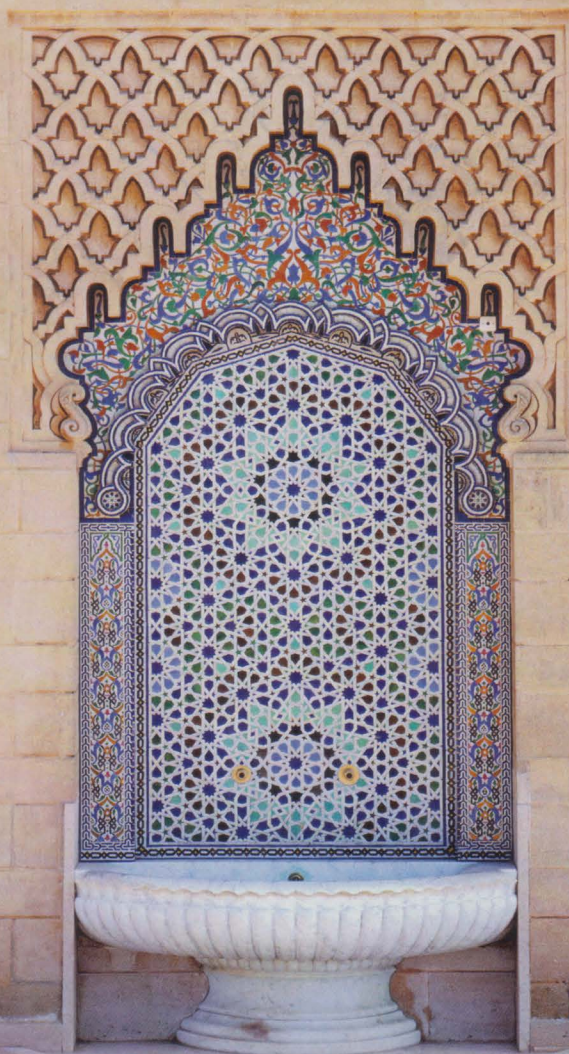MAKERS OF ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION

IBN KHALDUN

Syed Farid Alatas

OXFORD

Ibn Khaldun

MAKERS OF ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION

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This series, conceived by the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, is published and distributed by Oxford University Press (India). The books in the series, written by leading scholars in the field, aim to provide an introduction to outstanding figures in the history of Islamic civilization. They will serve as the essential first point of reference for study of the persons, events and ideas that have shaped the Islamic world and the cultural resources on which Muslims continue to draw.

Ibn Khaldun

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To my daughter, Afra

Contents

Preface

Ibn Khaldun was one of the most remarkable Muslim scholars of the pre-modern period. He founded an entirely new science that he called the science of human society (*ʿilm al-ijtimāʿ al-insānī*) or human social organization (*ʿilm al-ʿumrān al-basharī*). It had little impact on the development of Muslim thought for several centuries but greatly impressed European thinkers from the nineteenth century on, some of whom regarded Ibn Khaldun as a progenitor of sociology and other modern social sciences.

Kitāb al-ʿIbar, his history of the Arabs and Berbers and the introduction to it, the *Muqaddima* or *Prolegomenon*, constitute his main contributions to the social sciences. While *Kitāb al-ʿIbar* reports on the events of history, the *Muqaddima* discusses their underlying causes and what Ibn Khaldun calls the inner meaning of history. The underlying causes and inner meaning constitute the new science that Ibn Khaldun termed the science of human society. These and his other surviving works, notably his *Autobiography*, are more fully described at the end of the first chapter.

This book is an introduction to Ibn Khaldun's 'new science', focusing on his theory of the rise and decline of states. It also provides an extensive discussion of his views on education and knowledge, and his views on society. Finally, after a historical account of how Ibn Khaldun's ideas were received in his time and in the modern period, it

presents a brief discussion of how his ideas may be further developed in the context of contemporary social sciences and humanities.

This book is divided into six chapters. Chapter 1 provides a short account of his genealogy, his life, the social influences on his thinking and the intellectual context in which he thought and wrote. The fourteenth century in which he lived was vastly different from what he knew of earlier centuries. In earlier times, the Maghreb (literally 'the West', meaning western North Africa) had enjoyed a relatively well-developed market economy and the steady growth of merchant capitalism. That prosperity, particularly due to the gold trade, had led to the rise of wealthy cities and a thriving artistic and scientific culture. However, by the time of Ibn Khaldun's birth, the Maghreb was politically fragmented, economically depressed and under constant threat of nomadic invasions and pillaging. These circumstances surely must have influenced Ibn Khaldun's thinking on the rise and decline of states.

Chapter 2 focuses on Ibn Khaldun's 'new science'. His approach was a positive rather than a normative one. He was concerned with the study of state and society as they are rather than as they should be. In this sense, he departed from the dominant pattern of writings on state and society. This presentation of his ideas covers some methodological aspects of the new science as well as its main features.

Chapter 3 turns to a discussion of Ibn Khaldun's thoughts on education and knowledge. The classification of knowledge in classical Islamic learning functioned as a guide to those wishing to understand the range of sciences in existence and the relationship between them. There was, therefore, a pedagogical dimension to the classification of sciences. Ibn Khaldun's classification, and his distinction between the intellectual and transmitted sciences and the

strength and weaknesses of his scheme, are explained, as also his views on learning capacity, memorization, curriculum, strict teachers, and the breadth and depth of education. He was a keen observer of the relationship between education and society and saw education as having multiple objectives.

Chapter 4 surveys and analyses the reception and consumption of Ibn Khaldun's work in the pre-modern Muslim world, in Western academia and in the contemporary Muslim world.

Chapter 5 makes the point that, while there is a systematic theory of society to be found in the works of Ibn Khaldun, there has been insufficient attention to it in introductory textbooks on the history of the various social sciences and on more specialized topics to which Ibn Khaldun's science is obviously relevant. I discuss the possibility of developing Khaldunian social science by combining his theoretical insights with those of the modern social sciences.

Chapter 6 gives, along with a list of the works cited in this book, an account of the various editions and translations of Ibn Khaldun's works into European and non-European languages. It also presents a briefly annotated list of major works in Arabic, English and other European languages relevant to the topics covered in this book.

In conformity with the general format of this series I have reduced footnotes and information in the references to the barest minimum. Sufficient bibliographical detail will be found in the list of works cited at the end of the book. I have been permitted, in the interests of preventing errors in identifying persons, book titles and technical terms, to depart from the series' conventions to the extent of formerly transliterating proper names as well as specialized uses of Arabic words. Dates are given according to the Islamic (Hijri) calendar followed by the Christian or Common Era equivalent.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Ibn Khaldun's *Autobiography* and his character

IBN KHALDUN'S ANCESTRY

'My name is ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥassan b. Muḥammad b. Jābir b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Khaldūn,' Ibn Khaldun writes in the first few lines of his autobiography.[1] At the very outset the critical mind of the scholar was at work as he expresses doubt about the accuracy of his family tree. He reasons that if his ancestors had migrated to Andalusia during the time of the Arab conquest, there should be at least twenty generations between him and the first Khaldun. He arrived at the figure of twenty by counting three generations per century, according to the method established in the first book of the *ʿIbar.* This critical eye to the 'facts' prompted him to see the need for a new field of social science in which to better understand history.

Much of what is known about Ibn Khaldun's personal and family history comes from his autobiography. It is often the case that an author's family background and personal experiences are major influences on his perspective and outlook. This is surely true of Ibn Khaldun: the vocations of

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1 *Ibn Khaldoun, L'Autobiographie* (ed. Cheddadi), 17; hereafter cited as *Autobiog.*

his ancestors and his own experiences of the uncertainty and vicissitudes of political life helped to form his understanding of the nature of historical change.

The house of Khaldun (Banū Khaldūn) traces its origins to Seville in Andalusia. Ibn Khaldun's ancestors migrated to Tunis about the middle of the seventh/thirteenth century following the victory of Ferdinanad III, the son of Alfonso, King of Galicia, during the Reconquista (*Autobiog.*, 17). An ancestor by the name of Khaldun, from whom the family derives its name, was the first to set foot in Andalusia. Going further back in time, the Khalduns trace their origins to an Arab Yemeni tribe from the Hadhramaut region. The genealogist cited by Ibn Khaldun connects the Khaldun family line to Wāʾil b. Hujr, one of the Companions of the Prophet.[2]

The Khalduns were an eminent family of politicians and men of knowledge during the Umayyad, Almoravid and Almohad periods in Andalusia until the latter half of the fifth/eleventh century. Eventually, they settled in Tunis, where Ibn Khaldun was born. His father, Muḥammad Abū Bakr, broke family tradition by staying out of politics and led a life of study until he died in the Great Plague in 749/1348 (*Autobiog.*, 26).

It is convenient[3] to divide Ibn Khaldun's life into three periods. The first, lasting twenty years, was that of his childhood and education. The second period of about twenty-three years was taken up with the continuation of his studies and stints in political office. During his last thirty-one years he worked as a scholar, teacher and magistrate. He spent the first two periods in the Maghreb, or Muslim West,

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2   Khaldūn b. ʿUthmān b. Hānīʾ b. al-Khaṭṭāb b. Kurayb ibn Maʿdīkarib b. al-Hārith b. Wāʾil b. Hujr (*Autobiog.*, 18).

3   See Merad, 'L'Autobiographie', 54; Talbi, 'Ibn Khaldūn', 825, and Talbi, *Ibn Haldūn et l'histoire*, 6.

and the third between the Maghreb and Egypt. Much of the social context of Ibn Khaldun's thinking may be understood from the period in which he was politically active in the affairs of various rulers and states in North Africa and Spain.

IBN KHALDUN'S CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION

Ibn Khaldun was born in the month of Ramaḍān in the year 732/1332. The *Autobiography* provides a great deal of information about his courses of instruction and the major personalities under whom he studied. He learnt to recite the Qurʾān by heart and studied the various styles of recitation and Qurʾānic orthography. He also studied Maliki jurisprudence, the *ḥadīth* or traditions of the Prophet, and poetry. He studied under Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Jābir b. Sulṭān al-Qaysī al-Wādīyāshī, the greatest *ḥadīth* authority of Tunis, who conferred upon Ibn Khaldun the *ijāza* or permission to transmit teachings in language and law (*Autobiog.*, 27, 31). He received *ijāza* from various other teachers also, including several scholars of high repute who came to Tunis following the conquest of Ifriqiya by the Marinid sultan, Abū l-Ḥasan, in 748/1347.

Among these scholars, the one who exercised most influence on the intellectual development of Ibn Khaldun was his principal teacher, Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Ābilī, the grand master of the rational sciences.[4] Al-Ābilī made Ibn Khaldun especially aware of pedagogical practices that were detrimental to the process of knowledge transmission: a proliferation of readings was harmful to the presentation of knowledge; recourse to books alone was insufficient for the acquisition of a science – it was necessary to travel, to meet the masters and study under their personal direction; the use of abridgements did not illuminate the material to be studied

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4   *Autobiog.*, 31–2. See also Nassar, 'Le Maître d'Ibn Khaldun', 113.

– it was necessary to dispense with synopses and search for knowledge in the original sources. As we will see in detail, Ibn Khaldun built on and developed these pedagogical ideas in his *Muqaddima*.

Ibn Khaldun writes that since the age of puberty, he never ceased to study assiduously and acquire the sciences and virtues from the circle of scholars around him until the Great Plague in 748/1348 took most of his teachers and both his parents (*Autobiog.*, 57; also: 26, 34, 42, 44, 60). In addition, al-Ābilī left Tunis to join Abū ʿInān in Fez. Ibn Khaldun was thus deprived of the kind of education he had had prior to the plague. He was at this point at a crossroads of sorts. He could either stay in Tunis and pursue a political career or move to Fez to join al-Ābilī and continue his studies.

THE POLITICAL ADVENTURES OF IBN KHALDUN

Tunis in the middle of the fourteenth century was ruled by the Hafsids. Sultan Abū Ishāq was nominally in charge, but the man controlling the affairs of state was the powerful chamberlain, Abū Muḥammad Ibn Tāfrāgīn (*Autobiog.*, 57; Brunschvig, 'Tunisia', 852). Ibn Tāfrāgīn appointed Ibn Khaldun to the post of Master of the Signature (*ṣāḥib al-ʿalāma*). He was tasked with printing the words 'Praise and thanks to God' between the *basmala* and the body of the text of official documents. Had Ibn Khaldun been content with this appointment, he might have stayed on in Tunis in expectation of promotion to higher office and never written his *magnum opus*, the *Muqaddima* (Rosenthal, 'Translator's Introduction', xli), but he was far from content. He missed his studies under al-Ābilī and the other masters. He had studied particularly assiduously under al-Ābilī. After the master left, he felt bored and deprived of scientific activity. He was determined to join him (*Autobiog.*, 57, 60).

The opportunity came when he was summoned to the court in Fez and presented to the sultan in 755/1354 (*Autobiog.*, 61–2). He was admitted to the sultan's scientific council and later appointed to other posts as well. Interestingly, Ibn Khaldun says that these appointments did not interest him as they were not the kinds of positions to which his ancestors aspired. What pleased him, however, was the frequency with which he met the Maghrebian and Andalusian scholars who came to the court.

Ibn Khaldun's growing familiarity with the vicissitudes of political life must have begun to develop during these days. He refers to his falling out with Sultan Abū ʿInān. Ibn Khaldun had close relations with the deposed Almohad ruler of Bougie, Muḥammad, who was being held captive in Fez. Sultan Abū ʿInān had fallen ill towards the end of 757/1365, and Ibn Khaldun had conspired to help Muḥammad escape and regain his territory. Upon hearing of the conspiracy, Abū ʿInān had Ibn Khaldun arrested and imprisoned in early 758/1337. Despite his pleas for release, Ibn Khaldun remained in prison for two years. He composed an ode for the sultan to which the sultan responded favourably with a promise to release him. However, the sultan succumbed to his illness and died on 24 Dhū l-Ḥijja 759/27 November 1358. The promise to release Ibn Khaldun was honoured by Abū ʿInān's vizier, al-Ḥasan b. ʿAmr. He was reinstated in his former posts and treated well but was not permitted to return to Tunis as he had hoped (*Autobiog.*, 67, 69).

No sooner had Ibn Khaldun been released from prison than he became involved in another intrigue. Abū Sālim had been deported to Andalusia along with his brothers by their other brother, Abū ʿInān, who had seized power from their father. Now Abū Sālim made a bid to regain the throne by crossing over to Morocco and proclaiming himself ruler. At the same time one Manṣūr b. Sulaymān managed to seize

power from vizier al-Ḥasan and the infant sultan, al-Saʿīd b. Abū ʿInān. Ibn Khaldun took the opportunity to change sides and accepted the post of secretary to al-Manṣūr. However, this state of affairs did not last long. When Abū Salīm, having declared himself king, sought the help of Ibn Khaldun, the latter abandoned al-Manṣūr and helped to garner support for Abū Sālim among the various leaders and shaykhs. When Abū Sālim recaptured the throne of his father in the middle of the month of Shaʿbān 760/1359, Ibn Khaldun became his secretary (*Autobiog.*, 69–72; Enan, *Ibn Khaldūn*, 18–19). After about two years, he was appointed *maẓālim*, a judicial post that dealt with complaints and crimes not covered by the Sharīʿa (Rosenthal, 'Translator's Introduction', xlviii). Although Ibn Khaldun excelled at this job, it did not last long. Amidst infighting and plotting among various factions in Fez, Sultan Abū Sālim died, and the situation became less favourable for Ibn Khaldun. At the beginning of 764/1362, he sent his wife and children to stay with relatives in Constantine and made his way to Andalusia (*Autobiog.*, 73).

Ibn Khaldun was warmly welcomed in Granada where he was received by Sultan Muḥammad and the famous vizier and renowned writer and poet, Ibn al-Khaṭīb. In 765/1363 he was sent as ambassador to the Christian king of Castille, Pedro the Cruel, his task being to conclude a peace treaty. Pedro's court was at Seville. Ibn Khaldun writes of seeing the vestiges of the Banū Khaldun for the first time. Pedro was aware of the history of Ibn Khaldun's family in Seville and treated him with great honour. In fact, so impressed was Pedro that he tried to persuade Ibn Khaldun to stay on by offering to return the legacy of the Banū Khaldun to him. Ibn Khaldun turned down the offer and returned to Granada with gifts for the sultan. He was rewarded with the village of Elvira and sought permission for his family to join him. As usual, however, the peace and tranquility that

he enjoyed did not last. Because of the machinations of Ibn al-Khaṭīb, Ibn Khaldun was looked upon with suspicion by the sultan (*Autobiog.*, 80–2).

Meanwhile, the deposed Almohad ruler of Bougie, Muḥammad, with whom Ibn Khaldun had conspired during the reign of Sultan Abū ʿInān, had recaptured Bougie. He summoned Ibn Khaldun to Bougie in the middle of 766/1365 to take up the post of chamberlain (*wilāyat al-ḥijāba*), a position that required him to manage the affairs of the state and the relations between the sultan and his subjects (*Autobiog.*, 92; Enan, *Ibn Khaldūn*, 31). As before, things did not proceed smoothly. The intrigues against Ibn Khaldun began to multiply. Having fallen out of favour with the sultan and being threatened with arrest, he absconded to Biskra. Meanwhile, his younger brother Yahyā, also an historian,[5] was arrested and imprisoned in Bona, and their properties were confiscated. Ibn Khaldun was then summoned to take up the position of chamberlain and chancellor in Biskra. He was also tasked with enlisting the support of the tribes. He writes that he became weary of the perils of such tasks, lost interest in the holding of high posts and suffered from having neglected his studies for so long (*Autobiog.*, 95–8).

Despite these lamentations, Ibn Khaldun remained in Biskra and for a time helped to garner the support of the tribes on behalf of Sultan Abū Hammū. His loyalties shifted once again as events unfolded. Sultan ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz of Morocco (the Far West, or Maghrib al-Aqsā) was marching on Tlemcen. Viewing the situation as hopeless, Ibn Khaldun asked Abū Hammū for permission to depart for Andalusia, but Sultan ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz's army intercepted Ibn Khaldun at the port of Hunayn and took him to the sultan near Tlemcen. The sultan reproached him for having abandoned the

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5   Abū Zakariyyā' Yahyā Ibn Khaldun 734–780/1333–1378. See Bel, 'Ibn Khaldūn, Abū Zakariyyā' Yahyā'.

Marinids earlier. Ibn Khaldun was undoubtedly able to talk himself out of trouble and soon found himself in the service of the sultan. When Sultan ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz took Tlemcen, Ibn Khaldun was tasked once again with gathering the support of the tribes, this time against Sultan Abū Hammū (*Autobiog.*, 112–16). When the sultan died, Ibn Khaldun decided to go to Fez with his family, where he was received with reverence (*Autobiog.*, 135).

However, the peace in Fez was not to last. Enmity broke out between Fez and Granada. Ibn Khaldun then decided to migrate to Andalusia and arrived there in the spring of 776 AH. Displeased with Ibn Khaldun's shifting loyalties, the court of Fez refused to allow his family to join him in Andalusia. Sultan Muhammad Ibn al-Aḥmar had Ibn Khaldun expelled from Granada. All of this had to do with the friendship between Ibn Khaldun and Ibn al-Khaṭīb, the sultan of Andalusia's vizier. Ibn al-Khaṭīb was suspected of being disloyal to the sultan and was the object of plotting and intriguing by the members of the courts of Fez and Granada. Ibn Khaldun was considered guilty by association (*Autobiog.*, 142).

Ibn Khaldun had to return to North Africa where he was out of favour with practically all the rulers. Eventually, Sultan Abū Hammū, the ruler of Tlemcen, agreed, upon the intercession of Ibn Khaldun's friends, to allow him to settle there. Abū Hammū wanted to enlist Ibn Khaldun's services once again, needing him to garner the support of the tribes. This time Ibn Khaldun's reluctance for politics was stronger, and he finally had the resolve to quit. He settled with his family in the territory of the Banū Ārif, who housed them in the fort, Qalʿat Ibn Salāma (*Autobiog.*, 142–5).

THE WITHDRAWAL TO SCHOLARSHIP

It is in the quiet isolation of the Qal'at Ibn Salāma that the third period of Ibn Khaldun's life begins. Having spent his entire adult life in political intrigue, serving various courts in North Africa and Andalusia and interacting with members of the aristocracy as well as leaders of the tribes, he was ready to reflect on the meaning of history, particularly the history of the rise and decline of states. In this fort Ibn Khaldun wrote the *Muqaddima* or *Prolegomenon* to his larger work on the history of the Arabs and Berbers. He says, 'I completed its introduction following that unusual method (*al-naḥw al-gharīb*) I was guided to by that retreat' (*Autobiog.*, 145).

After four years in isolation and producing his remarkable scholarly achievement, Ibn Khaldun yearned to return to Tunis in order to continue his writing on the history of the Arabs, Berbers and Zanatas. For the next phase of his writing he required the use of libraries to consult historical sources. These were only available in the large urban centres. It was, therefore, necessary for Ibn Khaldun to be reconciled with the Sultan of Tunis, Abū l-'Abbās, to whom he wrote regarding his desire to return. Earlier he had fallen out of favour with Abū l-'Abbās and had to flee to Biskra to escape arrest while his younger brother, Yahyā, was arrested and imprisoned. Abū l-'Abbās was not only kind enough to grant Ibn Khaldun his permission to return to Tunis but also his patronage and, as in the old days, consulted him on the affairs of the state. Ibn Khaldun returned to Tunis in the month of Sha'bān in 780/1378 and was later joined by his family. There he was able to further his writing, completing chapters on the history of the Berbers and Zanatas and the

parts about the pre-Islamic period and the Muslim dynasties. A copy of what was completed thus far was presented to Abū l-ʿAbbās with a long ode of flattery attached (*Autobiog.*, 145–7). Unlike his time at Qalʿat Ibn Salāma, however, Ibn Khaldun was not spared from service to the sultan. Abū l-ʿAbbās asked him to accompany him during battle against rebels in 783/1381, which Ibn Khaldun did with great reluctance. To avoid such duties, Ibn Khaldun decided to leave Tunis and sought permission from the sultan to perform the ḥajj. He left Tunis in the month of Shaʿbān in 784/1382 (*Autobiog.*, 155).

Unable to realize his objective of the ḥajj, he proceeded to Cairo, arriving there at the beginning of Dhū l-Qaʿda 784/ January 1382. He was amazed at the city's beauty and grandeur:

I saw the capital of the world, the garden of the universe, the assembly of nations, the hive of activity of mankind, the palace of Islam and the seat of power. Castles and palaces loom in the sky, schools and convents appear in the horizon, the moons and stars of its scholars shine. (*Autobiog.*, 157)

This may have been Ibn Khaldun's first trip to Egypt, but he was already known there. Many scholars had heard of the *Muqaddima* and admired its style and originality. Ibn Khaldun expressed delight that students rushed to his side seeking knowledge from him (*Autobiog.*, 157).

Ibn Khaldun was granted an audience with the sultan, al-Ṭāhir al-Barqūq, who welcomed him and granted him a comfortable salary and various lucrative appointments. In 786/1384, he was appointed as Maliki judge, an appointment that he reluctantly accepted because of the plotting and intriguing that he would be subject to. He describes how he had to struggle against a corrupt system. He strove to apply the law impartially, uphold the rights of the weak, consider

evidence carefully, ignore the intercessions of both sides and verify the honesty of witnesses. He was up against a system in which the authorities indulged the abuses of the cronies of the powerful, but Ibn Khaldun acted against such abuses (*Autobiog.*, 166, 169–71; Enan, *Ibn Khaldūn*, 56). His strict, impartial administration of the law won him many enemies (*Kitāb al-Manhal al-Ṣāfī*, ms. cited in Enan, *Ibn Khaldūn*, 57). At the same time, he suffered the terrible loss of his wife and children. They had remained in Tunis when Ibn Khaldun went to Egypt, having been detained by the sultan in the hope of forcing Ibn Khaldun's return. Through Sultan al-Ṭāhir al-Barqūq's intercession, they were allowed to leave Tunis but perished on the way to Egypt when their ship sank (*Autobiog.*, 162, 171).

Later on Ibn Khaldun was to receive several other appointments and was also finally able to perform the hajj in 789/1387, returning to Cairo in the month of Jumādā 790/May-June 1388 (*Autobiog.*, 172).

The tranquility that Ibn Khaldun enjoyed was interrupted by a series of revolts in which al-Ṭāhir al-Barqūq lost and then regained the throne. Ibn Khaldun discusses these events in the light of the framework he established in the *Muqaddima* (Enan, *Ibn Khaldūn*, 60; *Autobiog.*, 218–25). Ibn Khaldun himself experienced the outcomes of the chaos of dynastic history. When al-Ṭāhir al-Barqūq fell, Ibn Khaldun lost his patronage. All that he lost was restored when the sultan regained his throne. But even while the sultan was in power, there were years when Ibn Khaldūn was relieved of his post as Maliki judge, due to the intrigues of various members of the court against him. When an adversary in the court disappeared, Ibn Khaldun was reinstated, as was the case in Ramadān 801/May 1399. But, in the month of Muḥarram 803/September 1400, he was once again relieved of his post as a result of the intrigues of adversaries (*Autobiog.*,

225, 228).

