mode of production (emphasizing economic processes) and *asabiyya (emphasizing political processes).

In his analysis of the mode of production, Ibn Khaldun used the dialectical relationship between country and town. Despite their antagonism, the two entities could not exist without one another. Ibn Khaldun, also, elaborated or developed such notions as "cooperation," "specialization," "division of labor," "labor value," "market," "exchange," "supply and demand," among others.

In the political dimension, Ibn Khaldun examined the role played by *asabiyya. *Asabiyya provided the prerequisite for central authority and the emergence of a wazi'. Leadership of the wazi' and the material and ideological resources of *asabiyya make royal authority (mulk) an inevitable outcome, hence, the state. Once established, the state goes through an evolutionary cycle, ending in its demise and in the emergence of a more vigorous state.

The state itself is a prerequisite of *umran. Therefore, while the state is youthful, *umran increases, reaching its zenith in the da'a stage. After this stage, the state grows weaker economically and politically, until it
either disintegrates or falls prey to a rising 'asabiyya from the outside.

In his analysis, Ibn Khaldun places equal emphasis on political and economic processes. He finds such processes to be interconnected and interdependent. Ibn Khaldun's conclusion is that the factors which make the state possible, are the same ones who lead to its demise. Thus, the cycle is a sort of a law to which all state are subject—excepting instances of divine intervention, however.

* * *

The primary source for this study was the famous Muqaddimah. However, since the Muqaddimah incorporates a wide variety of topics, a deliberate effort was made in this study in order to isolate, extract, and arrange the relevant sections in a coherent system.

Our ultimate objective is to bring attention especially of political economists to Ibn Khaldun's political economy, and to encourage researchers from all fields to explore Ibn Khaldun's work. The Muqaddimah contains a wealth of information. The potential for its contributions to political economy, and the social sciences at large, is unlimited. The researcher will be pleasantly surprised at the freshness, originality, and modernity of Ibn Khaldun's thought and insights.

In the remainder of this conclusion, we wish to
briefly outline some of Ibn Khaldun's contributions and insights. The list is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to highlight those concepts which warrant careful study by future scholars. They are stated as postulates.

* Economic prosperity takes place only if an atmosphere of political stability prevails.

* Country not only serves as a source of manpower to towns, but also a source of intellectual rejuvenation. Compare this with the present situation between the Third world and the First world: the developing states not only lose their manpower to the industrial world, but also suffer a serious "brain drain" problem.

* 'Asabiyya can be adapted to modern context. The concept of 'asabiyya as well as the theory of the state are major contributions of Ibn Khaldun. Contemporary international relations scholars will appreciate Ibn Khaldun's insights as they attempt to understand, for example, the phenomenal rise of Ayatollah Khomaini and the establishment of the "Islamic State" in Iran.

* Social conflict and revolutions are stimulated by the more fluent in society. Ibn Khaldun's conflict theory contradicts those modern theories whose premise is that poverty causes conflict or revolution. Ibn Khaldun would argue that the poor spend their time worrying about acquiring subsistence; but the well-to-do can spare the time and resources needed for social action such as revolution.
Evidence from recent history proves that Ibn Khaldun's notion is an accurate portrayal of reality. Consider, for example, the role of the middle class in the 1979 Iranian revolution.

* There is a natural movement from religious to secular authority. To prove this, Ibn Khaldun supplied the powerful example from Muslim history, that is, the transformation from the Caliphate to secular mulk. He is the first scholar to study the effects of religion on the rise and growth of the state.

* The government is a public good. This is illustrated especially in Ibn Khaldun's treatment of the necessity of government, which he attributes to human need for food and security.

* Modernization creates an environment conducive to corruption and moral degradation. We are, in this country, well aware of the effects of drugs, alcoholism, sexual deviance, gang violence, and other urban problems.

* The human is a child of custom. This brings attention to the importance of the social and ecological factors, and provides a refutation of racially-based theories concerning human achievement.

* Reform from the top usually comes late and is ultimately ineffective. Ibn Khaldun proves this by providing examples of many dynasties which in their declining stages attempted to no avail to rejuvenate their states and prevent their collapse.
* Knowledge is itself dependent on the social, economic, and political conditions of society. This, as we know, is a fundamental contribution to the field of sociology of knowledge.

* The cycle theory operates as a law of history. Such theory can, with some modifications, enrich the analyses of contemporary writers. Cycle theories have of late become very fashionable in the social sciences, and, especially, in political economy. In terms of applicability to present cases, one must exercise caution just as one must with, say, the application of orthodox Marxism, for tremendous changes have taken place in this century. Still, it is tempting to argue that, for example, the Saudi state might be a living example of Ibn Khaldun's cycle.
APPENDIX

FRANZ ROSENTHAL'S TRANSLATION: AN EVALUATION

The three-volume translation certainly provides an impressive contribution to the study of Islamic thought in general, and Ibn Khaldun's in particular. It contains a wealth of information particularly on all the references used by Ibn Khaldun. I agree with Mahdi that even Arab students of Ibn Khaldun will find referring to it indispensable.¹

However, this translation suffers from major shortcomings.² In comparing it with de Slane's translation, Gibb argued that de Slane's old French translation is superior and more useful, particularly in chapters II-V. Unlike de Slane, Rosenthal's adherence to a literal translation and his break up of Ibn Khaldun's free flowing,


long sentences rendered the work lifeless and static. Those familiar with the Arabic text are left wondering and asking, along with Gibb: "Is this our lively, direct, colorful, brilliantly imaginative, exuberantly eloquent Ibn Khaldun...?"3

Gibb, of course, realized that it is necessary to break up the especially long sentences of the *Mugaddimah*. But he would have liked to see that Rosenthal translate them into shorter ones without losing their vitality and spirit. The translation ought to take into account the method of, and the assumptions upon which, the original text was based, as for example, the fact that one has to understand that "Ibn Khaldun's thought...is basically biological, so that the verbal abstract is never clearly separated from the concrete personalities who embody it."4

Mahdi, on the other hand, was more favorable, and was concerned with Rosenthal's tendency of translating Ibn Khaldun's terms into contemporary phraseology, giving them false modern appearance. In other words, the same translation that appeared too literal for Gibb, was criticized by Mahdi for being too interpretive.

I am inclined to think the translation is too literal, for it does not convey the basic structural unity in the text. Failure to recognize that the text's purpose was to

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4Ibid., p. 140.
elaborate a "new science" leaves the impression that the original text is but a collection of scattered ideas. In this regard, Issawi's selections is superior to it.
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