Meanwhile devastating news had been received that Tīmūr had invaded Syria and captured Aleppo at the beginning of 803/1400, bringing about terrible bloodshed and destruction in the process. Alarmed, the Egyptians gathered their forces with the intention of repelling the Tatars. Ibn Khaldun accompanied them, despite his lack of enthusiasm for the expedition. He was more or less pressed into going by the sultan through his chamberlain, Yishbak, who sweetened the persuasion with words and gifts (*Autobiog.*, 238). Ibn Khaldun left with the Egyptian forces in the noble month of the *mawlid* in 803/5 October 1400. Upon arrival in Damascus, fighting broke out between the two sides, and over the course of more than a month neither side gained a clear victory. During this time, Sultan al-Ṭāhir al-Barqūq learnt of a plot to overthrow him in Cairo, which caused him to abandon the Syrian cause and return to Cairo. Ibn Khaldun found himself in a difficult position, concerned about his fate should there be no agreement between the two warring sides. To seek a way out, he decided to try to meet with Tīmūr and succeeded in getting an audience with him. According to Ibn Khaldun's account, the two had a long conversation in which Tīmūr asked about Ibn Khaldun's affairs and about the history of North Africa. Tīmūr must have been sufficiently impressed by his knowledge of history for he ordered him to write a work on North African history (*Autobiog.*, 238–43).

While Ibn Khaldun explained his perspective on the rise and decline of states, he must have discussed also the question of the surrender of Damascus, for not too long after this historic meeting Damascus capitulated (*Autobiog.*, 246). During this time, Ibn Khaldun wrote up a history of North Africa that he handed over to Tīmūr in the form of a dozen small folios (*Autobiog.*, 243). Discussions between

Ibn Khaldun and Tīmūr on historical and political topics continued even as the terms of capitulation were not honoured, and Damascus was devastated by Tīmūr's forces (Ibn Khaldun, *Autobiog.*, 247; Enan, *Ibn Khaldūn*, 67).[6] Ibn Khaldun also presented Tīmūr with gifts, including a beautiful Qurʾān, a prayer rug, a copy of the *Burda*, and some Egyptian delicacies (*Autobiog.*, 249). Ibn Khaldun then requested that Tīmūr grant a guarantee of safety (*maktūb amān*) for the scholars and bureaucrats.

Upon returning to Cairo, Ibn Khaldun was re-appointed to the post of judge in the latter part of 803 AH. Once again, however, intrigues against him led to his being relieved of his post in the following year. In all, Ibn Khaldun was appointed Maliki judge six times. On 26 Ramaḍān 808/16 March 1406, a few weeks into his last appointment, the luminous scholar of history and discoverer of the science of society passed away after a long life of political activism and scholarly brilliance. He was buried in the Sufi cemetery outside Bāb al-Naṣr (Enan, *Ibn Khaldūn*, 72). The last sentences in Ibn Khaldun's autobiography tell of his fifth appointment as judge, about a year before he left this world (*Autobiog.*, 256).

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF IBN KHALDUN'S THOUGHT

There is much to be learnt about Ibn Khaldun's life from his own pen. His autobiography, of which we have made extensive use, is an important aid to the comprehension of his magnificent *Muqaddima* (Bouthoul, *Ibn-Khaldoun*, 4). The details, discussions and insights he provides in the autobiography are important, especially in view of the fact that he was, in the words of Schmidt, 'a solitary figure,

6   For an interesting review of the discussion between Ibn Khaldun and Tīmūr see Fischel, *Ibn Khaldūn in Egypt*, 48–65.

towering above his age, yet to be explained in the way he himself regarded as proper in the interpretation of every historic phenomenon' (Schmidt, *Ibn Khaldun*, 45). Such an interpretation of Ibn Khaldun's life and thought will not be attempted here. However, it is possible to discuss three aspects of the socio-historical context. The first is the historical background of dynastic conflicts; the second is Ibn Khaldun's role in that; and the third is his awareness of the role of his ancestors.

Much of the history of North Africa is a history of dynasties that were interminably at war with one another. These dynasties were founded on the basis of tribal military support and sometimes religious reform. Ibn Khaldun was intimately familiar with the history of the formation and decline of North African states, including the three successive dynasties of Morocco, that is the Almoravids (1040–1147 CE), Almohads (1121–1269) and Marinids (1215–1465), which are discussed in detail. Each of these dynasties was founded and upheld by Berber tribes, the Ṣanhāja for the Almoravids, the Maṣmūda for the Almohads and the Zanāta for the Marinids. Hafsid rulers were initially Almohad governors ruling over Ifriqiyya. The Hafsids declared independence from the Almohads in 1229, and the dynasty lasted until 1574. Ibn Khaldun lived during the Marinids and Hafsids and witnessed the types of economic and political events in those dynasties that he had read were responsible for the rise and decline of the Almoravids and Almohads. In addition to the politics surrounding *haḍara* and *badawa* (sedentary and nomadic society) relations that defined this history, there were additional factors that came into play in Ibn Khaldun's time that were absent in the earlier periods. There was the great economic decline of trade in gold between North Africa and the western Sudan, and there was the Great Plague. There is a hint of Ibn Khaldun's

realization of the nature of the changes in his time, as noted by Lacoste (*Ibn Khaldun*, 88):

However, at the present time – that is, at the end of the eighth [fourteenth] century – the situation in the Maghrib, as we can observe, has taken a turn and changed entirely. The Berbers, the original population of the Maghrib, have been replaced by an influx of Arabs (that began in) the fifth [eleventh] century. The Arabs outnumbered and overpowered the Berbers, stripped them of most of their lands, and (also) obtained a share of those that remained in their possession. This was the situation until, in the middle of the eighth [fourteenth] century, civilization both in the East and the West was visited by a destructive plague which devastated nations and caused populations to vanish. It swallowed up many of the good things of civilization and wiped them out. It overtook the dynasties at the time of their senility, when they had reached the limit of their duration. It lessened their power and curtailed their influence. It weakened their authority. Their situation approached the point of annihilation and dissolution. Civilization decreased with the decrease of mankind. Cities and buildings were laid waste, roads and way signs were obliterated, settlements and mansions became empty, dynasties and tribes grew weak. The entire inhabited world changed. The East, it seems, was similarly visited, though in accordance with and in proportion to (the East's more affluent) civilization. It was as if the voice of existence in the world had called out for oblivion and restriction, and the world had responded to its call. God inherits the earth and whomever is upon it. When there is a general change of conditions, it is as if the entire creation had changed and the whole world been altered, as if it were a new and repeated creation, a world brought into existence anew. Therefore, there is need at this time that someone should systematically set down the situation of the world among all regions and races, as well as the customs and sectarian beliefs that have changed for their adherents, doing for this age what al-Masʿūdī did for his. (*Muq.*, i. 46 [i. 64–5]).[7]

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7   Page numbers in round brackets refer to the Arabic edition by Cheddadi. Page numbers in square brackets refer to Rosenthal's English translation of the *Muqaddima* from which quotations are

Whatever Ibn Khaldun thought of the economic conditions of his time or the destruction brought about by the plague, he probably did not regard them as factors that invalidated his general framework for the study of the rise and decline of states. He focused on what he considered to be the universal aspects of dynastic succession. The question of whether the changes to which he referred (later referred to as the crisis of the eighth/fourteenth century) would alter Ibn Khaldun's theoretical framework is debatable, although this is not the intention here. What is important to note is that he was motivated systematically to study the rise and decline of states and their various social aspects by what he considered to be significant upheaval brought about by the plague. Although this may have been the factor that pushed him to theorize the rise and decline of states in the *Muqaddima*, the plague itself is not a part of the theory. What features in the theory are abstractions derived from his keen understanding of the history of the dynamics of nomadic–sedentary relations and the impact that these have on state formation and disintegration.

Apart from this socio-historical context, there is the more personal context, of Ibn Khaldun's own role in history. As we saw from the autobiography, Ibn Khaldun served in various courts and dynasties across North Africa and Andalusia. For example, his experience of working with tribes under Abū Hammū, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz and others would have given him a great deal of insight into the nature of tribal loyalties, the meaning and significance of *ʿaṣabiyya* and many other concepts that make up his explanatory framework. Furthermore, not being a 'scholar of the distant spectator type' (Dhaouadi, 'Ibn Khaldun's Personality Traits', 40),

taken. In both cases, Roman numerals signify volume number, Arabic numerals the page number(s).

he experienced at first hand the outcomes of the chaos of dynastic history, having witnessed corruption and infighting in the courts and been victimized by these on numerous occasions.

Finally, there is also Ibn Khaldun's consciousness of and pride in the role of his ancestors in the political and intellectual life of Andalusia and North Africa. It is not only his own experiences of the uncertainties of political life but also his awareness of the vocations of his ancestors that developed in him the desire to understand the nature of historical change. Earlier, it was noted that Ibn Khaldun was not keen on certain posts because they were not the kinds of offices to which his ancestors aspired. This shows that he was inspired by the prestige of his genealogy and that this may have been a factor in his wanting to exert himself intellectually for the sake of understanding a history that he and his ancestors had helped to shape.

THE INTELLECTUAL CONTEXT OF IBN KHALDUN'S THOUGHT AND HIS CHARACTER

While the above account may give us some idea of the influences on Ibn Khaldun's work, it by no means constitutes a sufficient explanation of the forces that shaped his thought. Indeed, there were other scholars with similar familial backgrounds who did not produce such original work. There are also the psychological and personality traits that are specific to Ibn Khaldun that account for his creativity.[8] These traits are difficult for us to know, but some interesting points regarding his character have been raised by others.

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8   For a discussion on this, see Dhaouadi, 'Ibn Khaldun's Personality Traits'.

Ibn Ḥajar's (d. 852/1449) critique of Ibn Khaldun went beyond the intellectual arena when he made what appeared to be defamatory statements against the historian, saying that he [Ibn Khaldun] was once dismissed from his post as judge for committing forgery, that his sexual morality was under question and that he was a disagreeable and impolite person. These accusations were repeated by al-Sakhāwī, a student of Ibn Ḥajar (Enan, *Ibn Khaldūn*, 75–8).[9] While we may not be inclined to agree with or at least to not consider these accusations relevant to our assessment of Ibn Khaldun as a scholar, they do tell us something about the Egyptian climate of opinion about him. They may be seen to represent the views of the Egyptian scholarly community.

Enan (*Ibn Khaldūn*, 19) says unequivocally that Ibn Khaldun was an opportunist:

Ibn Khaldūn was an opportunist; he seized opportunities using all sorts of means and methods, and to him the end justified the means. He did not hesitate to return evil for good. He plainly explains this tendency and does not try to conceal it. Vizier Ibn ʿUmar released him from prison and covered him with his favours. But no sooner Ibn Khaldūn saw the rise of the victorious Manṣūr than he abandoned the vizier and sided with his adversary, and occupied the post of secretary to the new king.

Ibn Khaldun usually associated himself with the victorious, according to Enan, who also refers to Ibn Khaldun's 'exaggerated egoism, his ingratitude and his disposition to avail himself of favourable opportunities however much they were contrary to loyalty and gratitude' (Enan, *Ibn Khaldūn*, 19, 32).

Simon differs on this matter, however. For him, it would not be fair to expect a diplomat to display uncompromising loyalty in a time of extreme political instability (Simon, *Ibn Khaldun's Science*, 35–6). One might argue that it is precisely in

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9   Enan refers to Ibn Ḥajar's biography of Ibn Khaldun. See *Rafʿ al-ʿiṣr* (ms.),   p. 160.

such times that one expects uncompromising loyalty.

Talbi ('Ibn Khaldūn', 828) also takes a perspective different from that of Enan:

Ibn Khaldūn's life has been judged variously, and in general rather severely. There is certainly no doubt that he behaved in a detached, self-interested, haughty, ambitious and equivocal manner. He himself does not attempt to hide this, and openly describes in his *Ta'rīf* his successive changes of allegiance. He has been accused of fickleness and a lack of patriotism. But for such judgements to be strictly applicable presupposes the existence of the idea of 'allegiance' to a country, which was not the case. The very concept scarcely existed and was not to appear in Muslim thinking until it was affected by contact with Europe. The only treason was apostasy, nor was loyalty understood except in the context of relations between one man and another, and examples of felony were provided daily by those of the highest rank. Ibn Khaldūn was, moreover, readily pardoned by those who wished to use his services — he was in turn the enemy and the servant, now of one and now of another, in the same way that men were treacherously killed, with or without good reason, simply as a precaution. The struggles which rent the Muslim West in Ibn Khaldūn's time were merely a series of minor and abortive coups. He should therefore be judged according to the standards of his own time and not according to ours.

Talbi's point that Ibn Khaldun should not be judged according to the standards of our time is well taken if by that it is meant that we ought not to assess his character in terms of notions of loyalty founded on the modern nation-state. It is also true that those rulers whom Ibn Khaldun went against were often ready to forgive him and admit him back into their service, implying that the world of politics and diplomacy had a different concept of loyalty. But the difference is not between our time and Ibn Khaldun's but rather between spheres or arenas of life. It is certain that in the religious spheres of life and in the family sphere in his

time, the type of behaviour displayed by Ibn Khaldun vis-à-vis his royal patrons would not be considered ethical.

Ibn Khaldun has also been attacked by modern scholars. Taha Hussein, the famous Egyptian novelist and social thinker, wrote a doctoral dissertation on Ibn Khaldun. Hussein's criticisms were not limited to Ibn Khaldun's scholarship but extended to his character. He saw him as working for personal gain. For example, Hussein claimed that the fact that Ibn Khaldun's autobiography was attached to his *Kitāb al-ʿIbar* was an indication of his excessive concern with the 'I'. On the content of the autobiography, Hussein says that there are no geographical descriptions but just accounts of Ibn Khaldun's conflicts with rulers. Simon says (*Ibn Khaldun's Science*, 35) that it is unreasonable to draw such conclusions from the mere existence of Ibn Khaldun's autobiography and adds that Ibn Khaldun himself appears to answer such accusations when he states: 'Traits of character are the natural result of the peculiar situations in which they are found' (*Muq.*, i. 296 [i. 353]). Furthermore, according to Hussein, Ibn Khaldun was devoid of religious piety and patriotism and had little consideration for his family. He was more concerned about employment and praise (Hussein, *Étude analytique*, 21–3).

One of the most serious criticisms of Ibn Khaldun amounts to an accusation of plagiarism. Egyptian historian Mahmoud Ismail claims in a book titled *Nihāyat usṭūrat naẓariyyāt Ibn Khaldūn muqtabasa min Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ* (End of a myth: Ibn Khaldun's theories are copied from the Epistles of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā) that most of Ibn Khaldun's ideas are borrowed without acknowledgement from the encyclopaedic work of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ. In another publication by Ismail, *Hal intahat usṭūrat naẓariyyāt Ibn Khaldūn?* (Has the myth of Ibn Khaldūn ended?), Ismail compiles the reactions to his earlier book from scholars around the Arab world. It is clear from

this work that there was no intellectual resolution to the matter but also that it would be difficult to take such accusations against Ibn Khaldun seriously. Khalid Chaouch sees the appearance of such vilifying publications as a barometer of the Arab intellectual crisis. As Chaouch notes, it is strange that Ismail, who lauded Ibn Khaldun as the discoverer of historical materialism hundreds of years before Marx and Engels, then made such dangerous accusations (Chaouch, 'Ibn Khaldun, in spite of himself', 286).

Concerning Ibn Khaldun's alleged plagiarism, Enan's observation regarding Ibn Khaldun's originality is sound. Some of the topics dealt with by Ibn Khaldun in the *Muqaddima* were also dealt with by al-Fārābī and the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā. Such topics include the human need for society, the origins of villages and towns, the effects of the physical environment on character and the division of the sciences. But these topics were dealt with by al-Fārābī (d. 339/ 950) and the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā (*ca.* tenth century CE) in a purely philosophical manner, whereas Ibn Khaldun's treatment of them is from the perspective of the new science of human society (Enan, *Ibn Khaldūn*, 99–100).

It is true that Ibn Khaldun's autobiography does not provide much material for an analysis of his character as it does not go beyond the presentation of external facts (Simon, *Ibn Khaldun's Science*, 36). Whatever our position might be with regard to the debate on Ibn Khaldun's character, we should not allow our views on his character to affect our assessment of his intellectual achievements. However, it could be said that his character was such that he thrived on the plotting and intriguing that defined the politics of his day and that this kept him in political office for a long time and gave him an insight into the workings of the state that he may not have derived from books.

Beyond the social context, something needs to be said about the intellectual context in which Ibn Khaldun lived. His knowledge of history, particularly the history of the Muslim West and East, as well as his own experiences with affairs of state, must have shown him that history as reported by historians, that is the mere arrangement of facts, does not tell us much about the nature of history, its true meaning. In his opinion, the historians who came before him were more eloquent and rhetorical than scientific, in the manner that Ibn Khaldun understood his science of society (*ʿilm al-ijtimāʿ al-insānī*) or science of human social organization (*ʿilm al-ʿumrān al-basharī*) to be scientific. There was a lack of attention to clear proofs, and many of these works were mere compilations of previously transmitted materials (Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddima*, i. 59 [i. 83]). In fact, the *Muqaddima* begins with a systematic exposition of the flaws of existing historical works among the Muslims. This exposition is undertaken in order to justify the need for a new science of society that Ibn Khaldun understood would be in the service of history and will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

IBN KHALDUN'S WORKS

Ibn Khaldun's monumental study was *Kitāb al-ʿIbar wa-dīwān al-mubtadāʾ wa-l-khabar fī ayyām al-ʿarab wa-l-ʿajam wa-l-barbar* (Book of Examples and the Collection of Origins of the History of the Arabs and Berbers), an empirical work on the history of the Arabs and Berbers in several volumes. The *Muqaddima* or *Prolegomenon* is in fact an introduction to the *ʿIbar*. The latter is the descriptive part of his history, while the *Muqaddima* discusses the underlying causes and inner meaning of that history. It is the latter that Ibn Khaldun termed the science of human society. *Kitāb al-ʿIbar* consists of an introduction and three great divisions or books.

The Introduction (*muqaddima*), which takes up just a small section, is not to be confused with the *Prolegomenon,* which is also referred to as the *Muqaddima.* The Introduction to Book One makes a case for the merits of historiography and also discusses the errors of historians, errors that this *Kitāb al-ʿIbar* presumably intends to correct.

Book One (*Kitāb al-Awwal*) is the *Prolegeomenon* is what has come to be called the *Muqaddima* or *Prolegomenon* is the entire Book One. It has its own Introduction (*muqaddima*) and six chapters. It deals with society and its essential characteristics. It covers topics such as authority, government, modes of making a living, and the crafts and sciences, and consists of six long chapters (*faṣl*). Book Two (*Kitāb al-Thānī*) deals with the history of Arab dynasties from pre-Islamic to Islamic times and also discusses non-Arab peoples and dynasties such as the Persians, Syrians, Copts, Israelites, Nabataeans, Greeks, Byzantines and Turks. Book Three (*Kitāb al-Thālith*) deals with the history of the Berbers and focuses on royal authority and the dynasties of the Maghreb (*Muq.*, i. 10 [i. 11–12]).

In all, the published version of *Kitāb al-ʿIbar* occupies seven volumes. The first has the *Muqaddima* and Book One. Book Two is spread out over volumes 2–5, while Book Three fills volumes 6 and 7.

The autobiography was originally appended to the end of *Kitāb al-ʿIbar.* Its original full title is *al-Taʿrīf bi-Ibn Khaldūn muʾallif hādha l-kitāb, wa-riḥlatuhu gharban wa-sharqan* (Information on Ibn Khaldun, Author of this Work, and His Travels East and West).[10] It is to be seen as an integral part of *Kitāb al-ʿIbar* rather than an independent work (Cheddadi, 'Notice', 12; Merad, 'L'Autobiographie d'Ibn Khaldûn', 53).

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10   For a discussion on the different titles of the autobiography, see Fischel, *Ibn Khaldūn and Tamerlane,* 14–15.

Other works of Ibn Khaldun include the *Lubāb al-muḥaṣṣal fī uṣūl al-dīn* (The Resumé of the Compendium on the Fundamentals of Religion), being his summary of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's (d. 606/ 1209) *Compendium of the Sciences of the Ancients and Moderns,* and the *Shifaʾ al-Sāʾil* (The Healing of the Seekers), a work on Sufism.

In addition to the above works, Ibn Khaldun is said to have produced five other works: a commentary on the *Burda* of al-Būsīrī (d. 695/1294), an outline of logic, a treatise on arithmetic, resumés of works by Ibn Rushd (d. 595/1198), and a commentary on a poem by Ibn al-Khatīb (Talbi, 'Ibn Khaldūn', 828). These works, which have not come down to us, were mentioned by Ibn al-Khaṭīb, a close friend of Ibn Khaldun, and also by his biographer.[11]

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11   See Ibn al-Khatīb's *al-Iḥātah fī akhbar Gharnāta*, cited in Enan, *Ibn Khaldūn*, 117.

Ibn Khaldun and the science of society

Kitāb al-ʿIbar begins with a short invocation followed by brief remarks on the significance and popularity of what Ibn Khaldun refers to as the art of history *(fann al-tārīkh)*. It is a discipline that is cultivated throughout the world and among many races. Both ordinary people as well as the elite attach importance to history. Kings and leaders compete for it. Ibn Khaldun refers here to those who wish to learn from and be entertained by history as well as those who aspire to be portrayed in history in particular ways *(Muq., i. 5 [i. 6])*.

These remarks on history lead up to the Introduction or *muqaddima* to *Kitāb al-ʿIbar*. This Introduction is a few pages of general discussion on the requirements for writing history and the errors and weaknesses that often inform much historical writing. It is after this *muqaddima* that Book One of the *Kitāb al-ʿIbar,* begins. The *Muqaddima* provides a systematic account of the types of errors found in historical writing and also presents the *muqaddima* in outline, by referring to its chapter headings and content.

THE MEANING OF HISTORY

Ibn Khaldun begins by saying that history is accessible to both the learned and the ignorant. The ignorant are able to understand history because on the surface 'history is no

more than information about political events, dynasties, and occurrences of the remote past, elegantly presented and spiced with proverbs' (*Muq.*, 5–6 [i. 6]). History at the surface or the level of appearances (*ẓāhir*) is to be distinguished from the inner meaning (*bāṭin*) of history. At the deeper level, historical writing 'involves speculation and an attempt to get at the truth, subtle explanations of the causes and origins of existing things, and deep knowledge of the how and why of events' (*Muq.*, i. 6 [i. 6]). For this reason history ought to be counted as one of the fields of philosophy (*ḥikma*).

Ibn Khaldun was critical of those Muslim historians who were exhaustive in their recording of historical events but spiced up the truth with gossip or false reports. This mode of historical writing was repeated by those who followed them, resulting in the passing on of reports combined with nonsensical and discredited stories *(turrahāt al-aḥadīth; ẓakhārif min al-riwāya)* (*Muq.*, i. 6 [i. 6–7]). Ibn Khaldun lamented the lack of effort and critical spirit that hinders theoretical speculation in the writing of history. The main features of the historical writing that he criticized were:

1 Gossip and invented reports were mixed in with true reports.
2 The reporting of historical events was often founded on errors (*al-ghalṭ*) and wild conjecture (*al-wahm*).
3 Those who lacked competence nevertheless entered into scholarly disciplines.
4 Blind imitation (*al-taqlīd*) in that history was passed down from generation to generation and was accepted without question.

A theoretically speculative history, on the other hand, would be concerned with the inner meaning of history and delve into the origins and causes of what are reported as the surface phenomena of history. The reporter (*al-nāqil*)

merely records and passes on what he has collected, while a critical perspective is required to reveal the inner meanings of events (*Muq.,* i. 6 [i. 7]). What we gather so far is that the inner meaning of history refers to the origins and causes of events. The science that deals with the inner meaning of history is revealed later in Book One of *Kitāb al-ʿIbar.* For now, Ibn Khaldun takes us through the shortcomings of history in writing.

Ibn Khaldun notes that although many historical works have been written, only a few have been recognized as authorities and have replaced the works of their predecessors. The authors of these works include Muḥammad Ibn Isḥāq (85–151/704–767), the author of the famous *sīra* (biography) of the Prophet; Muḥammad Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (224–310/839–923), who wrote the renowned *Tārīkh al-rusūl wa-l-mulūk* (The History of Prophets and Kings), also known as the *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*; Hishām Ibn Muḥammad Ibn al-Kalbī (d. 204/819); Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Wāqidī (130–207/747–823), another celebrated biographer of the Prophet; Sayf Ibn ʿUmar al-Asadī (d. 180/796-97); and ʿAlī Ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Masʿūdī (d. 345/956) (*Muq.,* i. 7 [i. 7]).

Ibn Khaldun clarifies that although it was accepted among scholars that aspects of the works of al-Masʿūdī and al-Wāqidī were objectionable, they are distinguished from the general run of historical works by their methods. What sets these historians apart from the majority is their ability to distinguish spurious from worthy material (*Muq.,* 4 [i. 8]). Ibn Khaldun also suggests that the works of these two historians are general and broad-ranging in coverage and a reflection of their living during a period of two geographically extended Muslim dynasties, that is, the Umayyads and ʿAbbasids (*Muq.,* i. 7–8 [i. 8]). That is to say, the universal nature of the empires in which they lived influenced the nature of the history they wrote. Historians who came later were narrower

in scope and restricted their writing to their own periods, regions, dynasties and cities. Ibn Khaldun cites as examples Ibn Ḥayyān (377–469/987–1076), who wrote on Andalusia and the Andalusian Umayyads and Ibn al-Raqīq (d. after 1027-28 CE), the historian of Ifriqiyya and the Qayrawān state.

Ibn Khaldun refers to the later historians harshly as imitators (*muqallid*), characterizing them as dull-witted (*balīd*) and stupid (*Muq.,* i. 8 [i. 9]). Such historians merely reported the facts of the history of a particular dynasty without discerning truth from imagination. Furthermore, they failed to analyse the origins of the dynasty, the causes of its greatness, the principles of its foundations and organization, the causes of its decline and the factors that accounted for competition between dynasties and succession (*Muq.,* i. 8 [i. 9–10]). Such history writing consisted of forms (*suwar*) stripped of substance (*mawādd*) and should be considered ignorance disguised as knowledge. Such works dealt with species (*anwā'*) without taking into account or considering their genera (*ajnās*) or the differentia (*fuṣūl*) among them (*Muq.,* i. 8 [i. 9]).

Other historians who followed had even greater shortcomings. They provided extremely brief presentations of history and were content to supply the names of kings without genealogical or historical background. Such were the features of the works of Ibn Rashīq in his *Mizān al-'amal* and those 'untended cattle' who followed this method. Such works are not considered credible and are unworthy of transmission as they are devoid of useful material and uninformed by the acknowledged methods of historians (*Muq.,* i. 9 [i. 10]).

With characteristic humour, Ibn Khaldun says that the 'pasture of ignorance is unhealthy and unwholesome' ('*mar'a al-jahl bayn al-anām wakhīmun wabīlun*' (*Muq.,* i. 6 [i.

7]). He, on the other hand, had managed to awaken from this stupor and compose a work on history, by which he means his *Kitāb al-'Ibar*. In this work Ibn Khaldun exposes the emerging conditions pertaining to generations and periods. It deals with the facts of history (*al-akhbār*) as well as reflecting (*al-'itibār*) on those facts. Substantively, *Kitāb al-'Ibar* revolves around the history of the two dominant groups of the Maghreb, the Arabs and Berbers, dealing with society (*'umrān*) and civilization (*tamaddun*) and explaining the causes and origins of dynasties. In this way, the reader is able to dispense with blind trust in earlier works and come to understand the conditions of periods and peoples before and after his time (*Muq.,* i. 9–10 [i. 10–11]). He says that the book is organized in an unusual way and along the lines of a new method. Book One or *Kitāb al-Awwal* discusses society and its essential characteristics (*'awāriḍ dhātiyya*), which Ibn Khaldun lists as authority, government, the modes of making a living and the crafts and sciences. Book One is the theoretical part of the *'Ibar* in that it deals with definitions and concepts and explanations of the origins and causes. Book Two covers the history of Arab dynasties but also includes discussions on some non-Arab peoples and dynasties. Book Three deals with the history of the Berbers and the rise and fall of the various states of the Maghreb (*Muq.*, i. 10 [i. 11–12]).

There was no doubt in Ibn Khaldun's mind that *Kitāb al-'Ibar* was an original work that went beyond the mere reporting of historical facts. He considers the work to be not just a receptacle of historical knowledge but also an upholder of philosophy (*al-ḥikma*) (*Muq.*, i. 11 [i. 12]).

After these preliminary remarks on the meaning of history and the weaknesses of historical writing, the *Muqaddima* proper to *Kitāb al-'Ibar* begins. Here, a case is made for the merits or excellence of the science of history. It also carries an extended discussion on the errors of historians. The

subtitle of the *Muqaddima* reads 'On the excellence of the science of history, its orientations, a glimpse into the errors that historians exhibit, and some remarks on the causes thereof' (*Muq.*, i. 13 [i. 15]). The writing of history requires not only a command of a vast amount of knowledge and sources of information but also a good speculative mind (*husn naẓr*), implying that the discipline of history is a search for theoretical knowledge of pure truth rather than practical (*ʿamalī*) knowledge. The final goal of the speculative intellect (*al-ʿaql al-naẓarī*) is the perception of existence, which entails knowledge of the genera (*al-ajnās*), differentia (*al-fuṣūl*), reasons (*asbāb*) and causes (*ʿilla*) of things (*Muq.*, ii. 338 [ii. 413]). Deviation from the truth in historical writing is the result of a naïve trust in transmitted information, devoid of knowledge of customs, politics and the nature of human society. There is also the failure to corroborate older with newer material. Historians, Qurʾānic commentators and transmitters frequently committed errors in their reports because of their failure to consider the principles (*uṣūl*) informing historical realities. They did not use philosophy (*ḥikma*) as a criterion and, therefore, did not benefit from theoretical speculation, becoming lost in a wilderness of prejudice and error (*Muq.*, i. 13–14 [i. 15–6]).

Ibn Khaldun gives an interesting example of how Masʿūdī and other historians reported that the Prophet Moses counted 600,000 or more soldiers in the army of the Israelites in the desert. They did not consider whether Egypt and Syria could have supported such a large army. Ibn Khaldun also makes the convincing point that an army of this size was too large to march or fight as a unit. The territory would be unable to accommodate such numbers. Furthermore, logic dictates that if such a large army was in battle formation, it would be difficult to manage: it would extend beyond the fields of vision of the commanders, and one flank would not know

what the other was doing. Ibn Khaldun also notes that the Persians, whose empire was far more vast than the Israelites, had up to 200,000 men in their army. If it was true that the Israelite army amounted to 600,000 men, they would have ruled a much larger area, certainly much larger than that of the Persians. The size of a dynasty is proportionate to the size of its army (*Muq.*, i. 14–15 [i. 16–18]). Ibn Khaldun further notes that from Sulaymān b. Dāwūd back to Israel (Yaʿqūb) there were only eleven generations and it was not possible that the descendants of one man could reach such a number in that time (*Muq.*, i. 16 [i. 18–19]).

Another example is that of the Tubbaʿ kings of Yemen. The last Tubbaʿ ruler, Asʿad Abū Karib, was said to have ruled over Mosul and Azerbaijan. He is also said to have conducted raids on the Turks, Persians, Byzantines and Chinese, taken possession of territories and gathered much booty. Ibn Khaldun says that it would not have been possible for a ruler based in the Arabian Peninsula to reach the Turks without passing through the territories of the Persians and Byzantines and battling with them. Furthermore, there is no corroborative evidence that the Tubbaʿs took possession of Byzantine and Persian territories (*Muq.*, i. 18–20 [i. 22–5]). Many such examples of incredible but baseless stories are provided by Ibn Khaldun.

Apart from this, many historians tended to distort facts. Ibn Khaldun gives the example of the attack on the authenticity of the ʿAlid origins of the ʿUbaydid Fatimids through Imām Ismāʿīl, son of Imām Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, which emerged during ʿAbbasid times among people who wished to curry favour with the ʿAbbasids. The ʿUbaydid Fatimids were Shīʿa caliphs of Qayrawan and Cairo. Despite the fact that the ʿAlid origins of the ʿUbaydids is beyond doubt, many stories made contrary claims (*Muq.*, i. 30 [i. 41]). Ibn Khaldun finds it strange that the esteemed judge and master

of speculative theology, Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī, was among those who were inclined to accept this weak and spurious claim regarding ʿUbaydid genealogy.

There were reasons why some people cast doubt on the ʿAlid origins of the ʿUbaydids. Since they were often closely watched by tyrants and were constantly on the run, their identity was often disguised. Muḥammad b. Imām Ismāʿīl, the ancestor of ʿUbaydillāh al-Mahdī, the founder of the Fatimid state, was referred to as the Hidden (*al-maktūm*) Imām. Those wishing to gain the favour of the ʿAbbasids suggested that the ʿAlid descent of the ʿUbaydids was erroneously attributed. This was acceptable to the ʿAbbasids as it excused their failure to hold back the Kutāmah Berbers, partisans (*shīʿa*) of the ʿUbaydids (*Muq.*, i. 32–3 [i. 43–5]). The judges in Baghdad issued a statement that denied the ʿAlid origin of the ʿUbaydids, which was witnessed by many prominent scholars, Sunnī and Shīʿa alike. The declaration took place on a day in 402/1011 during the reign of al-Qādir. Testimonies by witnesses who were mainly partisans of the ʿAbbasids were based on hearsay and what was believed by the people of Baghdad. Ibn Khaldun notes that it was due to the selfish interests of the ʿAbbasids that the truth of the ʿAlid origins of the ʿUbaydid was distorted. The need for distortion arose because the rule of the ʿAbbasids was founded on injustice (*al-taʿassuf*), favouritism (*al-mīl*), foolishness (*al-afan*) and trivialities (*al-safsafa*) (*Muq.*, i. 33–4 [i. 45–7]).

A case similar to the preceding one concerns the ʿAlid descent of Idrīs b. Idrīs b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, who succeeded his father as imam in Morocco. Gossip-mongers had suggested that Idrīs was the product of an adulterous relationship and was the son of Rashīd, a client of the Idrisids. The fact, however, was that the older Idrīs was married into the Berber tribes and was

firmly established in desert life from the time he came to Morocco until his death. The nature of desert life is such that it is not possible for such things to happen without the community knowing about them. As Ibn Khaldun notes, there are no hiding places where things could be done in secrecy. After the death of the elder Idrīs, Rashīd was appointed steward of all the women based on the recommendation of the associates and partisans of the Idrisids. Rashīd was also under their supervision. In addition, the Moroccan Berbers had pledged their allegiance to the younger Idrīs, accepting him as the successor of the elder Idrīs. This meant that they were willing to protect him and die for him in wars and raids. It was obvious that if they had heard scandalous stories about the younger Idrīs' lineage, some of them would have refused to pledge allegiance. For Ibn Khaldun, it was obvious that the story of adultery and the doubts about Idrīs' pedigree had originated among the ʿAbbasid opponents of the Idrisids and among the Aghlabids, who were representatives of the ʿAbbasids in Ifriqiya (*Muq.*, i. 34–5 [I, 47–8]).

Ibn Khaldun relates how this happened. The elder Idrīs fought at the battle of Fakhkh, in which the ʿAlids, in revolt against the ʿAbbasids, were defeated.[12] He fled to the Maghreb. Later, Hārūn al-Rashīd, the fifth and most famous of the ʿAbbasid caliphs (r. 170–193/786–809) learnt that Wādiḥ, the ʿAbbasid client and governor of Alexandria, who also had Shiʿi inclinations, had been involved in Idrīs' escape. Al-Rashīd had Wādiḥ killed. A plot was then hatched to have Idrīs killed. Al-Shammākh, a client of al-Rashīd, managed under the pretext of having broken with his ʿAbbasid masters to befriend Idrīs and then poisoned him. The ʿAbbasids were delighted at the news of Idrīs' death as it weakened

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12 See Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil al-ṭālibīyīn wa-akharuhum* (The Slaying of the Talibids). This work provides biographies of the descendants of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib.

'Alid aspirations in the Maghreb. They were as yet unaware of Idrīs' unborn child. When the younger Idrīs succeeded his father, Shi'a rule renewed in the Maghreb, and the hold of the 'Abbasids in the far-flung regions of their empire weakened. Succeeding 'Abbasid caliphs attempted unsuccessfully, with the help of their clients, the Aghlabids, to have the Idrisids overthrown. The misrepresentation of Idrīs' descent by the Aghlabids in order to harm his reputation must be seen in that context. The lie was believed by the 'Abbasids and eagerly promulgated by slanderers (*Muq.*, i. 35–7 [i. 48–50]). There are obviously many motives that account for the production and promulgation of slanderous statements. Power and political control are among them. There is also envy. Ibn Khaldun noted that many who questioned the 'Alid heritage of Idrīs had themselves claimed descent from the Prophet Muḥammad or his descendants and were envious of the descendants of Idrīs. But in the Maghreb, the pedigree of the Idrisids is not only well known but so evident that it is virtually impossible to refute its authenticity (*Muq.*, i. 37 [i. 51]). As Ibn Khaldun says:

It is the result of continuous transmission by the more recent nations and generations on the authority of the older preceding ones. The Idrisids count the house of their ancestor Idrīs, the founder and builder of Fez, among their houses. His mosque is adjacent to their quarter and streets. His sword is (suspended) unsheathed atop the main minaret of their residence. There are other relics of his which have been attested to many times in an uninterrupted tradition, so that the tradition concerning them is almost as valuable as direct observation (as to its reliability). (*Muq.*, i. 37 [i. 51])

The envy of various parties caused them to aspire to bring down the Idrisids to the status of ordinary people. They imagined that their claim of illegitimacy was just as probable as the Idrisid claim of descent from the Prophet, but they

were unable to prove their claim. Ibn Khaldun notes that there are no descendants of the Prophet whose genealogy is so clearly established as those of the line of Idrīs from the family of al-Ḥasan (*Muq.*, i. 38 [i. 52]).

Yet another example of dishonesty and deception surrounds Imām al-Mahdī, the head of the Almohad dynasty. This also involves the denial of the authenticity of his descent. Al-Mahdī was accused of dishonesty and insincerity when all he did was to uphold the oneness of God and complain against injustice. The envy of the jurists of his time led them to declare him a liar. They were deluded into believing that they could outdo him in religious scholarship, juridical decisions and religion. When it was established that he was indeed superior and had a following among the people, their envy led them to attempt to cast doubts on his lineage (*Muq.*, i. 38 [i. 53]).

These people were honoured by al-Mahdī's enemies, the Lamtūna, the main tribe of the Almoravids. In the Lamtūna dynasty, religious scholars had positions of respect that they often did not receive elsewhere. They therefore became partisans of the Almoravids and enemies of the enemies of the Almoravids, including al-Mahdī. Al-Mahdī was critical of the ruling dynasty and called for a holy war against them. Many loyal followers who fought by his side perished. Of al-Mahdī himself, Ibn Khaldun says that he

remained always frugal, retiring, patient in tribulation, and very little concerned with the world to the last; he died without fortune or worldly possessions. He did not even have children, as everybody desires but as one often is deceived in desiring. I should like to know what he could have hoped to obtain by this way of life were it not (to look upon) the face of God, for he did not acquire worldly fortune of any kind during his lifetime. Moreover, if his intention had not been good, he would not have been successful, and his propaganda would not have spread. 'This

is how God formerly proceeded with His servants' [Qur'ān, 40. 85]. (*Muq.*, i. 39 [i. 54])

The jurists' denial of al-Mahdī's descent from the family of the Prophet (*ahl al-bayt*) was not made on the basis of any proof. Furthermore, using the logic that he established in the earlier discussion on the Idrisid genealogy, Ibn Khaldun says that people ought to be believed regarding their descent because they are only likely to accept their own kinsmen as leaders (*Muq.*, i. 39 [i. 54]). This point is relevant to Ibn Khaldun's theory of *ʿaṣabiyya* (group feeling), on which he elaborates in the first chapter of Book One. Here, he points out that al-Mahdī's ability to exercise leadership over the Maṣmūda tribes did not depend only on his Fatimid origins but also on the fact that he had a share in the Harghiya-Maṣmūdiya group feeling. In fact, al-Mahdī's Fatimid origins were cloudy and unknown among the Hargha-Maṣmūda. As Ibn Khaldun says, al-Mahdī had 'worn their skin' (*labasa jilda*) and become one of them (*Muq.*, i. 39–40 [i. 54–5]).

Ibn Khaldun notes that a weakness in historical writing is the neglect of the fact that conditions within societies change from period to period. These changes become noticeable only after a long time, and only a few individuals seemed to be aware of this. The ancient Persians, Syrians, Nabataeans, Tubbaʿs, Israelites and Copts had varying methods of kingship, administration, crafts, languages, technical terminologies and cultures. These peoples were succeeded by the Persians, Byzantines and Arabs. The old institutions and customs were transformed or replaced by newer ones. Further transformations took place with the coming of Islam and the Muḍar dynasty. Arab rule itself was replaced by that of various non-Arabs, such as the Turks in the east, the Berbers in the west and the European Christians in the north. When a new dynasty is established,

the ruler has recourse to the customs of his predecessor, which are invariably adopted. At the same time, the customs and ways of his own people are also incorporated into the dynasty. This process continues when the dynasty is in turn conquered by another (*Muq.*, i. 41–2 [i. 56–8]).

Reasoning by analogy (*al-qiyās*) is not free from error. It may often happen that a scholar attributes to the past knowledge that he has of the present although the discrepancy between past and present may be quite great (*Muq.*, i. 42 [i. 58]). An example of such an error is furnished from the reports concerning al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf, governor of Baghdad (40–95/660–714). It was said that his father was a school teacher. Ibn Khaldun says that in his time, teaching was just a means of earning a living. It was not considered an honourable profession. Teachers, in fact, tended to be weak, indigent and rootless. Historians failed to note that the teaching profession during Umayyad and ʿAbbasid times had a different reputation. Scholarship in that period had to do with the transmission of statements of the Prophet. Teaching involved the passing on of religious matters (*Muq.*, i. 42–3 [i. 58–9]). Furthermore (*Muq.*, i. 43 [i. 59]):

Persons of noble descent and people who shared in the group feeling (of the ruling dynasty) and who directed the affairs of Islam were the ones who taught the Book of God and the Sunnah of the Prophet, (and they did so) as one transmits traditions, not as one gives professional instruction. (The Qurʾān) was their Scripture, revealed to the Prophet in their midst. It constituted their guidance, and Islam was their religion, and for it they fought and died. It distinguished them from the other nations and ennobled them. They wished to teach it and make it understandable to the Muslims. They were not deterred by censure coming from pride, nor were they restrained by criticism coming from arrogance. This is attested by the fact that the Prophet sent the most important of the men around him with his embassies to the Arabs, in order to teach them the norms of Islam and the religious laws he brought.

With the spread of Islam and the systematic development of Islamic law, scholarship became rationalized. It was no longer necessary for the transmission of such knowledge to be the sole purview of the people of noble descent and those who shared in the group feeling of the ruling dynasty. These men became involved in the affairs of government and left scholarship and its transmission to others. Scholarship then became a profession or occupation among the less prestigious people in society. Teachers were not held in high regard and were even despised by the elite. Yūsuf, the father of al-Ḥajjāj, was one of the nobles of the Thaqīf, who were well-known for their high degree of *ʿaṣabiyya* and their opposition to the Quraysh. Al-Ḥajjāj's teaching of the Qurʾān did not mean what it meant in Ibn Khaldun's time, which was more than just an occupation that one took up to earn a living (*Muq.*, i. 43 [i. 60]).

A similar kind of error concerns the position and role of judges. Having read of judges as leaders in wars and commanders of armies, readers often aspired to such offices thinking that those positions were just as prestigious as they had been in former times. For example, they were aware that the father of Ibn Abī ʿĀmir had control over Hishām and that the father of Ibn ʿAbbād was one of the rulers of Seville, but wrongly assumed that their positions as judges were similar to those of present-day judges. Ibn Abī ʿĀmir and Ibn ʿAbbād partook of the group feeling of the Umayyads and supported the Umayyad dynasty in Andalusia. Their leadership and the prestige that people attached to them did not derive from the offices they held but from their sharing in the group feeling of the ruling dynasty. For this reason, judges were often entrusted with the most important of affairs concerning the campaigns of armies (*Muq.*, i. 43–4 [i, 60–1]).

People were also often misled about the conditions of society. The weak-minded among the people of Andalusia frequently made such errors. The destruction of the Arab dynasty in Andalusia led to the dissipation of group feeling among the people. Although Arab descent was remembered, the group feeling that facilitates the ascension to power had been lost. The people of Andalusia became mere subjects, devoid of the obligation of mutual support that is encouraged by strong group feeling. Thinking of the old days when descent and a share in the ruling dynasty were sources of power and authority, the professionals and artisans clamoured for positions that they imagined would aid their pursuit for power and authority.

Another error belonging to the same category concerns the procedures followed by historians when they record the facts of dynasties and their rulers. It was customary to mention the name of each ruler, his surname, his parents, his ancestors, his wives, his seal ring, his judge, his doorkeeper and his vizier. These historians were blindly following the tradition of the historians of the Umayyad and ʿAbbasid periods without taking the intentions of those historians into account. The Umayyad and ʿAbbasid historians wrote for the ruling elite and for the benefit of descendants who wanted to learn about their ancestors. The rulers were often interested in details such as from where servants were obtained so that they could emulate their ancestors. As judges also shared in the group feeling of the dynasty and were considered as important as the viziers, details about them were also mentioned by the historians. In later periods, however, the interest of historians turned to the current rulers and to the conflict between dynasties vying for predominance. It became irrelevant to mention the wives and sons, seal rings, judges, viziers and doorkeepers of past dynasties. Ibn Khaldun says that the historians of his time blindly imitated

previous authors, disregarding their purposes in writing history and failing to heed the aims of historical writing (*Muq.*, i. 44–5 [i. 62–3]).

Ibn Khaldun ends the Introduction with reference to the role of history. History is a record of events that are peculiar to an age or race. It contains discussions of general conditions pertaining to regions, races and periods. These are the historian's foundation. The problems raised by the historian emerge from that foundation. It is the foundation that distinguishes works such as that of the *Murūj al-dhahab* of al-Mas'ūdī, in which he discusses the conditions of nations and regions of the East and West during his time. He discusses their sects, customs, races, and describes the countries, their dynasties, political divisions and geographies. The *Murūj al-dhahab* became a basic reference work for historians. Al-Mas'ūdī was succeeded by al-Bakrī (d. 487/1094), whose scope was narrower and restricted to routes and provinces because, during his time, there were few great changes that took place in the history of nations and races.

By Ibn Khaldun's time, however, society had undergone many basic changes:

1   The Berbers were replaced by the Arab tribes as the dominant group.
2   Both the East and West were devastated by a plague.
3   The plague occurred at a time when some dynasties were in decline, resulting in further weakening of their power and authority.
4   Cities were physically laid to waste.

The drastic change in conditions demanded a new work of history similar to that of al-Mas'ūdī, which would be a model for future historians (*Muq.*, i. 45–6 [i. 63–4]).

In this book of mine, I shall discuss as much of that as will be

possible for me here in the Maghrib. I shall do so either explicitly or implicitly in connection with the history of the Maghrib, in conformity with my intention to restrict myself in this work to the Maghrib, the circumstances of its races and nations, and its subjects and dynasties, to the exclusion of any other region.[13] (This restriction is necessitated) by my lack of knowledge of conditions in the East and among its nations, and by the fact that secondhand information would not give the essential facts I am after. Al-Mas'ūdī's extensive travels in various countries enabled him to give a complete picture, as he mentioned in his work. Nevertheless, his discussion of conditions in the Maghrib is incomplete. 'And He knows more than any scholar' [Qur'ān, 12. 76]. God is the ultimate repository of (all) knowledge. Man is weak and deficient. Admission (of one's ignorance) is a specific (religious) duty. He whom God helps, finds his way (made) easy and his efforts and quests successful. We seek God's help for the goal to which we aspire in this work. God gives guidance and help. He may be trusted. (*Muq.*, i. 46–7 [i. 65])

THE SEVEN PRINCIPAL SOURCES OF ERRORS OF HISTORY AND THE JUSTIFICATION FOR A NEW SCIENCE

The *Muqaddima* or *Prolegomenon* (Book One of *Kitāb al-'Ibar*) opens with some preliminary remarks that provide a systematic discussion on the principal sources of errors of historians of the past and provide a justification for the new science constituted by this book. These remarks carry a discussion on the seven errors of historians. Book One begins with the following statement:

It should be known that history, in matter of fact, is information about human social organization, which itself is identical with world civilization. It deals with such conditions affecting the nature of civilization as, for instance, savagery and sociability,

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13   Nevertheless, a history of the Mashriq was added to *Kitāb al-'Ibar*.

group feelings, and the different ways by which one group of human beings achieves superiority over another. It deals with [kingship] and the dynasties that result (in this manner) and with the various ranks that exist within them. (It further deals) with the different kinds of gainful occupations and ways of making a living, with the sciences and crafts, that human beings pursue as part of their activities and efforts, and with all the other institutions that originate in civilization through its very nature.
(*Muq.*, i. 51–2 [i. 71])

While history in matter of fact (*ḥaqīqat al-tārīkh*) concerns the above, it is often beset by untruth (*al-kadhab*). Ibn Khaldun discusses seven reasons why this is unavoidable.

The first is partisanship with opinions and schools (*al-shīʿāt li-l-ārāʾ wa-l-madhāhib*). Impartiality means that historical information will be treated critically and its truth or untruth revealed. If a scholar allows himself to be swayed by a particular opinion or sect, he accepts information that is in line with partisan views, resulting in the acceptance and transmission of untruths (*Muq.*, i. 52 [i. 71]).

The second source of error is reliance on transmitters (*al-thiqa bi-l-nāqilīn*). This subject comes under the field of narrator criticism (*al-taʿdīl wa-l-tajrīḥ*), which originated from the need to assess the trustworthiness and accuracy of narrators of the *sunna* of the Prophet (*Muq.*, i. 52 [i. 71]). Ibn Khaldun was of the view that narrator criticism was of limited value and that it should only be employed after assessing if the information in question was in itself possible or not. If a certain piece of historical information was not acceptable to the intellect, there was no point in resorting to narrator criticism in the first place. Absurdity that is inherent in the meaning that renders such information unacceptable to the intellect is sufficient grounds for considering the information suspect. Establishing the truth regarding facts of history cannot rely on the character, honesty, probity and

accuracy of the transmitters. To begin with, it is necessary to assess whether the reported events could possibly have taken place. Ibn Khaldun deemed this to be more important than narrator criticism (*Muq.*, i. 55 [i. 76]).

The third source of error is the lack of awareness of the purpose of an event. Many narrators were unaware of the significance of the events that they reported. Instead, they attributed assumed or imagined significance to the information. The result was the transmission of falsehoods (*Muq.*, i. 52 [i. 72]).

The fourth source of error has to do with unfounded assumptions as to the truth of an event. This occurs frequently and is mainly a result of reliance on transmitters (*Muq.*, i. 52 [i. 72]).

The fifth source of error is ignorance of the conformity between conditions and the actual events (*taṭbīq al-aḥwāl ʿalā l-waqāʾiʿ*). Conditions are affected by ambiguities and distortions. The narrator reports the conditions as he sees them but is not able to place the event in its proper context for lack of appreciation of the complexity of the situation (*Muq.*, i. 52 [i. 72]).

The sixth source of error is ingratiation. Many historians desire to gain the favour of those with rank and prestige, rendering such information provided under these conditions untrustworthy (*Muq.*, i. 52–3 [i. 72]).

The seventh and most important of all reasons that account for the untrustworthiness of historical writing is ignorance of the nature of the conditions of society.

Every event (or phenomenon), whether (it comes into being in connection with some) essence or (as the result of an) action, must inevitably possess a nature peculiar to its essence as well as to the accidental conditions that may attach themselves to it. If the student knows the nature of events and the circumstances and requirements in the world of existence, it will help him to

distinguish truth from untruth in investigating the historical information critically. This is more effective in critical investigation than any other aspect that may be brought up in connection with it (*Muq.*, i. 53 [i. 72–3]).

This is an important point that indicates Ibn Khaldun's rootedness in the philosophical tradition of his time. He refers to the essences (*dhawāt*, sing. *dhāt*) and accidents (*ʿawāriḍ*, sing. *ʿaraḍ*) of phenomena. To know something is to know its essence and to be able to distinguish between that and its accidental properties. Applied to history, this means that the historian must know the nature of events and their conditions and requirements in order to distinguish truth from falsehood.

Referring to al-Masʿūdī again, Ibn Khaldun discusses the problem of the absurd and impossible in history writing. Al-Masʿūdī reported a story about how sea monsters interfered with the building of the city of Alexandria. To solve the problem, King Alexander is supposed to have dived to the bottom of the sea in a glass box inserted in a wooden container. While underwater, he drew pictures of the sea monsters and then had metal effigies made and displayed opposite the construction site. The monsters fled when they saw the effigies, and the construction of Alexandria was able to proceed (*Muq.*, i. 53 [i. 73]). Ibn Khaldun discusses the various reasons why this story is absurd. Apart from the fact that it was physically impossible to go underwater in this way, the nature of rule was such that Alexander would not have taken the risk as it would have provoked a revolt against him. Exposing himself to such a danger would quickly have led the people to attempt to replace him (*Muq.*, i. 53–4 [i. 73]).

Historical writing abounds with tales of the absurd and impossible. Only knowledge of the nature of society can yield proper and thorough examination of such reports. The method that informs efforts to distinguish truth from untruth

in historical information on the grounds of their possibility (*imkān*) or absurdity (*istiḥāla*) is the study of human society.

We must distinguish the conditions that attach themselves to the essence of civilization as required by its very nature; the things that are accidental (to civilization) and cannot be counted on; and the things that cannot possibly attach themselves to it. If we do that, we shall have a normative method for distinguishing right from wrong and truth from falsehood in historical information by means of a logical demonstration that admits of no doubts. Then whenever we hear about certain conditions occurring in civilization, we shall know what to accept and what to declare spurious. We shall have a sound yardstick with the help of which historians may find the path of truth and correctness where their reports are concerned. (*Muq.*, i. 56 [i. 77])

What Ibn Khaldun is suggesting here is that the assessment of what happened in history is more a matter of the probity of the report than the probity of the reporter. As we saw above, facts may be erroneously transmitted due to various problems, such as the bias of the reporter or his gullibility in accepting what was transmitted. This may happen even if the reporter is regarded as a truthful and honest person. The scholar has to rely on testing for the probity of the report itself. He must ask if it is possible that the reported event actually happened. Ibn Khaldun's new science of society established a framework that enabled the scholar to test a report for its probity. The more confident we are about the soundness of this science of society or, in today's idiom, the theoretical framework, the more secure our ground for judging an event possible. Take for example, Ibn Khaldun' discussion of the denial by some historians of the ʿAlid descent of Idrīs b. Idrīs. Knowledge of the nature of desert society would lead us to conclude that it was practically impossible for someone to hide his genealogy from members of the community. This approach,

which examines the probity of the report rather than that of the reporter, has the potential to raise doubts about what is often accepted with a high degree of certainty.

An example of an account that has been accepted without much critical assessment is the story of the executions of the men of the Jewish tribe, the Banū Qurayḍa, carried out with the approval of the Prophet. According to the account as related in early historical sources, some 600–900 men were sentenced to death for breaking a treaty with the Muslims of Madina. Barakat Aḥmad, in his excellent study of the relationship between the Prophet and the Jews, notes that neither Western nor Muslim scholars critically examined the evidence. Aḥmad provides many arguments that suggest that the standard account of the executions violates Ibn Khaldun's rule of distinguishing truth from falsehood on the grounds of possibility or impossibility. For example, according to the account, the men of Qurayḍa and their families were confined to a house in Madina before the executions were carried out. Aḥmad suggests that this is doubtful as there were no facilities in the Madina of the Prophet's time that could hold a few thousand people. Ahmad also notes that Madina was not equipped to execute and bury 600–900 people in one day (Aḥmad, *Muhammad and the Jews*, 23, 83, 85).

This approach is sound to the extent that there is a certain degree of stability of human society across space and time, making it possible to identify the causes of certain phenomena and formulate universal laws. Indeed, Ibn Khaldun applied his theoretical framework to the study of Jewish history, showing that a universal law explaining the rise and decline of dynasties applied as much to Jews as it did to Muslims (Bland, 'An Islamic Theory of Jewish History'). One of the laws formulated by Ibn Khaldun was that a 'dynasty rarely established itself firmly in lands with many different tribes and groups' (*Muq.*, i. 277 [i. 332]).

The same was the case in Syria in the age of the Israelites. At that time, there existed (there) a very large number of tribes with a great variety of group feelings, such as the tribes of Palestine and Canaan, the children of Esau, the Midyanites, the children of Lot, the Edomites, the Armenians [!], the Amalekites, Girgashites, and the Nabataeans from the Jazirah and Mosul. Therefore, it was difficult for the Israelites to establish their dynasty firmly. Time after time, their royal authority was endangered.

The (spirit of) opposition (alive in the country) communicated itself to (the Israelites). They opposed their own government and revolted against it. They thus never had a continuous and firmly established royal authority. Eventually they were overpowered, first by the Persians, then by the Greeks, and finally by the Romans, when their power came to an end in the Diaspora. (*Muq.*, i. 278 [i. 334])

The competing *ʿaṣabiyya*s of the Jews, in other words, explains why they failed to establish kingship for an extended duration.

The purpose (*ghard*) of Book One is to introduce the study of society. What it presented, Ibn Khaldun notes, actually constitutes an independent science with its own subject (*mawḍūʿ*), that is, human organization (*al-ʿumrān al-basharī*) and human society (*al-ijtimāʿ al-insānī*). It also has its own set of problems (*masāʾil*), that is, the explanation of the essential conditions of society (*Muq.*, i. 56 [i. 77]). Ibn Khaldun was very aware that he was discovering a new science. He considered the discussion of this objective to be something new, extraordinary and beneficial and noted that it did not exist among the scholars who preceded him, whether Greek, Persian, Syrian, Chaldean or Arab.

It does not belong to the science of rhetoric, discussed by Aristotle in the *Organon,* which deals with the persuasive nature of language. Neither is it a part of politics as politics is concerned with administration and its ethical and

philosophical basis (*Muq.*, i. 56 [i. 78]). There is something of the subject in the works of the sages and scholars of the past, but Ibn Khaldun regards these as not being exhaustive. He refers to sayings that are arranged in a circle and reflect a particular vision of justice and political rule. There are several examples of these 'circles of justice'. For example, there is the speech of Mūbadhān before Bahrām b. Bahrām in the story of the owl that was reported by al-Masʿūdī. It reads:

O king, the might of royal authority materializes only through the religious law, obedience toward God, and compliance with His commands and prohibitions. The religious law persists only through royal authority. Mighty royal authority is accomplished only through men. Men persist only with the help of property. The only way to property is through cultivation. The only way to cultivation is through justice. Justice is a balance set up among mankind. The Lord set it up and appointed an overseer for it, and that is the ruler. (*Muq.*, i. 58 [i. 80])

There is a similar saying by Anūshirwān:

Royal authority exists through the army, the army through money, money through taxes, taxes through cultivation, cultivation through justice, justice through the improvement of officials, the improvement of officials through the forthrightness of wazirs, and the whole thing in the first place through the ruler's personal supervision of his subjects' condition and his ability to educate them, so that he may rule them, and not they him. (*Muq.*, i. 58 [i. 80–1])

There is also the saying in the *Book on Politics* that is attributed to Aristotle:

The world is a garden the fence of which is the dynasty. The dynasty is an authority through which life is given to proper behavior. Proper behavior is a policy directed by the ruler. The ruler is an institution supported by the soldiers. The soldiers are helpers who

are maintained by money. Money is sustenance brought together by the subjects. The subjects are servants who are protected by justice. Justice is something familiar, and through it, the world persists. The world is a garden... (*Muq.*, i. 58–9 [i. 81–2]).

These are the eight sentences of political wisdom. The end of each sentence leads to the beginning of the next. The last sentence leads back to the first. In this way the sentences become a circle. Ibn Khaldun seems to be amused that the author of this circle of justice made much of his composition.

He found these discussions to be lacking in thoroughness and of a general nature. His own discussion on kingship was far more exhaustive, going beyond mere statements to provide explanation, proof and demonstrations and not requiring the instruction of Aristotle (*Muq.*, i. 59 [i. 82]).

The works of the Arabs with which Ibn Khaldun was familiar also did not measure up to his standards, although he admits that the writings of Ibn al-Muqaffaᶜ (d.139/756) on political topics touch upon the problems raised in his own work. Ibn al-Muqaffaᶜ, however, makes statements without providing arguments to substantiate them, following the prose style of the rhetoricians. The same was true of the scholarship of judge Abū Bakr al-Ṭurṭūshī (d. 520/1126). His work, the *Kitāb Sirāj al-mulūk*, is divided into chapters in a way that resembles Ibn Khaldun's work and relates many stories and traditions but does not deal with the subject in an analytical way. It ends up being a collection of previously transmitted material (*Muq.*, i. 59 [i. 82–3]).

The most important overall distinction between all these works and Ibn Khaldun's new science is the distinction between normative and positive science. The works that Ibn Khaldun cites that touch on the same subject matter as the *Muqaddima* are ethico-religious or philosophical in nature. They address topics such as dynasties, politics and government but do so in terms of normative prescripttions.

The *Muqaddima*, on the other hand, is a study of society as it is, not as it should be.[14]

Ibn Khaldun saw his science of human society as an original science. He seems to have been surprised that this science had not been discovered before.

In fact, I have not come across a discussion along these lines by anyone. I do not know if this is because people have been unaware of it, but there is no reason to suspect them (of having been unaware of it). Perhaps they have written exhaustively on this topic, and their work did not reach us. There are many sciences. There have been numerous sages among the nations of mankind. The knowledge that has not come down to us is larger than the knowledge that has. Where are the sciences of the Persians that ᶜUmar ordered wiped out at the time of the conquest! Where are the sciences of the Chaldaeans, the Syrians, and the Babylonians, and the scholarly products and results that were theirs! Where are the sciences of the Copts, their predecessors! The sciences of only one nation, the Greek, have come down to us, because they were translated through al-Maʾmun's efforts. (His efforts in this direction) were successful, because he had many translators at his disposal and spent much money in this connection. Of the sciences of others, nothing has come to our attention.
(*Muq.*, i. 56 [i. 78])

The task of Book One, the *Muqaddima,* was to elaborate this new science and to explain the various aspects of human society that affect human social organization. These factors are kingship, the modes of making a living or occupation, and the sciences and crafts. This is done with a view to overcoming the many errors that historical writing was prone to commit.

The *Muqaddima* is premised on certain truths or propositions (*muqaddimāt*),[15] the most important being the

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14 See also Enan (*Ibn Khaldūn*, § II, ch. 2) for discussion on the nature of the sciences before Ibn Khaldun's time.

15 Note that here *muqaddima* refers neither to the *Prolegomenon* nor Introduction to Book One. On the meaning of *muqaddima* as premise or proposition, see Dale, 'Ibn Khaldun: The Last Greek', 434.

idea of the necessity of society. These premises are discussed in detail in Chapter One. At the end of the preliminary remarks preceding Chapter One, however, the idea of the necessity of society is introduced and functions to explain the logic of the divisions of the *Muqaddima*. Ibn Khaldun says that humans are distinguished from other living beings in terms of certain characteristics specific to them. They are (*Muq.*, I, 62 [I, 84]):

1   The ability to think, resulting in the development of the sciences and crafts.
2   The need for governmental restraints and strong authority, as humans in their social life cannot exist without them.
3   Humans' ability to think and reflect also result in their efforts to make a living and the development of various modes of making a living.
4   Humans have a need to live together for the sake of companionship and for the satisfaction of basic needs. This also results from their natural disposition toward cooperation.

We discussed above the problem of historical writing being dominated by tales of the absurd and impossible. Ibn Khaldun said that only knowledge of the nature of society can yield proper history as such knowledge would lead the scholar to reject the impossible and absurd. Society itself may be either nomadic (*ʿumrān badawī*), which is found in outlying regions and mountains, in pastureland, in wasteland regions and on the fringes of deserts, or sedentary (*ʿumran haḍarī*), which is found in cities, towns, villages and small communities (*Muq.*, i. 62 [i. 84–5]). The factors of society or those things that affect society essentially are what constitute Ibn Khaldun's new science. This is reflected in the division of the *Muqaddima* into six chapters that discuss (*Muq.*, i. 63 [i. 85]):

1   human society in general, its types and the regions of the earth that are inhabited;
2   nomadic society;
3   dynasties, caliphal authority and kingship;
4   sedentary society;
5   crafts and the modes of making a living;
6   the sciences and their acquisition

We can now restate Ibn Khaldun's project in the following terms. Its purpose (*gharḍ*) was to introduce the study of society, a science with its own subject (*mawḍūʿ*), that is, human organization (*al-ʿumrān al-basharī*) or human society (*al-ijtimāʿ al-insānī*). It has its own set of problems (*masāʾil*), that is, the explanation of the essential conditions of society. These are the transitions from nomadic to sedentary societies and the formation of dynasties in the process, the nature of sedentary life, particularly economic life, and the cultivation of the sciences in cities, and the conditions that bring about the erosion and decline of dynasties. The method of the new science is rational demonstration (*burhān*) (*Muq.*, i. 56, 62 [i. 77, 84]).

THE SCIENCE OF HUMAN SOCIETY

Having established the need for it, the new science is then presented to us in the course of the six chapters that make up the *Muqaddima*. Ibn Khaldun's science of human society can be seen to be comprised of three components:

1   the *muqaddimāt* or premises of the science of human society;
2   the theory of the rise and decline of states;
3   methods.

The muqaddimāt *of the science of human society*

Chapter One carries a long discussion of premises or *muqaddimāt*, that is, assertions whose demonstration do not fall within the scope of the new science (Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldûn's Philosophy of History*, 172). Six *muqaddimāt* are listed but can be collapsed into three. They are (i) human society is necessary (*Muq.*, i. 67 [i. 89]); (ii) humans are influenced physically, psychologically and socially by the physical environment (*Muq.*, i. 71, 132, 138, 140 [i. 94, 167, 174, 177]); and (iii) humans are related to the spiritual world, the world beyond sense perception (*Muq.*, i. 146 [i. 184]). The most important premise in the sense of being more directly related to the subject matter of the *Muqaddima* is that human society is necessary.

To say that human society is necessary is also to say that humans are political by nature and that they are unable to dispense with the kind of social organization that the philosophers term *polis (madīna)*. This is the meaning of social organization (*ʿumrān*). God created humans in a way that requires them to obtain food for sustenance. Although they were given the power to obtain this sustenance, they are unable to satisfy their needs on an individual basis. They are compelled to cooperate with fellow human beings, for it is through the cooperation of a few that the needs of many more can be satisfied (*Muq.*, i. 67 [i. 89]). Human beings also need to come together for their defence. Aggression is natural to all living beings, and all are provided with the powers of defence. A human's ability to think is his means of defence. Through this ability, humans are able to engage in the production of the crafts and create instruments that serve them. Through mutual cooperation, they obtain the nutrition that they need for sustenance and the weapons they

need for defence (*Muq.*, i. 68 [i. 90]). It follows, therefore, that society is necessary for the human species. This is the meaning of *ʿumrān* or social organization, the subject matter of the science that is being advanced here.

The idea of the necessity of human society is taken by Ibn Khaldun as a premise, as a given, and it is unnecessary to establish that it exists. Ibn Khaldun says:

The afore-mentioned remarks have been in the nature of establishing the existence of the object in (this) particular field. A scholar in a particular discipline is not obliged to do this, since it is accepted in logic that a scholar in a particular science does not have to establish the existence of the object in that science. On the other hand, logicians do not consider it forbidden to do so. Thus, it is a voluntary contribution. (*Muq.*, i. 69 [i. 91])

When humans arrive at a certain level of the social organization of society, there is a need for a restraining influence as aggression and injustice are part of human nature. There is a need for the sort of power and authority that Ibn Khaldun refers to as kingship (*mulk*). Kingship is necessary to humans and is a natural property. Ibn Khaldun notes that the philosophers believe that kingship also exists in the animal world as, for example, among the bees and the locusts, but it is not the same as the kingship that exists among humans. Among animals it is a result of their natural disposition, while among humans it exists as a result of their ability to think and administrate (*Muq.*, i. 69 [i. 91–2]).

Ibn Khaldun also refers to the view of the philosophers that prophethood is a natural quality of humans. They say that the requirement of an authority to exercise a restraining influence over humans is satisfied by religious law as revealed to the prophets. The restraining influence is indeed exercised by the prophets, but Ibn Khaldun regards this proposition as illogical because human life can come about in the

absence of prophethood. Authority may be established by individuals on their own or with the aid of group feeling (*ʿaṣabiyya*). The numbers of people who follow prophets and divinely revealed books are far fewer than those who do not. Yet the latter possess dynasties and civilizations. The philosophers are, therefore, wrong to say that prophethood exists by necessity as its existence is not required by logic. Its necessity is, however, established by religious law (*Muq.*, i. 69–70 [i. 92–3]). In this way Ibn Khaldun makes a case for the natural character and necessity of kingship in the social organization of humans.

Given that society is necessary and that kingship is a natural property of humans, what are the forces that account for the transition from nomadic to sedentary societies and the concomitant rise and decline of dynasties? The answer requires an explication of the nature of nomadic and sedentary societies. The rest of the *Muqaddima* is concerned with these matters. Ibn Khaldun's discussion on nomadic society, dynasties and authority, sedentary society, the modes of making a living, and sciences, which form the contents of Chapters Two to Six of the *Muqaddima*, can be reconstructed into a theory of the rise and decline of states. The main elements of this theory are the nature and characteristics of nomadic and sedentary societies, the role of the interaction between these types of societies in the rise of states and the conditions of both that cause the erosion and decline of states.

The theory of the rise and decline of states

The focus of this section on Ibn Khaldun's theory is his understanding of the causes of the rise and decline of states, which he explains in terms of the essential differences in social organization between pastoral nomadic and sedentary societies. His approach was to study the constituent elements

of society, such as economic and urban institutions, the state and solidarity (*ʿaṣabiyya*). A central concept crucial for the understanding of these differences is *ʿaṣabiyya*, referring to a type of group feeling or social cohesion. In Ibn Khaldun's theory of state formation, social groups with strong *ʿaṣabiyya* could dominate and establish rule over those with weak *ʿaṣabiyya*. However, with the conquest of a state by a tribal group, its settlement in an urban area resulted in a decline in its *ʿaṣabiyya*, leaving the tribe vulnerable to attack from succeeding pre-urbanized tribes.

These are the key elements of Ibn Khaldun's sociology. Its overall concern is with the rise of states as a result of the conflict and interaction between nomadic and sedentary societies and the peculiar natures of nomadic and sedentary societies that create the conditions that result in the erosion of kingship and eventual decline of the state.

The main areas of focus of the theory are (i) nomadic or Bedouin society (*al-ʿumrān al-badawī*); (ii) sedentary society (*al-ʿumrān al-ḥaḍarī*); (iii) the interaction between the two that leads to the rise and decline of dynasties, the state (*al-dawla*) and its types of authority, that is, kingship (*mulk*) and caliphal authority (*khilāfa*); (iv) the modes of making a living; and (v) the sciences and their acquisition. The first four areas are discussed in this chapter, while the sciences and their acquisition are discussed in Chapter 3.

Nomadic people, like sedentary people, form a natural group. It is the mode of making a living (*al-maʿāsh*) that accounts for the different conditions of a people. Those people who adopt agriculture or animal husbandry as their mode of making a living live in desert areas. Their social organization is such that it does not provide for much more than a subsistence-level life. If there is an increase in their wealth and they begin to live above a subsistence level, they may settle in towns and cities and develop a

taste for good cuisine, the fine arts, elaborate architecture and greater comfort and luxury. Their mode of making a living corresponds to their wealth (*Muq.*, i. 191–2 [i. 249–50]). Among those who make their living from animals are nomads who raise sheep and cattle and move around the desert in search of water and pasture. They are shepherds (*shāwīya*), who do not venture far into the desert where good pastures are not available. The *shāwīya* include the Turks and Turkomans. Those who are dependent on camels go deeper into the desert where camels can find sustenance. Ibn Khaldun also notes that camel nomads often flee into the desert to escape punishment by the authorities for their hostile acts. They are the most savage (*al-waḥsh*) of people and include the Arabs, Berbers and Zanāta in the West and the Kurds, Turkomans and Turks in the East. The Arabs, however, venture deeper into the desert as they live more exclusively on camels, while the others rely on sheep and cattle as well (*Muq.*, i. 193–4 [i. 251–2]).

Nomadic society is prior to and the basis of sedentary society. The evidence for this is that most of the inhabitants of cities originate from Bedouins. Ibn Khaldun makes a point concerning the differences between nomadic and sedentary life that is crucial to the development of his theory:

It has thus become clear that the existence of Bedouins is prior to, and the basis of, the existence of towns and cities. Likewise, the existence of towns and cities results from luxury customs pertaining to luxury and ease, which are posterior to the customs that go with the bare necessities of life. (*Muq.*, i. 196 [i. 253])

Ibn Khaldun makes the interesting point that nomadic people are better (*khayr*) or more moral than sedentary people. His reasoning is that the soul in its natural state is more readily able to accept good or evil, either one of which leaves its impression. The nomadic soul is first affected by

good and finds it difficult to acquire evil. The sedentary soul, on the other hand, is introduced to evil much earlier because of its greater exposure to luxury and worldly success (*Muq.*, i. 197 [i. 253–4]). Nomadic people are also more courageous than sedentary people. The lifestyle of sedentary people disposes them to laziness and ease. They are dependent on the authorities for their protection, do not carry weapons and are not required to hunt for sustenance. The Bedouins lack the facilities available to sedentary people. They are required to hunt and carry weapons for their self-defence. As Ibn Khaldun said of them:

They watch carefully all sides of the road. They take hurried naps only when they are together in company or when they are in the saddle. They pay attention to every faint barking and noise. They go alone into the desert, guided by their fortitude, putting their trust in themselves. Fortitude has become a character quality of theirs, and courage their nature. They use it whenever they are called upon or an alarm stirs them. When sedentary people mix with them in the desert or associate with them on a journey, they depend on them. They cannot do anything for themselves without them. This is an observed fact. (Their dependence extends) even to knowledge of the country, the (right) directions, watering places, and crossroads. (*Muq.*, i. 200–1 [i. 257–8])

The reason for this is that humans are not conditioned by their natural disposition, but are the products of the conditions to which they have become accustomed and which have replaced their natural dispositions (*Muq.*, i. 201 [i. 258]).

Sedentary people are further disadvantaged because of their reliance on law. It is natural that the majority be dominated by a minority in sedentary societies. If the domination is founded on injustice and intimidation, it destroys the fortitude and power of resistance of the people. Ibn Khaldun illustrates this idea with the following account.

'Umar forbade Sa'd (b. Abī Waqqāṣ) to exercise such (arbitrary power) when Zuhrah b. Ḥawīyah took the spoils of al-Jālinūs. The value of the spoils was 75,000 gold pieces. (Zuhrah) had followed al-Jālinūs on the day of al-Qādisīyah, killed him, and taken his spoils. Sa'd took them away from him and said, 'Why did you not wait for my permission to follow him?' He wrote to 'Umar and asked 'Umar for permission (to confiscate the spoils). But 'Umar replied, 'Would you want to proceed against a man like Zuhrah, who already has borne so much of the brunt (of battle), and while there still remains so much of the war for you (to finish)? Would you want to break his strength and morale?' Thus, 'Umar confirmed (Zuhrah) in possession of the spoils. (*Muq.*, i. 202–3 [i. 259])

The enforcement of laws by way of punishment destroys fortitude because of the feeling of humiliation that it causes. Even laws intended to educate and instruct may have similar effects on fortitude because people come to rely more on the law and less on their own abilities. For these reasons a greater degree of fortitude exists among the Bedouin than among sedentary people. There are exceptions, however. The men around the Prophet were observant of laws but also had great fortitude. However, the restraining influence came from within them. It was neither the imposition of law nor scientific education but faith and belief that caused them to be observant of the law (*Muq.*, i. 203 [i. 259–60]).

Not only the positive qualities of courage and fortitude enable the Bedouin to live in the desert. These qualities are insufficient if the Bedouin do not enjoy a high degree of solidarity or group feeling (*'aṣabiyya*). *'Aṣabiyya* refers to a form of group solidarity that is founded on its members' knowledge of sharing a common descent. Ibn Khaldun believed that this form of group feeling or solidarity was far more potent than other forms of solidarity. The stronger the *'aṣabiyya*, the more close-knit the group and the greater

the degree of mutual support and aid. The *ʿaṣabiyya* of the Bedouin was more intact than that of the townspeople. This afforded them a higher degree of mutual support and courage. However, *ʿaṣabiyya* tends to diminish over time due to certain policies adopted by a ruler as well as the nature of settled, urban life. The relatively more affluent nature of urban life has the effect of reducing *ʿaṣabiyya* to the extent that it divides the rich from the poor. Apart from that, as time goes by the ruler attempts to distance himself from his kinsmen, whom he considers potential usurpers of his power, by bringing outsiders or non-kinsmen into his circle. This contributes to the diminishing of *ʿaṣabiyya*. The relative military superiority of the Bedouin is due to their greater *ʿaṣabiyya*, a function of their being a close-knit group of common descent.

The restraining influence among Bedouin tribes comes from their *shaykhs* and leaders. It results from the great respect and veneration they generally enjoy among the people. The hamlets of the Bedouins are defended against outside enemies by a tribal militia composed of noble youths of the tribe who are known for their courage. Their defense and protection are successful only if they are a closely-knit group of common descent. This strengthens their stamina and makes them feared, since everybody's affection for his family and his group is more important (than anything else). Compassion and affection for one's blood relations and relatives exist in human nature as something God put into the hearts of men. It makes for mutual support and aid, and increases the fear felt by the enemy. (*Muq.*, i. 206 [i. 262–3])

ʿAṣabiyya has been variously translated as solidarity, group feeling, *esprit de corps* and group loyalty (Rabiʿ, *The Political Theory of Ibn Khaldūn*, 49). Whatever term we use, it is important to note that by *ʿaṣabiyya* Ibn Khaldun meant a sense of commonality and faithfulness to a group that is founded to a great extent on blood ties. Indeed, there are

three types of relationships that make up ʿaṣabiyya. These are blood ties (ṣilat al-raḥim), clientship (walāʾ) and alliance (ḥilf) (Muq., i. 207 [i. 264]). The type of ʿaṣabiyya is determined by the preponderance of each element. ʿAṣabiyya that emerges principally from close blood ties is the most powerful and reliable and creates the strongest feelings of ṣolidarity. However, as the kinship element declines, affiliation and clientship may become the dominant elements in group relations, giving rise to weaker forms of ʿaṣabiyya.

As just noted, ʿaṣabiyya based on blood relationship is the most powerful form. Blood ties bring about ʿaṣabiyya only to the extent that common descent is clear and unambiguous and results in mutual aid and affection (Muq., i. 207–8 [i. 264–5]). It follows, therefore, that groups with stronger blood ties have stronger ʿaṣabiyya and are superior insofar as their levels of mutual aid and affection are greater. The leadership of a people must be vested in those who are of the same descent. Furthermore, the leader has the superior group feeling, which each individual in the group is ready to follow and obey (Muq., i. 213 [i. 269]). Because of the strong correlation between common descent and group feeling, mere attachment to people as clients or allies does not allow one to assume leadership over those people. For this reason, many leaders attempt to acquire prestigious pedigrees by way of fabrication. Ibn Khaldun provides many examples of this.

These things are invented by people to get into the good graces of rulers, through (sycophantic) behavior and through the opinions they express. Their (fabrications) eventually become so well known as to be irrefutable. I have heard that Yaghamrāsin b. Zayyān, the founder of the Zayyanid rule, when he was asked about (the alleged Idrisid descent of his family), denied it. He expressed himself in the Zanātah dialect as follows: 'We gained worldly power and [kingship] with our swords, not through (noble) family connections. The usefulness of (our [kingship] for us) in the next

world depends on God.' And he turned away from the person who, in this way, had hoped to get into his good graces. (*Muq.*, i. 215 [i. 271–2])

Having a family line or house (*al-bayt*) and nobility (*al-sharaf*) are only possible among people who share in a group feeling. One has a 'house' when he can count noble and famous people among his ancestors. The advantage of common descent is that it creates a strong group feeling that facilitates mutual aid and affection. Having noble ancestors and the prestige that they bring strengthens a group. Sedentary life dissipates group feeling as tribal affiliations weaken. Nobility is lost along with the weakening of group feeling (*Muq.*, i. 216–7 [i. 273–4]). Clients, followers and slaves of a people belonging to a noble house share in the group feeling of that house while experiencing a decline in their own group feeling, owing to their being attached to a superior group. If the client attains nobility and house, they are derived from the nobility and house of his masters (*Muq.*, i. 219–20 [i. 277–8]). This happened to the Barmecides. They belonged to a Persian house but later became clients of the ʿAbbasids. Their descent was not a factor, and their subsequent nobility was a function of their position as followers of the ʿAbbasid (*Muq.*, i. 219–20 [i. 277–8]).

Now, the prestige (*al-ḥasb*) of a house lasts for at most four generations. The one who establishes the glory of the house maintains the qualities that created the glory. This is continued by the son who had contact with his father and absorbed those qualities. He is, however, inferior to his father in that what he has learnt from his father is through study rather than from practical experience. The third generation follows tradition and is inferior to the second generation in that it relies on imitation rather than judgement. The fourth generation is the most inferior in that its members no longer have the qualities of the first generation that created the glory.

A fourth generation descendant imagines that the glory of the house is merely derived from its noble descent rather than the qualities and efforts of earlier generations. He is deceived by the respect that people bestow upon him, imagining that it is due purely to his descent. He isolates himself from those who share in his group feeling, thinking that they will follow him because of his descent. His upbringing was such that he takes their obedience for granted. He lacks respect for them, and they in turn come to despise him. They eventually revolt and transfer their loyalties to another branch of his tribe. The family of the new leader then grows, while the house of the original leader decays and collapses. This is the fate of kingship as well as the houses of tribes, emirs and all who share in a ruler's group feeling. When one house declines, another from among the same descent arises (*Muq.*, i. 221–2 [i. 278–80]).

Ibn Khaldun has already stated that nomadic groups are more courageous and superior to sedentary people in terms of their fortitude and group feeling. Group feeling facilitates mutual defence and social activities. At the same time, every social organization requires a superior power to exercise restraint over the group. The superior one is the one with the greater degree of group feeling such that he can command the obedience of others. Such superiority is kingship. If a tribe has several houses and many group feelings, it is the one superior or stronger in group feelings that rules (*Muq.*, i. 226 [i. 284]).

Once a particular group feeling has established its superiority over the people who share in that group feeling, it then establishes its superiority over other group feelings. If it succeeds in overpowering another group, the two group feelings come into close contact with the superior one growing in strength. As the ruling dynasty grows senile

and declines, and if there is no one from among those who share in its group feeling to defend it, the new group feeling assumes rule and attains kingship (*Muq.*, i. 227 [i. 285]).

The goal of group feeling is the attainment of kingship. The tribe representing the superior group feeling attains kingship either by acquiring actual control of the state or providing assistance to the ruling dynasty. If a people are able to retain their group feeling, kingship that disappears in one branch will be passed on to another branch of the same people. When the group feeling of the ruling group diminishes and its kingship is compromised, there is an opportunity for another strong group feeling from within the same nation (*umma*) to achieve kingship. They are then subject to the same process of decline that their predecessors experienced. Kingship in a particular nation persists until the group feeling of the entire nation dissipates (*Muq.*, i. 239–40 [i. 296–7]). Ibn Khaldun furnished several examples of this.

This can be illustrated by what happened among the nations. When the [kingship] of ʿĀd was wiped out, their brethren, the Thamūd, took over. They were succeeded, in turn, by their brethren, the Amalekites. The Amalekites were succeeded by their brethren, the Ḥimyar. The Ḥimyar were succeeded by their brethren, the Tubbaʿs, who belonged to the Ḥimyar. They, likewise, were succeeded, by the Adhwāʾ. Then, the Muḍar came to power.

The same was the case with the Persians. When the Kayyanid rule was wiped out, the Sassanians ruled after them. Eventually, God permitted them all to be destroyed by the Muslims.

The same was also the case with the Greeks. Their rule was wiped out and transferred to their brethren, the Rūm (Romans).

The same was the case with the Berbers in the Maghrib. When the rule of their first rulers, the Maghrāwa and the Kutāma, was wiped out, it went to the Ṣinhāja. Then it went to the Veiled (Ṣinhāja), then to the Maṣmūda, and then to the (still) remaining Zanāta groups. (*Muq.*, i. 240 [i. 298])

When a dynasty declines, its power is transferred to those who have a share in the group feeling of that dynasty. The same group feeling exists among those who are related to members of the dynasty in decline because the magnitude of group feeling is proportionate to the closeness of the relationship. The cycle repeats itself until a major change in conditions takes place, such as a transformation by a religion or the disappearance of a civilization, when kingship then passes on to an entirely new nation (*Muq.*, i. 240–1 [i. 298–9]).

Once a dynasty is in power, it is able to dispense with the very group feeling that enabled it to be established. Once kingship authority is exercised and inherited over several generations and dynasties, the leaders are followed for their own qualities rather than for reasons of group feeling. The rulers then rule with the help of clients or tribal groups who have different lineages. An example that Ibn Khaldun cites is the case of the ʿAbbasids under al-Muʿtasim and his son al-Wāthiq. When the Arab group feeling dissipated, they ruled with the aid of Persians, Turks, Daylams, Seljuks and other clients. Gradually, client after client gained control over the provincial areas until the caliphs only controlled Baghdad and their rule finally disintegrated (*Muq.*, i. 261–2 [i. 314–5]).

Religion functions to supplement the power that a dynasty obtains from group feeling. Religion creates a zeal that overcomes jealousy and envy and spurs people to fight for common objectives. Consequently, they are able to defeat armies much larger than their own (*Muq.*, i. 267 [i. 320]). Nevertheless, religion requires the support of group feeling if it is to play such a role. In support of this idea, Ibn Khaldun quotes the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet, 'God sent no prophet who did not enjoy the protection of his people' (*Muq.*, i. 269 [i. 322]).

The relationship between kingship and group feeling is such that the ruler eventually turns against his own people

Once the dynasty is established, the people of his own group feeling are brought into the administrative services of the state. As the ruler consolidates his power, he attempts to be independent of the people of his group feeling, alienating them in the process. He instead brings clients and followers into the inner circle and confers the important administrative offices on them (*Muq.*, i. 312–3 [i. 372–3).

We read above that Ibn Khaldun notes that the prestige of a house lasted for about four generations. Using the imagery of the lifespan of human beings, he suggests that the dynasty develops senility (*haram*) over the course of three generations and is destroyed by the fourth generation (*Muq.*, i. 289 [i. 345]). There is a relation between the political and economic aspects of the decline.

Production, distribution, the creation of value, the determineation of prices, the role of money, and the nature of public finance are all manifested in more complex ways in sedentary societies, especially in societies dominated by kingship. Here, the distinction that Ibn Khaldun makes between caliphate (*khilāfa*) and kingship is important. The exercise of caliphal authority meant (*Muq.*, i. 328 [i. 387–8]):

to cause the masses to act as required by religious insight into their interests in the other world as well as in this world. (The worldly interests) have bearing upon (the interests in the other world), since according to the Lawgiver (Muḥammad), all worldly conditions are to be considered in their relation to their value for the other world. Thus, (the caliphate) in reality substitutes for the Lawgiver (Muḥammad), inasmuch as it serves, like him, to protect the religion and to exercise (political) leadership of the world.

Kingship differs from caliphate authority:

We have also mentioned before that according to their nature, human beings need someone to act as a restraining influence and mediator in every social organization, in order to keep the members from (fighting) with each other. That person must, by

necessity, have superiority over the others in the matter of group feeling. If not, his power to (exercise a restraining influence) could not materialize. (*Muq.*, i. 226 [i. 284])

Ibn Khaldun refers to this superiority as kingship or *mulk*, characterized by the ability to rule by force. *Mulk* is distinguished from *khilāfa* by the ability of the ruler to rule by force. Thus, in the *mulk* periods, people were constantly in danger of having their property confiscated and also suffered from other forms of injustice, such as forced labour, the imposition of duties not required by religious law and the collection of unjustifiable taxes.

Ibn Khaldun's account of the decline of the dynasty elaborates, as pointed out by Gellner, a Keynesian-type notion of the multiplier (Gellner, *Muslim Society*, 34). The difference is that in Keynes' time the middle class was blamed for inadequate aggregate demand, while Ibn Khaldun blames the governmental propensity to save at a time when private investment was weak.

Now, if the ruler holds on to property and revenue, or they are lost or not properly used by him, then the property in the possession of the ruler's entourage will be small. The gifts which they, in their turn, had been used to give to their entourage and people, stop, and all their expenditures are cut down. They constitute the greatest number of people (who make expenditures), and their expenditures provide more of the substance of trade than (the expenditures of) any other (group of people). Thus (when they stop spending), business slumps and commercial profits decline because of the shortage of capital. Revenues from the land tax decrease, because the land tax and taxation (in general) depend on cultural activity, commercial transactions, business prosperity, and the people's demand for gain and profit. It is the dynasty that suffers from the situation and that has a deficit, because under these circumstances the property of the ruler decreases in consequence of the decrease in revenues from the land tax. As we have stated, the dynasty is the greatest market, the mother and

base of all trade. (It is the market that provides) the substance of income and expenditures (for trade). If government business slumps and the volume of trade is small, the dependent markets will naturally show the same symptoms, and to a greater degree. Furthermore, money circulates between subjects and ruler, moving back and forth. Now, if the ruler keeps it to himself, it is lost to the subjects. (*Muq.*, ii. 79 [ii. 102–3])

The political down cycle of a dynasty is correlated with the economic down cycle.

It should be known that at the beginning of the dynasty, taxation yields a large revenue from small assessments. At the end of the dynasty, taxation yields a small revenue from large assessments.

The reason for this is that when the dynasty follows the ways (*sunan*) of the religion, it imposes only such taxes as are stipulated by the religious law, such as charity taxes, the land tax, and the poll tax... When the dynasty continues in power and their rulers follow each other in succession, they become sophisticated. The Bedouin attitude and simplicity lose their significance, and the Bedouin qualities of moderation and restraint disappear. [Kingship] with its tyranny, and sedentary culture that stimulates sophistication, make their appearance. The people of the dynasty then acquire qualities of character related to cleverness. Their customs and needs become more varied because of the prosperity and luxury in which they are immersed. As a result, the individual imposts and assessments upon the subjects, agricultural laborers, farmers, and all the other taxpayers, increase. Every individual impost and assessment is greatly increased, in order to obtain a higher tax revenue (*Muq.*, ii. 67–8 [ii. 89–90]).

When assessments increase beyond the limits of equity, productive activities halt, tax revenues decrease and individual imposts increase to make up for the loss. Incentives are gone, and the result is a downturn in the production, fiscal and political cycles of the dynasty (*Muq.*, ii. 68 [ii. 90–1]).

Sedentary life is the last stage of society where decay sets in (*Muq.*, i. 198 [i. 255]). The characteristics of Bedouin

life that enabled the dynasty to be established – an austere lifestyle, moral and courageous people, greater fortitude because of less reliance on law and stronger group feeling – all suffer erosion in sedentary society. Once senility afflicts a dynasty it cannot be reversed (*Muq.*, ii. 92 [ii. 117]). It is as natural to the lifespan of a dynasty as it is to that of a human being. Kingship is founded on two main factors, group feeling and wealth. The disintegration of the dynasty comes about as a result of the erosion of both.

During the early stages of the dynasty, when kingship develops a taste for luxury, the first to be alienated are the members of the ruler's family and his relatives. As potential usurpers of power, they are isolated or even eliminated. Their place is taken by an inner circle of clients and followers among whom a new group feeling develops. This new group feeling, however, is never as potent as the original group feeling because of the lack of blood relations. The fragmentation of the ruling group is sensed by people of other lineages who, as a result, also begin to pose a threat to the ruler. They are also persecuted or eliminated. The disintegration of the dynasty comes about as a result of the effects of luxury on group feeling and the alienation of the inner circle of family members. During later stages of the dynasty, the rulers come to be dependent on a weak militia in the frontier regions, on tribesmen devoid of the spirit of mutual aid, affection and strength that accompanied group feeling. Alienated members of the ruling family and the population of the outlying regions begin to collaborate. Eventually, the rebels reach the centre of the dynasty and may split it into two or three dynasties. The original dynasty comes to be ruled by those who do not have its group feeling. Group feeling is still operative to the extent that the new rulers find it necessary to acknowledge the superiority of the original group feeling (*Muq.*, ii. 94–5 [ii. 118–21]).

Ibn Khaldun gives the example of the Umayyads. The reach of the Arabs under the Umayyads extended to Anadalusia, India and China. Their authority was founded on the group feeling of ʿAbd al-Manāf. Ibn Khaldun notes that so strong was the group feeling that Sulaymān b. ʿAbd al-Mālik's order that ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Mūsā b. Nuṣayr in Cordova be killed was obeyed. Gradually, luxury took its toll and their group feeling was destroyed. Their place was taken by the ʿAbbasids who eliminated the descendants of Abū Ṭālib, the ʿAlids, thereby destroying the group feeling of ʿAbd al-Manāf. The Arabs of the outer regions, such as the Aghlabids in Ifriqiya and the Andalusians, obtained followings in these areas, splitting the ʿAbbasid dynasty. The Idrisids seceded in the Maghreb with the support of the Berber tribes (*Muq.*, ii. 95–6 [ii. 121]).

The fall of a dynasty is not only a matter of the social-psychological factor of group feeling. There is a also an important role played by wealth. The luxurious lifestyle that accompanies kingship calls for increased expenditure on salaries and allowances. As the expectations of the military grow, the ruler is forced to exact more taxes, impose more duties and even confiscate property in order to satisfy the army. As the dynasty becomes weaker in group feeling, it experiences greater fragmentation (*Muq.*, ii. 97–8 [ii. 122–4]). A new dynasty then emerges in two ways. One way is when provincial governors of the disintegrating dynasty wrest control of the outlying regions where the dynasty is weak. New dynasties may be founded in these regions. For example, when the ʿAbbasids became senile, the Samanids took control of Transoxiana, the Hamdanids of Mosul and Syria, and the Tulunids of Egypt. In Andalusia, the Umayyad dynasty broke up into numerous principalities (*ṭawāʾif*), the leaders of which were formerly Umayyad provincial governors (*Muq.*, ii. 103 [ii. 129]). The other way that a new

dynasty is formed is when a rebel from a neighbouring state and tribal group, on the strength of his group feeling, conquers the ailing dynasty (*Muq.*, ii. 104 [ii. 129–30]).

If the preponderant element in *ʿaṣabiyya* is blood ties and it is strong, it is a firm basis of the power of the state. That power attains a form of authority that Ibn Khaldun termed *mulk* or kingship. Ibn Khaldun further distinguished between two types of kingship, *mulk siyāsī* or royal authority and *mulk tabīʿī* or unbridled kingship (Rabīʿ, *The Political Theory of Ibn Khaldūn*, 141). Royal authority is kingship that 'causes the masses to act as required by intellectual (rational) insight into the means of furthering their worldly interests and avoiding anything that is harmful (in that respect)' (*Muq.*, i, 327–8 [i. 387]). When *ʿaṣabiyya* is strong and the power wielded by the sovereign is not based on brute strength but on acceptance of his legitimacy, it is royal authority. As *ʿaṣabiyya* dissipates, that is, when the blood-tie element is replaced by those of alliance and clientship, another kind of *mulk* is established, natural or unbridled kingship. This type of kingship 'causes the masses to act as required by purpose and desire [of the rulers]' (*Muq.*, i, 327 [i, 387]). It is, in effect, power with minimum authority. It is this form of kingship that is the most destructive to the social and political life of humans.

Methods

Ibn Khaldun regarded the traditional method of distinguishing right from wrong in historical studies as flawed because it focused on the assessment of the reliability of sources and the characters of the transmitters of information. Instead, he regarded it necessary to assess the inherent possibility or absurdity of reported historical facts and events by investigating the nature of human society. The truth and falsehood of the former can be logically

demonstrated from the latter. In this sense, Ibn Khaldun was heir to classical Islamic tradition, resorting above all to the method of demonstration (*burhān*).

Following Mahdi (*Ibn Khaldūn's Philosophy of History*, 160), we use the term 'method' here to refer to what Ibn Khaldun and others in the Islamic tradition understood as *mantiq*, that is, the rules that enable one to distinguish right from wrong, both in terms of definitions (*hudūd*) that provide the essence (*māhiya*) of things and arguments that lead to judgements or apperceptions (*tasdīqāt*) (*Muq.*, iii. 91 [iii. 137]). In general terms, the basis of perception is the sensibilia or what may be sensed as perceived by the five senses (*al-hawās al-khamsa*). While all animals have this ability, humans are distinguished by being able to abstract universals (*kulliyāt*) from the sensibilia. Abstraction progresses until the highest universal is reached. For example, individual humans are compared to one another and from this the species (*nūʿ*) to which humans belong is abstracted. Then human beings are compared to animals and the genus (*jins*) to which both humans and animals belong is abstracted. The comparisons continue in this manner until the highest genus is reached, that is, substance (*jawhar*) (*Muq.*, iii. 91–2 [iii. 137–8]).

Knowledge is either the perception of the essence of things, that is conception (*tasawwur*), or apperception (*tasdīq*). *Tasawwur* is perception that does not involve the exercising of judgement. *Tasdīq* refers to *judgement* or assent that establishes the correspondence between the concept and the object to which the concept refers. The goal of *tasdīq* is knowledge of the realities of things (*haqāʾiq al-ashyāʾ*) (*Muq.*, iii. 92 [iii. 138–9]). Knowledge as the perception of the essence of things or conception (*tasawwur*) refers to the knowledge of universals. There are five universals: genus (*jins*), difference (*fasl*), species (*nūʿ*), property (*khāsa*) and general accident (*ʿarad al-ʿām*) (*Muq.*, iii. 94 [iii. 142]).

This process of thinking may take place in the right or wrong way. The canon of logic was developed in order to present the methods of logic in a systematic manner to aid the process of analogical reasoning (*qiyās*). Following Aristotle, the Muslims recognize five kinds of analogical reasoning (*Muq.*, iii. 93–4 [iii. 140–1]):

1. Demonstration (*burhān*), referring to reasoning that produces certain knowledge;
2. Dialectics (*jadal*) or disputation, reasoning that aims to silence an opponent. It may include deductive, inductive or other forms of arguments;
3. Rhetoric (*khiṭāba*) refers to reasoning that teaches how to influence people. It is directed towards influence or persuasion rather than instruction.
4. Poetics (*shiʿir*) is reasoning that teaches the use of parable (*tamthīl*) and similes (*tashbīh*) and aims at inspiring and encouraging people;
5. Sophistry (*safsaṭa*) is reasoning that aims to confuse and deceive an opponent and is, of course, a method to be avoided.

What is Ibn Khaldun's method? First of all, it is necessary to differentiate his critique of historical writing from his exposition of the new science of society as different methods are employed in each case. His critique of historical writing is contained in the *muqaddima* to the *ʿIbar*. His exposition of the science of society is contained in the rest of the *Muqaddima* or *Prolegomenon*.

The best method for ascertaining the truth is that of demonstration from premises that are certain as it produces certain knowledge. This was the method Ibn Khaldun employed in the *Muqaddima*. However, as noted by Mahdi, this was not the method employed in the critique of historical writing as this critique was not premised on true,

self-evident and primary statements. Neither is the rhetorical or poetic method of reasoning employed. This leaves the dialectical method (Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldûn's Philosophy of History*, 161), which Ibn Khaldun used to expose the weaknesses of historical writing that did not formulate true, self-evident and primary premises. A dialectical argument can be founded on premises that are opinions that may be true or false. The purpose of the argument is to refute or accept them. It does so by revealing the absurdity of the opinion in question or by refuting opposing opinions. In other words, a dialectical argument is purely logical in that it does not necessarily proceed from true premises (ibid, 162). For example, Ibn Khaldun refers to many opinions and reports of historians to show that what they believed or reported was unlikely to be true. He is not concerned with establishing facts regarding the issues concerned. It is only necessary for him to show that what was reported as fact was improbable. Sometimes, opinions were used to refute other opinions. For example, with regard to the claim that Idrīs b. Idrīs was not of ʿAlid descent, Ibn Khaldun's point was not to necessarily prove the ʿAlid descent of Idrīs but to show that the denial there of had an unsound basis.

Ibn Khaldun's method in the *Muqaddima* was demonstration. He says very early on that:

It should be known that the discussion of this topic is something new, extraordinary, and highly useful. Penetrating research has shown the way to it. It does not belong to rhetoric, one of the logical disciplines (represented in Aristotle's *Organon*), the subject of which is convincing words by means of which the mass is inclined to accept a particular opinion or not to accept it. (*Muq.*, i, 56 [i, 78])

Ibn Khaldun did not introduce a new method in his scholarship. He was heir to the philosophers of Islam

who studied and improved upon the Greek methods of argumentation. However, his application of the method of the philosophers to historical phenomena was new. As Hodgson put it, Ibn Khaldun's science was meant to be 'a self-consistent body of demonstrable generalizations about historical change, generalizations which would in turn be based on premises taken from the demonstrated results of "higher", i.e., more abstract, sciences – in this case chiefly biology, psychology, and geography' (Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, ii. 479–80). These premises were the six *muqaddimāt*, that is, assertions whose demonstration does not fall within the scope of the new science. Furthermore and most significantly, his approach was decidedly materialistic in the sense that he accounts for the differences between Bedouin and sedentary society in terms of economic and geographical factors (Dale, 'Ibn Khaldun: The Last Greek', 440). Change in history is explained in terms of the interplay of political and economic factors and not spiritual factors such as divine intervention. This was an important reason why Ibn Khaldun achieved much fame and popularity in the West, particularly from the nineteenth century on.

Ibn Khaldun informs us that there was a time when the early speculative theologians (*mutakallimūn*) were strongly opposed to the study and teaching of the methods of argumentation. He was referring to theologians who argued that analogical reasoning should be opposed in Islam. Speculative theologians developed their science to defend rationally the articles of faith (*ʿaqāʾid al-īmān*) and did so with recourse to rational proofs. For example, they reasoned that as accidents existed and were created, and bodies were not free from accidents, it followed that something that is not free of created things (accidents) must itself be created. Having developed such arguments, they attempted to strengthen the proofs by proposing basic principles (*qawāʾid wa-uṣūl*)

that were to act as premises (*muqaddimāt*) for the proofs. Examples of these basic principles are the affirmation of atomic matter, atomic time and the vacuum, the denial of nature and an intellectual combination of quiddities and the affirmation of the existence of 'state'.

It then occurred to scholars, such as Shaykh Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī (d. 324/936), judge Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī (d. 402/1013) and Abū Isḥāq al-Isfarāyanī (d. 418/1027), that if the evidence marshalled in favour of the articles of faith was wrong, then things proven by them would be wrong as well. A refutation of the arguments for the articles of faith amounted to a refutation of the articles of faith themselves because the latter rest on the former (*Muq.*, iii. 95–6 [iii. 144–5]).

The speculative theologians hold that the five universals (genus, species, difference, property and general accident) and essences are mere mental constructs having no corresponding reality outside the mind. This means that the propositions upon which argumentation is predicated are wrong, and the idea of a rational cause is wrong (*Muq.*, iii. 96 [iii. 145]). Instead, they posited an atomistic or occasionalist view of the universe, one in which all effects are to be understood as direct creations of God rather than results of causes that are part of the nature of things (Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldûn's Philosophy of History*, 80; Ibn Khaldun, *Muq.*, iii. 96 [iii. 145–6]). In this way the pillars of logic are demolished. On the other hand, if the legitimacy of logic is maintained and its metaphysical foundations upheld, there is the danger of subjecting the articles of faith to refutation.

Ibn Khaldun was also critical of the scholars closer to his time, such as Fakhr al-Dīn b. al-Khaṭīb and Afḍal al-Dīn al-Khūnajī, who reduced logic to a discipline in its own right as opposed to being an instrument for the sciences (*Muq.*, iii, 95 [iii, 142–3]). Indeed, Ibn Khaldun's new science of human society was a product of the application of analogical

reasoning, specifically demonstration and dialectical argumentation, to history.

The materialism of Ibn Khaldun's mode of thought, of course, raises the question of the extent to which he was free from a theological approach to history. This issue was raised decades ago by H. A. R. Gibb, who discusses the observations of Ayad and Rosenthal, both of whom tend to downplay the religious element in Ibn Khaldun's science of society. Ayad says that Ibn Khaldun's doctrine of causality and natural law in history is in opposition to a theological view of history in which God intervenes in the affairs of humans. Furthermore, religion merely features as an important social-psychological factor in the process of historical change (Ayad, *Die Geschichte*, 51–3; 143, cited in Gibb, 'The Islamic Background', 27). Rosenthal takes a similar view, remarking that although Ibn Khaldun was a firm believer, religion is treated as simply one factor in the study of the state (Rosenthal, *Ibn Khalduns Gedanken*, 58, cited in Gibb, 'The Islamic Background', 27). Gibb, on the other hand, asserts that Ibn Khaldun's mode of thought is entirely compatible with a theological approach. His doctrine of causality and natural law is simply the *sunnat Allāh* (the way of Allah). This notion suggests that what appears to humans to be cause and effect is actually divine creation, the *sunna* of Allah (Gibb, 'The Islamic Background', 29).

However one reconciles Ibn Khaldun's study of history with his religious beliefs, the point that should be stressed is that his mode of thought is truly disciplined and systematic and is not a theological approach dressed up in rational terminology.

Ibn Khaldun on education and knowledge

Ibn Khaldun's thoughts on issues relating to education, pedagogy and knowledge are contained in Chapter Six of the *Muqaddima*. We noted earlier that the *Muqaddima* is premised on basic principles called *muqaddimāt,* which are presented most fully in Chapter One of the *Muqaddima*. The most important of them is the idea of the necessity of society. That idea, however, is to be understood in relation to another basic premise that is discussed as a preface to Chapter Six, namely the human ability to think, one of the characteristics that distinguish humans from other living beings. The ability to think results in the cultivation of the sciences. Humans do not create and develop the sciences in a social vacuum, but in the context of the society in which they live.

Ibn Khaldun tells us in his autobiography that he underwent a great pedagogical experience during his formative years, particularly under the intellectual mentorship of Al-Ābilī (*Autobiog.*, 31–2). During this time he became aware of faulty and ineffective practices in education that negatively affected the transmission of knowledge. Ibn Khaldun presents some interesting ideas in this respect in Chapter Six, discussed below.

HUMANS' ABILITY TO THINK

All living beings have awareness of things outside themselves via the senses of hearing, vision, smell, taste and touch. Humans have the added advantage of having perception of thinking. Through this faculty (*quwwa*) humans make representations (*suwar*) of the external world that are beyond sense perception (*Muq.*, ii. 337–8, [ii. 411–12]). Ibn Khaldun tells us that this is the meaning of the Qur'ānic vese: 'He gave you hearing and eyes and hearts' (*af'ida*, sing. *fu'ād*) (Q. 16. 78). The term *fu'ād* here refers to the ability to think. There are a number of levels of this faculty (*Muq.*, ii. 338, [ii. 412]).

The first level is the ability to make sense and order of things in the outside world that may appear to be arbitrary. It is through this discerning intellect (*'aql al-tamyīzī*) that humans are able to distinguish between what is useful and what is harmful. The second level is the ability to form ideas and develop behaviour that is necessary for dealing with fellow humans. This level of thinking involves apperceptions (*taṣdīqāt*) that develop through experience. It is referred to as the experimental intellect (*'aql al-tajrībī*). The third level is the ability to think that provides knowledge or opinions (*ẓann*) of things beyond sense perception. It involves both perceptions and apperceptions. This is called the speculative intellect (*'aql al-naẓarī*). Regarding perceptions and apperceptions Ibn Khaldun says the following:

They are arranged according to a special order, following special conditions, and thus provide some other knowledge of the same kind, that is, either perceptive or apperceptive. Then, they are again combined with something else, and again provide some other knowledge. The end of the process is to be provided with the perception of existence as it is, with its various genera,

differences, reasons, and causes. By thinking about these things, (man) achieves perfection in his reality and becomes pure intellect and perceptive soul. This is the meaning of human reality. (*Muq.*, ii. 338, [ii. 413]).

If we were to think of Ibn Khaldun's own work on history in these terms, we could say that the continuous exercise of perception and apperception with respect to a specific subject matter results in a theoretical understanding beyond sense perception that is founded on the nature of a thing, that is, its genera and differences and its origins, causes and effects. In modern terms this would be referred to as theory building.

Human thinking materializes in action. When thinking intends to effect something, it must understand the order of that thing, that is, its causes and its conditions. The process of thinking is such that the final result in the causal chain is the first thought (*Muq.*, ii. 339, [ii. 413]). For example,

if a man thinks of bringing into existence a roof to shelter him, he will progress in his mind (from the roof) to the wall supporting the roof, and then to the foundation upon which the wall stands. Here, his thinking will end, and he will then start to work on the foundation, then (go on to) the wall, and then (to) the roof, with which his action will end. This is what is meant by the saying: 'The beginning of action is the end of thinking, and the beginning of thinking is the end of action. (*Muq.*, ii. 339–40, [ii. 413–14])

The degree of humanity of a human being is determined by the degree to which an orderly causal chain can be established. To the extent that a causal nexus can be established at several levels, the degree of humanity is greater. Ibn Khaldun gives the example of chess players who are able to think three or five moves in advance. Thinking in an orderly manner about the political and social arrangements of life enables humans through tradition, learning and experience. This is the working of the experimental intellect,

which exerts itself after the discerning intellect is led to action (*Muq.*, ii. 340, [ii, 418–19]). However, it is the intellect at the next level, the speculative intellect, that creates the sciences. The speculative intellect enables humans to perceive existent things (*mawjūdāt*) as they are (*Muq.*, ii. 348, [ii. 424–5]). Before discussing the actual sciences that humans have acquired, developed and passed on through instruction, Ibn Khaldun discusses the classification of knowledge.

THE CLASSIFICATION OF KNOWLEDGE

The classification of knowledge in classical Islamic learning was important because it functioned as a guide to those who sought an understanding of the range of sciences in existence and the relationship between them. There was, therefore, a pedagogical dimension to the classification of sciences. This section discusses Ibn Khaldun's classification, his distinction between the intellectual and transmitted sciences, and the strengths and weaknesses of his scheme.

In Islam the sciences are considered to be one, as well as belonging to a hierarchical order (Nasr, *Islamic Science*, 13). Therefore, Muslim scholars always sought to elaborate a classification scheme that distinguished between different types of knowledge, including those that originated from the Muslims and those that were assimilated from other civilizations. As noted by Osman Bakar, this was a serious concern of Muslim scholars from al-Kindī in the third/ninth century to Shāh Walīullāh of Delhi in the twelfth/eighteenth century (Osman Bakar, *Classification*, 1).

According to Ibn Khaldun's scheme of classification (*aṣnāf al-ʿulūm*), there are two kinds of sciences that are cultivated and taught in cities. One is natural to humans and is guided by their capacity to think. These are the philosophical sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-ḥikmiyya al-falsafiyya*). Humans become acquainted

with the sciences under this category through the ability to think. The consideration of problems, arguments and methods arises from human perceptions. The second kind of knowledge is derived from the authority of religion and is referred to as the traditional sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-naqliyya*). The sciences in this category are reliant on knowledge derived from the authority of revelation. While there is a role for the human intellect in the traditional sciences, their basic character remains unchanged (*Muq.*, ii. 358, [ii, 436–7]). There is a third category that Ibn Khaldun discusses, that is, the magical sciences (*ʿulūm al-siḥr wa-l-ṭalismāt*), sciences that are forbidden by religious law. (See the table on the facing page.)

It is interesting to note that the science that Ibn Khaldun discovered, the science of human society (*ʿilm al-ijtimāʿ al-insānī*), is not mentioned in his classification of knowledge. As Lakhsassi says, it is 'unthinkable that a methodological work like the *Muqaddima*, in which the author treats the epistemological foundations of history as a science by bringing to light all kinds of errors into which the previous Muslim historians [had fallen], says nothing about this discipline in the chapter on the science' (Lakhsassi, 'Ibn Khaldūn and the Classification of the Sciences', 21). It is likely that Ibn Khaldun did not discuss his new science in Chapter Six because he had already clearly stated his view that it was to be seen as a branch of philosophy or *ḥikma*. This would mean that that it came under the category of philosophical sciences.

Another point concerns the sciences of magic. It is unlikely that Ibn Khaldun intended to classify them under the category of philosophical sciences. Neither are they religious sciences. Therefore, they are tentatively presented in a category of their own.

Ibn Khaldun's classification of knowledge

Traditional sciences (al-ʿulūm al-naqliyya)

A. Sciences of the Qurʾān (ʿulūm al-Qurʾān)
1. Interpretation (tafsīr)
2. Recitation (qirāʾat)
B. Sciences of the Arabic language (ʿulūm al-lisān al-ʿarabī)
1. Lexicography (al-lugha)
2. Grammar (al-nahw)
3. Syntax and style (bayān)
4. Literature (al-adab)
C. Sciences of Prophetic tradition (ʿulūm al-hadīth)
D. Jurisprudence (al-fiqh) and its principles (uṣūl al-fiqh)
E. Speculative theology (ʿilm al-kalām)
F. Sufism (ʿilm al-taṣawwuf)
G. Science of dream interpretation (ʿilm taʿbīr al-ruʾyā)

Philosophical sciences (al-ʿulūm al-hikmiyya al-falsafiyya)

A. Science of logic (ʿilm al-mantiq)
B. Physics (ʿilm al-tabīʿi)
1. Celestial and elementary bodies (al-ajsām al-samāwiyya wa-l-ʿanṣariyya)
2. Zoology
3. Botany
4. Chemistry
5. Minerals
6. Atmospheric sciences
7. Seismology
8. Psychology (ʿilm al-nafs)
9. Medicine (ʿilm al-tib)
10. Agriculture (ʿilm al-falāha)
C. Metaphysics (ʿilm al-ilāhī)
D. Mathematical sciences (al-taʿālīm)
1. Geometry (ʿilm al-handasa)
2. Arithmetic (ʿilm al-arthamāṭīqī)
3. Music (ʿilm al-musīqī)
4. Astronomy (ʿilm al-hayʾa)

Magical Sciences (ʿulūm al-sihr wa -l-talismāt)

A. Sorcery (ʿilm al-sihr)
1. Letter magic (ʿilm asrār al-hurūf)
2. Alchemy (ʿilm al-kīmiyāʾ)
B. Talismans (ʿilm al-talismāt)

A weakness of Ibn Khaldun's classification is that it is based on equating traditional sciences with religious sciences. His definition of traditional sciences was not sufficiently universal to embrace non-religious sciences or *naqlī* sciences, such as the sciences of language (Osman Bakar, 'Traditional Muslim Classifications', 9). His classification, it may be said, grants a limited role for the intellect in the religious sciences. According to Fazlur Rahman,

The most fateful distinction that came to be made in the course of time was between the 'religious sciences' (*ʿulūm sharʿīya*) or 'traditional sciences' (*ʿulūm naqlīya*) and the rational or secular sciences' (*ʿulūm ʿaqlīya* or *ghayr sharʿīya*) toward which a gradual stiffening and stifling attitude was adopted. (Rahman, *Islam and Modernity*, 33, cited in Osman Bakar, 'Traditional Muslim Classifications', 10)

Due to concern with success in the hereafter, the spread of Sufism, which emphasized the spiritual rather than the rational, and the greater employability of qadis and muftis, the religious sciences were prioritized (Rahman, *Islam and Modernity*, 33–4). An additional blow was struck by al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), who opposed the philosophy of al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037) and advised that their works be shunned lest their philosophy gain acceptance (Rahman, *Islam and Modernity*, 34).

Ibn Khaldun's discussion of the sciences is unlike traditional accounts of the classification of knowledge. He goes beyond an enumeration of the sciences in their respective categories. As Lakhsassi ('Ibn Khaldūn and the Classification of the Science', 22–23) says, his presentation of the classification of the sciences has three dimensions. The first is the historical dimension, which discusses the emergence and development of the various sciences in Muslim society. The second is the sociological dimension, which looks at the

various functions of different sciences in Muslim society. For example, Ibn Khaldun noted that astrology was a dangerous field because it was used to predict the downfall of a dynasty and encouraged its enemies and rivals to attack at a time that was determined by astrology to be advantageous.

We have (personally) observed much of the sort. It is, therefore, necessary that astrology be forbidden to all civilized people, because it may cause harm to religion and dynasty. The fact that it exists as a natural part of human perceptions and knowledge does not speak against (the need to forbid it). God and evil exist side by side in the world and cannot be removed. Responsibility comes in connection with the things that cause good and evil. It is (our) duty to try to acquire goodness with the help of the things that cause it, and to avoid the causes of evil and harm. That is what those who realize the corruption and harmfulness of this science must do.

This (situation) should make one realize that even if astrology were in itself sound, no Muslim could acquire the knowledge and habit of it. He who studies it and thinks that he knows it fully, is most ignorant of the actual situation. Since the religious law forbids the study of astrology, civilized people no longer gather to study it and to form classes for the study of astrology. Those who are eager to learn it – and they are very, very few – have to read the books and treatises on astrology in a secluded corner of their houses. They have to hide from the people and are under the watchful eye of the great mass. And then, astrology is a very complicated subject with many branches and subdivisions and is difficult to understand. How could people under such conditions acquire a mastery of it? (Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddima*, iii. 190–1[iii. 262–3]).

The third dimension is the epistemological one, in which Ibn Khaldun discusses each of the sciences in terms of their underlying philosophical principles (Lakhsassi, 'Ibn Khaldūn and the Classification of the Science', 23).

IBN KHALDUN'S REFUTATION OF PHILOSOPHY

Although Ibn Khaldun commented on many of the disciplines in his classification of the sciences, I have chosen to discuss his refutation of philosophy in order to bring out some of his characteristic views and their relevance for modern knowledge.

Ibn Khaldun begins his refutation with a definition of philosophy. There are thinkers who believe that the parts of existence perceptible by the senses as well as those beyond sense perception can be discerned through mental speculation (*anẓār al-fikriyya*) and intellectual reasoning (*aqyisa ʿaqliyya*) (*Muq.*, iii. 178 [iii. 246–7]). They also believe that the articles of faith can be established as being correct via speculation. Those with such beliefs are called philosophers (*falāsifa*, sing., *faylasūf*). They establish rules of intellectual speculation, referred to as logic (*manṭiq*). The process of abstraction from the senses results in progressively higher levels of abstraction until simple universal ideas are reached, which are the highest genera. Humans study abstract intelligibles (*maʿqūlāt al-mujarrada*) with the goal of perceiving existence as it is (*Muq.*, iii. 178–9 [iii. 246–7]). Furthermore, the philosophers believe that happiness consists of a perception of existence in combination with an acceptance of the soul of virtue (*faḍīla*) (*Muq.*, iii. 180 [iii. 249]). The leading proponent of these ideas was Aristotle. He was known as the First Teacher (*al-muʿallim al-awwal*) and was the first to present rules of logic systematically and to deal with their problems in an exhaustive manner. The most famous among the Muslims who adopted Aristotle's logic and developed philosophical views implied by this logic were al-Fārābī in the fourth/tenth century and Ibn Sīnā in the fifth/eleventh century (*Muq.*, iii. 180 [iii. 249–50]).

Ibn Khaldun's critique that the philosophers are wrong on several counts is rather technical in nature. First of all, it is wrong for Muslim philosophers, to derive existent things from the first intellect (*al-ʿaql al-awwal*) instead of from the Necessary Being (*al-wājib*). They neglect the levels of divine creation beyond the first intellect. They restrict themselves to the affirmation of the intellect and disregard what is beyond it, as if existence were that narrow (*Muq.*, iii. 181 [iii. 250]; Rosenthal, 'Ibn Jaldūn's Attitude to the Falāsifa', 78).

More important, however, is Ibn Khaldun's rejection of the claim that existing things can be perceived via speculation (*naẓar*). This concerns the philosophers' arguments about existent things beyond sense perception.

The essences of (the *spiritualia*) are completely unknown. One cannot get at them, nor can they be proven by logical arguments, because an abstraction of *intelligibilia* from the individual *existentia* of the outside world is possible only in the case of things we can perceive by the senses, from which the universals are thus derived. We cannot perceive the spiritual essences and abstract further quiddities from them, because the senses constitute a veil between us and them. We have, thus, no (logical) arguments for them, and we have no way whatever of affirming their existence. There are only available to us (in this connection) the situations in which perceptions of the human soul take place, and especially the dream visions which are within the intuitive experience of all. But beyond that, the reality and attributes of the (*spiritualia*) are an obscure matter, and there is no way to learn about them. Competent (philosophers) have clearly said so. They have expressed the opinion that whatever is immaterial cannot be proven by (logical) arguments, because it is a condition of (logical) arguments that their premises must be essential ones. The great philosopher Plato said that no certainty can be achieved with regard to the Divine, and one can state about the Divine only what is most suitable and proper that is, conjectures. If, after all the toil and trouble, we find only conjectures, the (conjectures) that we had at the beginning may as well suffice us. What use, then, do these sciences and the

pursuit of them have? We want certainty about the *existentia* that are beyond sensual perception, while, in their (philosophy), (those conjectures) are the limit that human thinking can reach. (*Muq.*, iii. 182 [iii. 252])

A human is composed of corporeal and spiritual parts. The spiritual part perceives both the spiritual and the corporeal. Corporeal perceptions occur through the intermediary of the brain and the senses, while spiritual perceptions do not have intermediaries (*Muq.*, iii. 182 [iii. 253]). Arguments and proof belong in the arena of corporeal perception (*madārik al-jasmāniyya*) (*Muq.*, iii. 183 [iii. 254]). Reality is too vast to be perceived by human reason, whether corporeally or spiritually (*Muq.*, iii. 184 [iii. 255]). The science of logic does not enable the philosophers to achieve their stated goals. The only use of philosophy is that it exercises the mind in the orderly presentation of proofs and arguments. The student should be clear that, while the science of logic is necessary to sound thinking, it can also do harm if applied to areas where it cannot yield the intended results (*Muq.*, iii. 185 [iii. 257]).

Ibn Khaldun's critique of the philosophers is really a critique of the science of logic as applied to all existing things. He was not an empiricist, as claimed by Rosenthal ('Ibn Jaldūn's Attitude to the Falāsifa', 76), in that he restricted the source of knowledge to sensory experience. On the contrary, he recognized other sources of knowledge but maintained that the science of logic had to be applied to domains that are appropriate, such as history. This view has great relevance to the modern social sciences in the Muslim world. It suggests that there is much to be learnt from both the philosophical and religious sciences in terms of their epistemologies and methods, even if specific doctrines of these sciences may not be of relevance to the social sciences.

IBN KHALDUN'S CRITIQUE OF SUFISM

Ibn Khaldun's critique of Sufism is another instance of the workings of the sociological mode of thinking. An account of it is instructive in that it reveals some aspects of his approach that focus on the social consequences of ideas and doctrines.

Sufism belongs to a group of sciences that originated in Islam. The way or *tarīqa* of those who later came to be referred to as Sufis, that is, the men of the first three generations of Islam, is considered the path of truth and guidance. The Sufi approach is founded on divine worship, devotion to God, on asceticism and an aversion to material splendours. Later on, as worldly interests overtook people, the terms *ṣūfiya* and *mutaṣawwifa* came to be used for those who retained the way of the first three generations. Ibn Khaldun cites ʿAbd al-Karīm b. Hawāzin al-Qushayrī (376–465/986–1072), who said that there is no etymology for the term *ṣūfī* in the Arabic language and that it was obviously a nickname. The latter also did not think it probable that the term was derived from *al-ṣafāʾ* (purity), *al-ṣuffa* (bench),[16] *al-ṣaff* (row)[17] or *al-ṣūf* (wool) (al-Qushayri, *Principles of Sufism*, 301–2, cited in Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddima*, iii. 49 [iii. 76]). Ibn Khaldun, however, was of the view that the term was derived from *al-ṣūf* because the Sufis wore woollen clothes as opposed to the luxurious garments worn by others (*Muq.*, iii. 49 [iii. 77]).

Ibn Khaldun tells us that the Sufis had a theory that humans have two forms of perception. There is the perception of the sciences, which may be certain (*yaqīn*), hypothetical

16 A reference to the ascetic people during the Prophet's time who would gather around benches in the mosque of Madina.

17 A reference to those who occupied the first row, either physically as in the congregational prayer, or metaphorically as in before the Truth (Rosenthal, *Ibn Khaldūn, The Muqaddima*, iii. 76; n. 455).

(*zann*), doubtful (*shakk*) or imaginary (*wahm*). There is also the perception of emotions (*ahwāl*), such as joy, grief and anxiety. Reason originates from perceptions and emotions and distinguishes humans from animals. For example, grief or joy originates from a perception of what is painful or pleasurable. Similarly, worship may lead to a particular state or station (*maqām*). The Sufi novice (*murīd*) progresses from one station to another on the basis of obedience and sincerity until he recognizes the oneness of God (*tawḥīd*) and achieves gnosis (*maʿrifa, ʿirfān*). To overcome shortcomings during this journey, the novice must engage in self-scrutiny. His acts of worship are not merely acts of obedience but are informed by ecstatic (*mawājid*) experiences that are the fruits of his self-scrutiny. Spiritual exertion, seclusion (*khalwa*) and the repetition of religious formulae (*dhikr*) precede the removing of the veil (*kashf*) of sense perception. The exercise of *dhikr* strengthens the power of inner perception of the divine worlds while external senses weaken. Knowledge gained from sense perception (*ḥiss al-ẓāhir*) and reasoning passes into inner perception (*ḥiss al-bāṭin*) or vision. This is the removal of the veil of sense perception.

The Sufis also had their own set of technical terms for their own discipline, which scholars, such as al-Qushayrī, ʿUmar b. Muḥammad al-Suhrawardī (539–632/1145–1234) and Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, wrote about it in a systematic fashion.

It seems that Ibn Khaldun approved of Sufism as understood in the above manner. He said that the practice of the men around the Prophet and the early Sufis mentioned in the *Risāla* of al-Qushayrī practised Islam this way (*Muq.*, iii. 50–2 [iii. 77–82]). Nevertheless, Ibn Khaldun was extremely critical of later Sufism as can be seen from the following fatwa that is worth quoting at length:

The path of the so-called Sufis [*mutaṣawwifa*] comprises two paths. The first is the path of the Sunna, the path of their forefathers [*salaf*], according to the Book and Sunna, imitating their righteous forefathers among the Companions [of the Prophet] and the Followers.

The second path, which is contaminated by [heretical] innovations, is the way of a group among the recent thinkers [*muta'akhkhirūn*] who make the first path a means to the removal [*kashf*] of the veil of sensation because that is one of its results. Now among these self-styled Sufis are Ibn ʿArabī, Ibn Sabʿīn, Ibn Barrajān, and their followers among those who travelled their way and worshipped according to their [heretical] sect [*niḥla*]. They have many works filled with pure unbelief and vile innovations, as well as corresponding interpretations of the outward forms [of scripture and practice] in the most bizarre, unfounded, and reprehensible ways – such that one who examines them will be astounded at their being referred to religion [*al-milla*] or being considered part of the Sharia.

Now the praise of these people by someone is certainly not a proof [of the validity of their views], even if the person praising them has attained whatever excellence he may have attained. For the Book and Sunna are more excellent and a better testimony than anyone.

So as for the legal *judgement* [*ḥukm*] concerning these books containing those beliefs that lead [people] astray and their manuscripts that are found in the hands of the people, such as the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* and *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiya* of Ibn ʿArabī, the *Budd* [*al-ʿārif*] by Ibn Sabʿīn, and Ibn Qasī's *Khalʿ al-naʿlayn* – the *judgement* concerning these books and their like is that they should all be eliminated wherever they are found, either through burning them in fire or by washing them with water until all trace of the writing is effaced because of the general positive benefit [*maṣlaḥa*] for religion through effacing unsound beliefs. Therefore, it is incumbent on the public authority [*walī al-amr*] to burn these books in order to eliminate the general cause of corruption [which they constitute], and it is incumbent on whoever is able to do so to burn them. (Ibn Khaldūn, *Shifāʾ al-sāʾil*, 110–11, cited in Morris, 'An Arab Machiavelli?', 249–50).

These caustic remarks about Sufism resonate with his views in the *Muqaddima*:

Among the adepts of mysticism are fools and imbeciles who are more like insane persons than like rational beings. Nonetheless, they deservedly attained stations of sainthood and the mystic states of the righteous. The persons with mystical experience who learn about them know that such is their condition, although they are not legally responsible. The information they give about the supernatural is remarkable. They are not bound by anything. They speak absolutely freely about it and tell remarkable things...

If this is correct, it should be known that the state of these men is frequently confused with that of the insane, whose rational souls are corrupted and who belong to (the category of) animals. There are signs by which one can distinguish the two groups. One of them is that fools are found devoting themselves constantly to certain *dhikr* exercises and divine worship, though not in the way the religious law requires, since, as we have stated, they are not legally responsible. The insane, on the other hand, have no (particular) devotion whatever.

Another sign is that fools were created stupid, and were stupid from their earliest days. The insane, on the other hand, lose their minds after some portion of their life has passed, as the result of natural bodily accidents. When this happens to them and their rational souls become corrupt, they are lost.

A further sign is the great activity of fools among men. It may be good or bad. They do not have to have permission, because for them there is no legal responsibility. The insane, on the other hand, show no (such) activity. (*Muq.* i. 172–4 [i. 224–6])

Some of the specific criticisms of Ibn Khaldun against the doctrines and practices of the Sufis are enumerated as follows:

1 The Sufi doctrine of the oneness of creation is identical to Christian views of the Messiah and Imāmī Shīʿa views concerning their Imāms (*Muq.*, iii. 54–6 [iii. 83–7]).
2 The Sufi theory of manifestation (*tajallī*) cannot be

properly understood because of its obscurity (*ghumūḍ*) and incomeprehensibility (*inghilāq*) (*Muq.*, iii. 56 [iii. 89]).

3 The Sufi theory of poles (*quṭb*) is a mere rhetorical figure of speech, not founded on logical proofs and not based on religious arguments, and identical with the theory of the extremist Shiʿa on the issue of hereditary succession (*Muq.*, iii. 59 [iii. 93]).

4 Sufi discussions on the removing of the veil and related matters are ambiguous (*mutashābih*), based as they are on ecstatic experience, and are to be left alone as are the ambiguous statements of the Qurʾān (*Muq.*, iii. 63 [iii. 101]);

5 Sufis who are in a state of removal from sense perception may make ecstatic utterances (*shaṭaḥāt*), the content of which may be objectionable to orthodox Muslims (*ahl al-sharʿ*). Ibn Khaldun cites the example of al-Ḥusayn b. Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj (244–309/858–922) (*Muq.*, iii. 63–4 [iii. 101–2]).

6 Ibn Khaldun tends to treat aspects of Sufism as part of the suspect supernatural practices associated with magic, sorcery and astrology, even though this supernatural knowledge or activity was not intended (*Muq.*, i. 171 [i. 222]; Morris, 'An Arab Machiavelli?', 256).

How are we to reconcile Ibn Khaldun's positive statements regarding the Sufis of the first three generations of Muslims and those mentioned in al-Qushayrī's *Risāla* with the fatwa and the comments just noted above? Obviously Ibn Khaldun made a distinction between the early Sufis and those who came later. What were the characteristics of the later Sufis that made their knowledge and practices so reprehensible? One point has to do with the distinction between the sobriety (*ṣaḥw*) of the Sufis on the one hand and their ecstatic or 'intoxicated' (*sukr*) states on the other.

He saw the latter as resulting in acts of irresponsibility, such as practices of worship that fell outside religious law. These aspects of Sufism were to be discouraged because of the social function of religion (Syrier, 'Ibn Khaldūn and Islamic Mysticism', 298). Some of Ibn Khaldun's criticism of the Sufi tradition was directed more towards its negative social and political implications rather than its beliefs, as suggested by Morris ('An Arab Machiavelli?', 254). An example Ibn Khaldun gives is the popular views regarding the appearance of the Mahdī. The ignorant masses often believed in rumours and traditions about the appearance of the Mahdī, giving them false hopes and causing them to sacrifice wealth and money to these claimants. Ibn Khaldun associates propaganda for the cause of the Mahdī with Sufism that was influenced by extremist Shiʿa views (*Muq.*, ii. 139–40; 145–8 [ii. 186–7; 196–200]). He implicated Sufism in many uprisings with messianic pretensions (Ceyhan, 'Ibn Khaldun's Perception of Sufis', 490–1).

It is worth concluding this section on Ibn Khaldun's rather hostile views about Sufism with Morris's insight that these denunciations had something to do with his perception of the connection between the growing influence of Sufism on the intellectual and political life of his time and the material decline of the Maghreb and Andalusia (Morris, 'An Arab Machiavelli', 276).

Finally, it should be mentioned that Ibn Khaldun certainly did not attack belief in the supernatural. He wrote about the three kinds of souls that humans may possess. The first is the soul that cannot move beyond the perception of the senses and imagination. People with these capacities acquire knowledge through perception and apperception. The second kind of soul has a power of spiritual intellect that goes beyond sense perception and is found among the saints and people of divine knowledge. The third kind of

soul is of the angelic type and is the soul of a prophet who by the will of God has temporarily cast off his humanity to be in a state of revelation (*Muq.*, i. 155–6; 145–8 [i. 197–9]). In addition to the obvious differences between prophets on the one hand and diviners on the other from a theological point of view, there are also social differences. The difference between prophet and diviner corresponds to that between social welfare and social harm. In other words, there is a difference in social function (Asatrian, 'Ibn Khaldun on Magic and the Occult', 92).

IBN KHALDUN ON EDUCATION

Ibn Khaldun had definite views on the proper methods of teaching and learning. This section covers his views on learning capacity, memorization, curriculum, teacher strictness and the breadth and depth of education. He was a keen observer of the relationship between education and society and saw education as having multiple objectives. In this respect he had some interesting ideas:

1   The order in which subjects are introduced determines success in the outcome of learning.
2   The abundance of scholarly works constitutes an obstacle to learning.
3   The proliferation of handbooks providing abridgements is detrimental to learning.
4   Effective methods of instruction must be adhered to.
5   The study of auxiliary sciences should not be prolonged and extended.
6   Severe punishments should not be meted out to students.
7   Education is greatly enhanced by travel in quest of knowledge and meeting with scholars.

In an interesting section on the instruction of children and the various methods of instruction to be found in different Muslim cities, Ibn Khaldun remarks that the qadi Abū Bakr Ibn al-ʿArabī, made an important point in saying that instruction in the Arabic language and poetry should come before instruction in the other sciences because of the corrupt nature of the language in their times. Then students should learn arithmetic and then Qurʾānic studies. Teaching the Qurʾān first would not yield the best results, as the students would be reading about things they did not understand. Instead, they should begin with the study of the principles of Islam, the principles of jurisprudence, disputation (*jadal*) and the *ḥadīth* and its sciences. Ibn Khaldun opines that the advice of the judge is good but is pessimistic about its being accepted because of the weight of accepted custom. Preference was given to the teaching of the Qurʾān first because of the desire for blessings and rewards of the hereafter as well as anxiety about delaying the teaching of it to the children (*Muq.*, iii. 223 [iii. 304–5]). Indeed, as listed above, Ibn Khaldun alerts us to the many bad practices in the instruction of students, and he does appear to have been negative about the likelihood of reform.

Making an excessive amount of scholarly works available to students constitutes an obstacle to learning. Along with this comes the need to master a great deal of technical terminology and methods used in those works. Giving the example of Maliki jurisprudence, Ibn Khaldun says that jurisprudence has so many different methods that it would be more efficient if students received more focused instruction, as the differences are just variations of the same subject. Ibn Khaldun also suggests it is unnecessary for students to gain a complete mastery of the principles and details of philology, as that would require a lifetime of study of a subject that is merely an instrument and means for further studies (*Muq.*, iii. 209–10 [iii. 289–90]).

Another obstacle to scholarship is the abundance of handbooks. These contain brief presentations or summaries of the contents and methods of the sciences. Ibn Khaldun says that reading these handbooks results in corruption (*fasād*) of the learning process in that the novice is confused by knowing the final results before he has learned about the process. Studying abridgements also requires a great deal of time as their contents are complex and difficult to understand. Furthermore, the scholarly habits that students develop from studying abridgements are inferior to those developed from studying the lengthier, original works. Studying the latter requires more repetition, which is a superior learning habit (*Muq.*, iii. 211–12 [iii. 290–1]).

Yet another obstacle to effective learning is ineffective methods of instruction. Teaching is only effective when it proceeds slowly and in stages. The teacher should begin with the introduction of the principles. While doing so, the teacher observes the student's ability to grasp what is introduced and gauges the student's ability to handle the rest of the material. The teacher then goes over the material for a second time and instructs at a higher level. Instead of a summary, the teacher provides full commentaries and explanations. The student's grounding in the discipline becomes deeper. The teacher may then take the student through the subject another time, dealing with all vague, obscure or complicated matters. Effective instruction requires this threefold repetition. Ibn Khaldun notes that in his time many teachers were ignorant of this method. Instead, they began instruction by exposing students to complicated scientific problems that students were not ready for. Students in the beginning only gain an approximate and general understanding of a problem. If they are exposed to the final results when they are unable to comprehend the problem, they may be discouraged from learning altogether. This is due to the failure of the teacher

to teach according to the age and receptivity of the student. The teacher should also avoid prolonging instruction by not allowing too many breaks or long intervals between sessions. This is because long interruptions disrupt the continuity between the different aspects of a subject and negate the beneficial effects of repeated and continuous activity. Finally, it is not advisable to expose students to two disciplines at the same time. Dividing their attention between two subjects affords less opportunity for the mastery of one (*Muq.*, iii. 213–15 [iii. 292–5]).

Another obstacle discussed by Ibn Khaldūn is the prolongation of the study of the auxiliary sciences. The sciences that are studied for their own sake are the religious, physical and metaphysical sciences. The auxiliary sciences that are prerequisites to the study of other sciences include Arabic philology, arithmetic and logic. These latter sciences should only be studied to the extent that they are required as tools in the other sciences. The purpose of instruction in the auxiliary sciences is lost if they cease to be auxiliary sciences. Furthermore, prolonging their instruction and treating them as sciences that are wanted for their own sake diverts attention from the more important sciences (*Muq.*, iii. 218–19 [iii. 298–300]).

Ibn Khaldūn also advises that severe punishment not be meted out to students. He draws a parallel with the impact of harsh treatment on slaves and servants. Those subject to harsh treatment feel oppressed and are prone to being lazy, dishonest and insincere. They resort to deceit in order to avoid further harsh treatment until such behaviour becomes habitual. They no longer strive to develop the virtues required for good character and do not reach their human potentials (*Muq.*, iii. 224–5 [iii. 305–6]).

The personal relationship between student and teacher is vital to the learning process. Ibn Khaldūn goes so far

as to suggest that students should travel to meet with the authoritative scholars of their time. Personal contact with teachers results in knowledge, superior character and firmly entrenched virtue (*Muq.*, iii. 226 [iii. 307]).

We have only touched on Ibn Khaldun's views and ideas on knowledge and its acquisition. There are many other aspects of his observations on education that have to do with politics, language, city life and social class. When his classification of knowledge, critique of specific sciences and views on the methods and procedures of education are taken together, he can be seen to be a pedagogical innovator. According to Cheddadi ('Ibn Khaldūn', 8), Ibn Khaldun does not approach the topic of education in the traditional way of his time, that is, as a philosopher, theologian, moralist or jurist. Rather he approaches education as an historian and sociologist. As noted by Tibawi ('Philosophy of Muslim Education', 87), Ibn Khaldun covers education in terms of its social, political and economic aspects as might a modern educationist, although within the framework of tradition *he* is original.

The reception of Ibn Khaldun

This discussion on the reception of Ibn Khaldun is divided into three parts: the reception of his work in the pre-modern Muslim world; the discovery of Ibn Khaldun in the West; his marginal status in contemporary social sciences, both in Muslim societies and in the West. During his own time and the decades following his death, Ibn Khaldun had a small following of students and scholars, some of whose works are with us today. However, the cultivation of Khaldunian scholarship did not continue unabated up to the present. There was a revival of interest in him during the late Ottoman period. It is likely that the Ottoman interest led to his being discovered by the Europeans, who discussed his work in some detail from the nineteenth century on. It can be said that subsequent Arab and other Muslim interest in Ibn Khaldun was to some extent, but not exclusively, a function of European interest in him, as well as a growing interest in the social sciences among Muslims, of which Ibn Khaldun was seen as a precursor by many in the West. Indeed, much of the initial interest in Ibn Khaldun in the West was because he was seen as a discoverer of sociology as well as a precursor of many ideas in various social sciences. Muslims, on the other hand, were interested in his work for other reasons as well, including the idea that he was the last great thinker of pre-modern Muslim times.

THE PRE-MODERN RECEPTION OF IBN KHALDUN

In this section, we touch on works on Ibn Khaldun by scholars who lived in periods prior to or areas uninfluenced by the modern social sciences. It is a widely accepted view that Ibn Khaldun did not have a following of scholars until after he was 'discovered' and promoted by the Europeans. Prior to that, it was held, he did not have followers among his contemporaries in North Africa and Egypt or elsewhere in the Muslim world who wrote what may be called Khaldunian works of history.

As we shall see, there were a number of scholars who were influenced by Ibn Khaldun's writings and whose works have come down to us. On the other hand, it is true that no Khaldunian school of history or human science developed out of this interest (Enan, *Ibn Khaldūn*, 74). In the case of Egypt, Enan's explanation as to why this may have been the case is interesting. Even before his arrival in Egypt, Egyptians were aware of the negative views that Ibn Khaldun had about them. In what appears to be a geographical explanation of human character, Ibn Khaldun said:

In the same way, the inhabitants of coastal regions are somewhat similar to the inhabitants of the south. The air in which they live is very much hotter because of the reflection of the light and the rays of (the sun from) the surface of the sea. Therefore, their share in the qualities resulting from heat, that is, joy and levity, is larger than that of the (inhabitants of) cold and hilly or mountainous countries. To a degree, this may be observed in the inhabitants of the Jarîd in the third zone. The heat is abundant in it and in the air there, since it lies south of the coastal plains and hills. Another example is furnished by the Egyptians. Egypt lies at about the same latitude as the Jarîd. The Egyptians are dominated by joyfulness, levity, and disregard for the future. They store no provisions of

food, neither for a month nor a year ahead, but purchase most of it (daily) in the market. Fez in the Maghrib, on the other hand, lies inland (and is) surrounded by cold hills. Its inhabitants can be observed to look sad and gloomy and to be too much concerned for the future. Although a man in Fez might have provisions of wheat stored, sufficient to last him for years, he always goes to the market early to buy his food for the day, because he is afraid to consume any of his hoarded food (*Muq.* i. 139 [i. 175]).

Here distinction in character is made between the North Africans and the Egyptians on account of differences in climate. The verdict on the Egyptian character is not flattering and would have been received by Egyptians with considerable discomfort and anger (Enan, *Ibn Khaldūn*, 75). Nevertheless, Ibn Khaldun's lectures were well attended, and many profited from them, some of whom wrote both for and against Ibn Khaldun's science of human society.

One of the fiercer critiques of Ibn Khaldun was by al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, an historian and famous *ḥadīth* scholar. Although he praised Ibn Khaldun's knowledge of the affairs of state, eloquence and appreciation of poetry, he derided his science of human society, saying that it was made to look excellent because it was embellished with rhetoric.

Ibn Khaldun had great admirers among the scholars of the Maghreb and the East. The most well-known among his followers in Egypt was Taqī al-Dīn al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1441), who attended his lectures in Cairo as a youth (Issawi, *An Arab Philosophy of History*, 24; Abdesselem, *Ibn Khaldun et ses lecteurs*: 14; Enan, *Ibn Khaldūn*, 75). The most important follower was Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad Ibn al-Azraq al-Andalusī from North Africa (831–96/1428–91). His *Badāʾiʿ al-silk fī ṭabāʾiʿ al-mulk* is clearly influenced by Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddima*. Ibn al-Azraq summarizes the *Muqaddima* and also discusses themes such as the relationship between ethics and royal authority (*mulk*) (al-Azraq, *Badāʾiʿ al-silk fī ṭabāʾiʿ al-mulk*;

Abdesselem, *Ibn Khaldun et ses lecteurs*, 19).

However, it was another two centuries before Ibn Khaldun featured as an important part of intellectual discourse, this time among Ottoman scholars and statesmen discussing the future of the Ottoman state. It is interesting to note that the Ottoman interest in Ibn Khaldun can be contrasted with the relative absence of such interest among Arabs, Iranians and other Muslims during this period.

The first Ottoman scholar to attempt to think in Khaldunian terms was Kātib Çelebi (d. 1657). A productive writer, he wrote twenty-one works covering history, biography and geography (Gökyay, 'Kâtib Çelebi'). In one of them, titled *Düstürü'l-amel li-ıslāh ıl-ḫalel* (The Mode of Procedure for Rectifying the Damage), Ottoman history is presented in terms of Ibn Khaldun's cyclical stages of rise and decline (Fleisher, 'Royal Authority, Dynamic Cyclism', 199). He discusses the causes of state financial deficits and puts forward solutions.

After Kātib Çelebi, Ottoman historian Na'imâ's (d. 1716) writings were strongly influenced by both Ibn Khaldun and Kātib Çelebi. In his history, *Târîḫ-i Na'îmâ*, he discusses Ibn Khaldun's cyclical theory of the rise and decline of states and the conflict between nomadic and sedentary societies (ibid, 200). Na'îmâ takes up the idea of the 'circle of equity or circle of justice', that is, eight interconnected principles of good government. This he attributed to İnalızâde 'Alî Çelebi's well-known *Aḫlâk-i ʿAlâ'î,* who in turn derived it from Ibn Khaldun (Thomas, *A Study of Naima*, 78). Ibn Khaldun himself refers to various versions of the 'circle of justice', which consist of statements of political wisdom arranged around the circumference of a circle (*Muq.*, i. 58–9 [i. 81–2]; see above, ch. 2, pp. 48–9).

The eight principles are (Fleischer, 'Royal Authority, Dynamic Cyclism', citing İnalızâde III: 49):

1 There can be no royal authority without the military.
2 There can be no military without wealth.
3 The subjects produce the wealth.
4 Justice preserves the subjects' loyalty to the sovereign.
5 Justice requires harmony in the world.
6 The world is a garden; its walls are the state.
7 The Holy Law (Sharīᶜa) orders the state.
8 There is no support for the Sharīᶜa except through royal authority.

The circle of equity cited by Na'îmâ is as follows:

1 There is no *mulk* and no *devlet* (state) without the military and without manpower.
2 Men are to be found only by means of wealth.
3 Wealth is only to be garnered from the peasantry.
4 The peasantry is to be maintained in prosperity only through justice.
    5 And without *mulk* and *devlet* there can be no justice.

The closing of the circle reflects the idea that the military and manpower are essential to justice. As noted by Thomas, the circle was an ideological tool that functioned to justify the need for the domestic reforms drawn up by the Ottoman vezier, Hüseyin Köprülü, to protect the empire from its European enemies (Thomas, *A Study of Naima*, 78).

Many Ottoman scholars, following Kâtib Çelebi and Na'îmâ, believed that the Ottoman dynasty was heading towards decline. Ibn Khaldun had become well-established as he was considered to have furnished a model that explained this decline. The Ottoman statesmen were, of course, interested in institutional and administrative reforms that might halt or reverse the decline (Fleischer, 'Royal Authority, Dynastic Cyclism', 200). It was only later in the nineteenth

century that non-Ottoman thinkers began to take an interest in Ibn Khaldun. Among those influenced by Ibn Khaldun were the reformers, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, Muḥammad ʿAbduh and Rashīd Riḍā (*Abdesselem, Ibn Khaldun et ses lecteurs,* 60 ff.).

THE DISCOVERY AND RECEPTION OF IBN KHALDUN IN MODERN SOCIAL SCIENCE

The discovery and reception of Ibn Khaldun in the West are important because of the impact they still have on the place that Ibn Khaldun has in the social sciences today. The attention given to Ibn Khaldun, particularly in the nineteenth century, was during the formative period of many disciplines in the modern social sciences. As these sciences spread across the Arab and Muslim world from Europe from then onwards, a handful of Muslim and Western scholars began to refer to Ibn Khaldun when reflecting on historical and contemporary developments, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa. As in the West, Ibn Khaldun began to receive a great deal of attention among Arab and other Muslim social scientists. Hundreds of articles, doctoral theses, books and conference papers were published on various aspects of his thought. To some extent, this was due to the great enthusiasm with which he had been received by some of the giants of Western thought. For the purpose of this discussion on how Ibn Khaldun was received in the modern social sciences, it is convenient to consider both the types of attitudes towards Ibn Khaldun and the types of scholarly work about him. With regard to attitude, the three types of writings that are referred to here are eulogy, censure and defence.

Eulogizing Ibn Khaldun

Ibn Khaldun was probably first known to Europe in 1636 in a Latin translation by Ibn ʿArabshāh's biography of Tamerlane (Tīmūr; Teymūr-e Lang), titled *Fī akhbār Taymūr ʿajāʾib al-maqdūr (Viate et rerum gestarum Timuri, qui vulgo Tamerlanes dicitur, Historia)*, the fourteenth-century conqueror of vasts parts of Asia and the founder of the Timurid dynasty (1370–1405) in Central Asia. ʿArabshāh refers to the historic meeting between Ibn Khaldun and Tīmūr (Fischel, *Ibn Khaldūn and Tamerlane*, 3). About sixty years later, Barthelemy d'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque orientale, ou dictionnaire universel contenant tout ce qui regarde la connaissance des peuples de l'Orient* was published posthumously and contained (ii. 418) a biography of Ibn Khaldun. The *Bibliothèque orientale* was for the most part an abridged translation of the great bibliographic work in Arabic by Kātib Çelebi, titled *Kashf al-zunun*.

Translations of Ibn Khaldun into European languages followed about a hundred years later. Extracts of his work were published in French by Silvestre de Sacy in 1810, in German by Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall in 1818 and 1822. The French translation of the *Muqaddima,* undertaken by William MacGuckin de Slane, appeared between 1862 and 1868.

Among the well-known European scholars who commented on Ibn Khaldun's contribution to the understanding of history, one of the earliest was Jacob Gråberg Graf von Hemsö (1776–1847), Swedish and Norwegian Consul for Morocco and Tripoli, a post to which he was appointed in 1815, and Knight of the Sardinian Order of St. Mauritius and Lazarus. His article (1834) titled 'An Account of the Great Historical Work of the African Philosopher Ibn

Khaldún' begins with the observation that few peoples in history had produced so ingenious a scholar and statesman as Ibn Khaldun. At that time Ibn Khaldun's name was almost unknown in Europe. And, in line with the common prejudices of that time, Gråberg goes on to say that, although Ibn Khaldun did not totally renounce the prejudices of Islam, he at least had done so more than any other Arab historiographer! (Gråberg, 'An Account', 387, 388).

An Orientalist slant is also found in Reynold A. Nicholson's (1868–1945) *A Literary History of the Arabs* (1907). Nicholson said that, alone among the Muslims, Ibn Khaldun had a comprehensive and philosophical view of history, sought to explain the hidden causes of events and formulated laws of the rise and decline of states. Nicholson held (incorrectly) that Ibn Khaldun had no followers among the Muslims, that his intellectual descendants were Europeans, such as Machiavelli, Vico and Gibbon (ibid, 438–9). He regarded Ibn Khaldun as one of only two exceptions to the mass of unoriginal writings that appeared among Muslims since the Mongol invasions (ibid, 443). Nicholson balanced his praise for Ibn Khaldun by saying that he was not capable of implementing the revolution in historical science, despite having discovered its principles and methods (ibid, 452–3).

Along the same lines as Gråberg and Nicholson, the Spanish philosopher, José Ortega y Gasset (1883–1955) found in Ibn Khaldun an explanation for a puzzling fact that he had identified in connection with the North African town of Melilla, conquered by the Spaniards in 1497. In an essay that first appeared in 1934, Ortega observed that for the last four hundred years, the people of Melilla and those in its surroundings had been in a reciprocally hostile relationship – a peculiarly African problem that no European could understand, and no native African could explain as Africans

were not thinkers. For Ortega, Ibn Khaldun was the exception – he helped make sense out of the chaos of North African history by reducing the events to the relationship between two modes of living, the nomadic and the sedentary (Ortega y Gasset, 'Abenjaldún nos revela el secreto', 98).

Robert Flint, in his *History of the Philosophy of History* (1893), is more objective in his assessment of Ibn Khaldun:

As regards the science or philosophy of history, Arabic literature was adorned by one most brilliant name. Neither the classical nor the medieval Christian world can show one of nearly the same brightness. Ibn Khaldun (AD 1332–1406), considered simply as an historian, had superiors even among Arabic authors, but as a theorist on history he had no equal in any age or country until Vico appeared, more than three hundred years later. Plato, Aristotle and Augustine were not his peers, and all others were unworthy of being even mentioned along with him. He was admirable alike by his originality and sagacity, his profundity and his comprehensiveness. He was, however, a man apart, as solitary and unique among his co-religionists and contemporaries in the department of historical philosophy as was Dante in poetry or Roger Bacon in science among theirs. Arabic historians had, indeed, collected the materials which he could use, but he alone used them. (Flint, *History of the Philosophy of History* , 57).

Flint did not single out Arabs or Muslims as typically incapable of original or innovative thought; he saw Ibn Khaldun as singularly unique among both Muslims and Europeans.

The pioneering historian of science, George Sarton (1884–1956) also moved away from the perspective of Gråberg and Nicholson. He wrote:

Ibn Khaldun was a historian, politician, sociologist, economist, a deep student of human affairs, anxious to analyse the past of mankind in order to understand its present and its future. Not only is he the greatest historian of the Middle Ages, towering like

a giant over a tribe of pygmies, but one of the first philosophers of history, a forerunner of Machiavelli, Bodin, Vico, Comte and Curnot. Among Christian historians of the Middle Ages there are but one or two who can perhaps compare with him, to wit, Otto von Freising and John of Salisbury, and the distance between them and him is great indeed, far greater than the distance between him and Vico. What is equally remarkable, Ibn Khaldun ventured to speculate on what we should call to-day the methods of historical research... (Sarton, *Introduction to the History of Science,* iii. 1262)

Sarton regarded Ibn Khaldun and other Muslim thinkers as part of his own intellectual tradition. The Oriental–Greek–Arabic network is 'our network', he said and blamed the neglect of Arabic science in the West on the fact that Arabic studies were confined to Oriental studies. Sarton went so far as to suggest that knowledge of the Arabic language was as essential as Greek, Latin and Hebrew for the student of medieval science (Sarton, *A Guide to the History of Science* (1952), 28–9; 30–1).

As for the field of economics, two economists in the West should be mentioned. Joseph Schumpeter wrote (*History of Economic Analysis* [1954], 74) that, in regard to the history of economic analysis 'we may safely leap over 500 years to the epoch of St Thomas Aquinas (1225–74)'. Subsequently referred to as the Schumpeterian Gap, some have suggested that the idea that five hundred years can be ignored represents an ethnocentric view of the history of the discipline, as it effectively excludes the contributions of thinkers from various civilizations.[18] Schumpeter only made passing references to Ibn Khaldun. Joseph Spengler, on the other hand, was far more attentive to and more appreciative

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18   See Ghazanfar, 'History of Economic Thought'; Hosseini, 'The Inaccuracy'; and Hosseini, 'Contributions of Medieval Muslim Scholars'.

of his contributions to the field of economics.[19] Writing in 1963–4, he referred to Ibn Khaldun as the greatest economist of medieval Islam, and concluded: 'one is compelled to infer from a comparison of Ibn Khaldun's economic ideas with those set down in Muslim moral-philosophical literature that the knowledge of economic behaviour in some circles was very great indeed, having been acquired through contact with cumulating experience, and that one must turn to the writings of those with access to this knowledge and experience if one would know the actual state of Muslim economic knowledge.' Although Ibn Khaldun did not identify economics as a science because of his concern with elaborating a new science of human society, economic issues had a high priority in his theory of the rise and decline of states, which was understood in terms of politico-economic cycles (Schumpeter, 'Economic Thought of Islam', 285–6, 289). Spengler highlights six topics discussed by Ibn Khaldun of relevance to economics, namely; supply, demand and price; rank, obsequiousness and profit; surplus, luxury and capital formation; and consumption and expenditure (ibid, 297–303).

Ibn Khaldun's concern with the differences between nomadic and sedentary societies, cities and their locations, and the relationship between the modes of making a living and urban life were all of interest to geographers.[20] He was also recognized by sociologists, particularly in the nineteenth century, as a founder of the discipline with which he is in fact most associated.[21] Ibn Khaldun is extensively discussed

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19 To be sure, it is not merely attitude or the availability of sources that distinguish Schumpeter from Spengler. This is not the place, however, to engage in a comparative study of the two.

20 See James and Martin, *All Possible Worlds*, 53.

21 See: von Kremer, 'Ibn Chaldun und seine Kulturgeschichte' (1879); Gumplowicz, *Soziologische Essays* (1899); Maunier, 'Les idées sociologiques' (1915); Oppenheimer, *System der Soziologie* (1922–35), ii. 173 ff., iv., 251 ff.

by Becker and Barnes in their *Social Thought from Lore to Science* ([1938] 1961, i. 266–79), noting that he was the first to apply modern-like ideas to the study of society. Barnes asserts that Ibn Khaldun (rather than Vico) has 'the best claim to the honor of having founded the philosophy of history, and his view of the factors involved in the historical process was sounder and more modern than that of the Italian of three centuries later' (Barnes, 'Ancient and Medieval Social Philosophy', 25–6).

One of the more important treatments of Ibn Khaldun, in terms of its possible impact on the social sciences, is that of Arnold Toynbee:

...an Arabic genius who achieved in a single 'acquiescence' of less than four years' length, out of a fifty-four years' span of adult working life, a life-work in the shape of a piece of literature which can bear comparison with the work of Thucydides or the work of a Machiavelli for both breadth and profundity of vision as well as for sheer intellectual power. Ibn Khaldun's star shines the more brightly by contrast with the foil of darkness against which it flashes out; for while Thucydides and Machiavelli and Clarendon are all brilliant representatives of brilliant times and places, Ibn Khaldun is the sole point of light in his quarter of the firmament. He is indeed the one outstanding personality in the history of a civilization whose social life on the whole was 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short'. In his chosen field of intellectual activity he appears to have been inspired by no predecessor, and to have found no kindred souls among his contemporaries, and to have kindled no answering spark of inspiration in any successors; and yet, in the Prolegomena (*Muqaddamāt*)[22] to his *Universal History* he has conceived and formulated a philosophy of history which is undoubtedly the greatest work of its kind that has ever yet been created by any mind in any time or place. (Toynbee, *A Study of History*, iii. 321–2)

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22 This should be *Muqaddima*. Possibly Toynbee did not realize that the *muqaddimāt* refer to the prefatory discussions in the *Muqaddima*.

The background to Toynbee's interest in Ibn Khaldun was his concern with the question of the growth of civilizations. Ibn Khaldun provided a model with which the phenomenon of what Toynbee characterized as 'arrested civilizations' could be understood (ibid, iii. 24). Toynbee's role in the popularization of Ibn Khaldun in Western academia was crucial in that he possibly inspired others to apply Ibn Khaldun's model to the study of history on the pattern that is suggested in his (Toynbee's) own work (Irwin, 'Toynbee and Ibn Khaldun', 464–5). Katsiaficas makes an interesting point that praise 'can be a means of obscuring the contributions of Ibn Khaldun'. As a result of viewing Ibn Khaldun from within the Western tradition of history, Toynbee fails to understand him in terms of his own intellectual context of the dialogue between Hellenist and Islamic thought (Katsiaficas, 'Ibn Khaldun: A Dialectical Philosopher', 47).

Aziz Al-Azmeh has made the point that such treatments of Ibn Khaldun are problematic in that they are founded on an evolutionist approach. The past is being read in terms of what is considered to be the endpoint of history, so that Ibn Khaldun would then be seen as a precursor of modern sociology. Such a reading robs Ibn Khaldun of his cultural specificity (Al-Azmeh, *Ibn Khaldūn in Modern Scholarship*, 160). His concepts, theoretical perspective and world-view are then anachronistically given a modern slant and meaning. Al-Azmeh's point is valid, but it need not lead us to deny the possibility or usefulness of suggesting similarities between Ibn Khaldun's science of human society and modern sociology and to merge the two when that is appropriate (this is discussed further in the next chapter). Ibn Khaldun should be studied in a way that does not strip him from his original context; thereafter, we are free to interpret and appropriate his work for our own purposes.

Censure and endorsement of Ibn Khaldun

One of the earliest scholarly studies on Ibn Khaldun challenges the claim that Ibn Khaldun discovered a new science later claimed by moderns as akin to sociology. Taha Hussein, in his doctoral dissertation on Ibn Khaldun, declared him to be a weak scholar. He recognized some originality in Ibn Khaldun's work in that he was the first to abandon the annalist style, and he acknowledged Ibn Khaldun's mastery of the facts of Berber history. However, he felt that Ibn Khaldun's knowledge of the Arab East was poor (Hussein, *Etude analytique* (1918), 25–6). More importantly, he doubted that his new science could be counted as sociology, as had been claimed by scholars such as Gumplowicz and Ferrero ('Un sociologo arabo' [1896]). He viewed the notion that Ibn Khaldun was a sociologist as a gross exaggeration because his object of study, that is, the state, was too limited to be the object of study of sociology (Hussein, *Etude analytique*, 75). While there is some truth in Hussein's criticisms, his censure of Ibn Khaldun is excessive and may be due to an Egyptian nationalist perspective (Tomar, 'Between Myth and Reality', 602). [23] Errors and problems in Ibn Khaldun's writings do not detract from the value of the new science he formulated, a point that Hussein does not concede.

The more intellectual critiques of Ibn Khaldun ask how successfully he applied the theoretical perspective developed in the *Muqaddima* to the history in *Kitāb al-ʿIbar*. One of the first to make this point was Stefano Colosio ('Contribution a l'étude d'Ibn Khaldoun' (1914), cited in Enan, *Ibn Khaldūn*, 127–8; see also Talbi's article 'Ibn Khaldūn' in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, iii. 829), where he suggests that it would be unreasonable to expect one man to write an historical

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23 For a more detailed account of Arab critiques of Ibn Khaldun see Cengiz Tomar, 'Between Myth and Reality'.

work according to the demands of the *Muqaddima*. In the translator's introduction, Rosenthal says that Ibn Khaldun does not deserve such criticism, as his discussion of North African history in *Kitāb al-'Ibar* was obviously guided by the framework established in the *Muqaddima*. I would add that *Kitāb al-'Ibar*, particularly the parts of it dealing with the Maghreb, are arranged in a manner consistent with the perspective of the *Muqaddima*. We must remember that in the *Muqaddima*, Ibn Khaldun says that at one level history is merely a collection of the events and facts of history. These are reported in *Kitāb al-'Ibar*. The science of human society, on the other hand, deals with the inner meaning of history and is elaborated in the *Muqaddima*. In this sense, Ibn Khaldun did apply his framework to his historical work.

THE MARGINAL STATUS OF IBN KHALDUN IN MODERN SOCIAL SCIENCE

In order to address the question of the marginal status of Ibn Khaldun in contemporary social science, it is useful to have an idea of the types of scholarship that exist on him. A more detailed discussion is presented in chapter 6; here, I merely touch on the different types of scholarship and discuss how they reflect his marginal status in the modern social sciences.

Of course, Ibn Khaldun is not 'marginal' in the sense of 'neglected' – he has become the subject of much discussion in many of the social sciences over the last few decades. However, he exists on the margins of the social sciences as he generally does not appear in textbooks or courses on a par with Marx, Weber, Durkheim and other founders of sociology and social science disciplines. A major reason for this is that Ibn Khaldun writings have not been worked on by theorists in such a way as to construct a modern sociological

theory. His works are frequently mentioned and discussed but rarely theoretically encountered and reconstructed as sociology. Because of the prevalence of Eurocentrism, in which European concepts and categories dominate, non-Western thinkers such as Ibn Khaldun remain marginal (Alatas, 'Khaldunian Applications', 270–1). Writing and research on Ibn Khaldun can be seen to fall under the following categories:

1 Biographies.
2 Works on Ibn Khaldun as a precursor of the social sciences.
3 Comparative studies between Ibn Khaldun and scholars of the Western canon.
4 Broad surveys of the ideas contained in the *Muqaddima*;
5 Epistemological and methodological aspects of Ibn Khaldun's theory.
6 Theoretical critique and analysis.
7 The application of his theoretical framework to empirical situations.

A glance at any extensive bibliography on Ibn Khaldun reveals that most work about him falls under the first four categories. There are far fewer works that systematically deal with methodological and theoretical issues related to the *Muqaddima* and *Kitāb al-ʿIbar*. If Ibn Khaldun is to be a part of the mainstream social sciences, what is needed is more methodological and theoretical work that facilitates the application of his theoretical framework to empirical situations, historical or contemporary. There is a need for more systematic expositions, analyses and critiques of his theory with reference to the main concepts utilized, the type of evidence marshaled, his assumptions regarding the subject matter and the question of empirical verification. If we define marginality in terms of the lack of theoretical

application, it can be said that today Ibn Khaldun is generally marginalized by social scientists. In the next chapter, a case is made for the contemporary relevance of his works with some illustrations of how his theory can be applied to historical and contemporary empirical cases.

The significance of Ibn Khaldun for the modern social sciences

In terms of the themes, concepts and framework of the *Muqaddima* that make up the theory of the rise and decline of dynasties, Ibn Khaldun is certainly relevant to the modern social sciences. Nevertheless, there has been a dearth of attention to his works, especially in the social science curricula in universities. Academic writings on Ibn Khaldun tend to be confined to specialists on Middle Eastern and North African history and usually do not involve applications of his framework. A case can be made for the development of what we might call Khaldunian social science, which would combine his theoretical insights with those of the modern social sciences. The use to which Ibn Khaldun's works are put should go beyond claiming that he is a forerunner of the modern social sciences or using him as an ideological justification for colonial rule (see Carré, 'Ethique et politique chez Ibn Khaldûn', 109). What I offer here are some examples of what Khaldunian social science would look like, to illustrate the potential of his works to contribute to the development of the social sciences.

The significance of Ibn Khaldun's works for the social sciences today can be seen at three levels:

1   The development of alternative arguments for application to old topics in Islamic studies;

2   The development of Khaldunian sociology in the context
    of the modern social sciences;
3   The implementation of Ibn Khaldun's approach.

ALTERNATIVE ARGUMENTS IN ISLAMIC STUDIES

Students of Ibn Khaldun have often observed new or fresh
arguments that he brought to old issues. An example is his
discussion of the controversial matter of the caliphate. There
are five preconditions governing the office of the caliphate:
the caliph should have knowledge, probity, competence, be
of sound mind and body and be of Qurayshī descent (*Muq.*,
i. 333 [i. 394–5]). The last condition is the controversial
one. Ibn Khaldun notes that most scholars are of the view
that it obtains even if the condition of competence is not
fulfilled. He argues that if the group feeling of the caliph
is diminished to the extent that he is unable to rule with
strength, his competence will also be diminished. If compe-
tence is eliminated as a requirement, this reflects on the other
conditions such as knowledge and probity. In other words,
if Qurayshī descent is made a necessary condition, it may
mean that the other conditions are dropped, contradicting
the general consensus (*Muq.*, i. 335 [i. 399]).

Ibn Khaldun notes that the power of the Quraysh had
indeed diminished. Their group feeling had disappeared for
the reasons explained by his general theory of the rise and
decline of states. They were unable to fulfill the duties of
the caliphate, and their place was taken by non-Arabs. This
resulted in confusion among the scholars, who went to the
extent of denying Qurayshī descent as a condition (*Muq.*, i.
334 [i. 397]).The wisdom of insisting on that condition needs
to be examined (*Muq.*, i. 335 [i. 399]).

The condition of Qurayshī descent is not simply a matter of the blessing (*baraka*) that may accrue to people as a result of having a caliph of Qurayshī descent. The purpose of the Sharīʿa is not to provide blessings. If there are conditions regarding the descent of the caliph, they are specified because of the public interest. Ibn Khaldun's contribution to the debate lies in his specification of the public interest in this case. He says that the public interest is the regard for group feeling. Possession of strong group feeling by the caliph relieves him from opposition and dissent and means that he is accepted by the community. At one time the Quraysh satisfied this condition because of their strong group feeling, and they commanded the respect and obedience of Arabs and non-Arabs alike. They represented the strongest group feeling available to the Arabs at the time. This explains why Qurayshī descent was a condition of the caliphate (*Muq.*, i. 335–6 [i. 399–400]).

The condition of Qurayshī descent, is thus linked to the conditions of group feeling and competence. From here Ibn Khaldun derives a more general condition. The caliph should belong to a people who possess a group feeling that is superior to those of their contemporaries in order to secure their obedience. The group feeling would have to be comprehensive enough to include all the regions under the caliphate. Such was the case with the Qurayshī group feeling, founded on the all-encompassing message of Islam. These conditions did not exist in later times, when each region had people representing superior group feelings (*Muq.*, i. 336–7 [i. 401]). The sociological point made by Ibn Khaldun is that the nature of things is such that it attests to the need for group feeling in leadership. Only those who possess superiority of group feeling can lead a nation or people. Religious law would hardly stipulate a requirement as narrow as the Qurayshī descent of the caliph if it contradicted the

requirements of existence (*al-amr al-wujūdī*) (*Muq.*, i. 337 [i. 402]).[24]

While there is much scope for the development of new arguments with respect to traditional topics in Islamic studies, we can go beyond them to the creation of a school of sociology based on Ibn Khaldun's work.

DEVELOPING KHALDUNIAN SOCIOLOGY

Ibn Khaldun developed a new science that shares many features with modern sociology as well as other modern social sciences.[25] Yet, there has been little effort to develop his theories by applying them to historical and empirical cases and integrating them into the modern social sciences. There are clearly areas for the further development of sociology and other social sciences that could take Ibn Khaldun's ideas seriously into account. Three examples are presented here:

1 Bringing Ibn Khaldun into existing theoretical perspectives in the social sciences.
2 Developing Khaldunian concepts.
3 Topics encouraged by a reading of Ibn Khaldun.

Bringing Ibn Khaldun into existing theoretical perspectives in the social sciences

Here I consider a way of combining the idea of 'the Asiatic mode of production' and Ibn Khaldun's account of the rise and decline of dynasties.

In describing the Asiatic mode of production, Marx and Engels assumed that Asiatic societies, such as those in India,

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24 But see Al-Azmeh, *Ibn Khaldun*, 85.
25 As noted by Lacoste (*Ibn Khaldun: The Birth of History*, 7), using modern concepts to discuss or apply Ibn Khaldun's ideas does not mean we are attributing modern ideas to him.

were stagnant and had no known history: the history of Asiatic societies was merely that of 'the successive intruders who founded their empires on the passive basin of that unresisting and unchanging society' (Marx & Engels, *On Colonialism*, 81). One possible response to this is the view that the 'Asiatic mode of production' or 'oriental despotism' idea is inaccurate when we understand that so-called Oriental societies underwent change on a by no means small scale, as indicated in Ibn Khaldun's theory of the rise and fall of states in the Middle East and North Africa (Andreski, *The Uses of Comparative Sociology*, 172–3). However, the kind of dynamism captured by Ibn Khaldun's theory does not in itself constitute a critique of the Asiatic mode of production idea. We need to distinguish between stagnation on the one hand and the absence of the prerequisites of modern capitalism or the presence of barriers to capitalism on the other. When Marx said that Asiatic societies had no history, he meant that they lacked dynamism in the direction of the development of modern capitalism due to the absence of certain prerequisites of capitalism. Marx did not mean that Asiatic societies were literally stagnant. Rather, they did not move in the direction of capitalist development in the way that Europe did.

Ibn Khaldun has also been used to corroborate the theory of the Asiatic mode of production. According to the theory, the 'oriental despot' of the Asiatic state derives his power from the fragmented nature of his society. Asiatic society is stratified into clans, tribes and ethnic groups and lacks unity along class lines, allowing the despot to rule his subjects with a greater centralization of power than was possible in feudal Europe. Ibn Khaldun's theory of the rise and decline of dynasties provides an explanation of the despot's basis of power. It explains the lack of social integration in sedentary societies and thereby supports the view of the insignificance

of class as a prime mover of history (see Turner, *Marx and the End of Orientalism*, 41–3). Engels provides us with an account of a Khaldunian-type nomadic–sedentary dialectic without any reference to Ibn Khaldun:

The townspeople grow rich, luxurious and lax in the observation of the 'law'. The Bedouins, poor and hence of strict morals, contemplate with envy and covetousness these riches and pleasures. Then they unite under a prophet, a Mahdi, to chastise the apostates and restore the observation of the ritual and the true faith and to appropriate in recompense the treasures of the renegades. In a hundred years they are naturally in the same position as the renegades were: a new purge of the faith is required, a new Mahdi arises and the game starts again from the beginning. (Engels, 'On the History of Early Christianity', 276)

It is true that if considered in the abstract, that is, out of historical context, Ibn Khaldun's and Engels' models appear to offer support for the theory of the Asiatic mode of production. The power of the ruler is derived from his ability to gain tribal military support. This support facilitated the establishment of new dynasties and formed the basis of power in areas that did not have large-scale public works, such as the Ottoman empire and Safavid Iran. However, it must be understood that such a basis of power was also the reason for the downfall of the state. Furthermore, in Ibn Khaldun's theory, the tribe did not play the role, alongside the village and the clan, in fragmenting society. His is not a theory of fragmented society and cannot be used in support of it.

Here Abrahamian's discussion of the basis of power in the Asiatic state is useful. He discerns in Marx and Engels two different explanations for power. In one explanation, the strength of the state was derived from its control and organization of public works, from the large bureaucracy that administered those works. In the second explanation,

much of the empire was divided into villages that had individual organizations and constituted little worlds in themselves. According to this explanation, state strength was derived from the weak and fragmented nature of society (Abrahamian, 'Oriental Despotism', 6). Whatever the relative merits of these two arguments in explaining the basis of despotic power, we may consider Ibn Khaldun's idea of the state as a critique of the theory of the Asiatic mode of production. Whatever factors may account for the strength of the ruler, the presence of nomadic society and the sharing of nomads in the group feeling contributed to the eventual decline of the Asiatic state.

The Ottoman dynasty survived for centuries and managed to avoid decline and decay within four generations. In Iranian history on the other hand, there were periodic rises and falls of dynasties carried by tribal groups. Both the Ottoman and Safavid empires were established as a result of the movements of nomadic peoples (Wittek, 'Les role des tribus', 666). In both cases the rulers attempted to diffuse the power of tribal groups once their power bases had become established. For example, the Safavid Shāh 'Abbās weakened the *qizilbash* of the Turkoman tribes by recruiting Georgian slaves for his army. The Turks invented the *devşirme* system to reduce dependence on tribal military support. In Iran, for centuries up until the twentieth, tribal military power remained a factor in bringing dynasties to power. The question is why the Ottomans seemed to have been better able to control the tribes than the Iranians.

One reason has to do with differences in the geographical locations of the tribes. The mountainous terrain of Iran is such that centralization was more difficult than in the Ottoman empire. Furthermore, Iran's many tribes (estimated at half of the total Iranian population at the beginning of the nineteenth century: Issawi, *Economic History of Iran*, 20)

occupied large geographical areas (Keddie, 'Class Struggle and Political Power', 306). In the Ottoman empire, on the other hand, the tribes were in areas away from the centre. Another important difference between the two is that in the Iranian military institution of the *tuyūl*, the *tuyūldār* were drawn from the tribal population, while their Ottoman counterparts, the *timar* holders, were generally not taken from the tribal population.

As mentioned earlier, the Ottomans reduced their dependence on tribal military power through the *devşirme* system. A similar system instituted by Shāh ʿAbbās was designed to replace reliance on tribal khāns with Georgian and Armenian converts. The system succeeded in Turkey but not in Iran because the Iranian state was a great deal more dependent on the tribes for its military force (Lambton, *Qajar Persia*, 61). The proximity of tribal groups to the central state in Iran, coupled with the fact that they were superior warriors, made them an indispensable source of power but at the same time a constant threat to the authority of the ruler. Iranian history is testimony to this, the state having been subject to periods of breakdown during which various tribal forces came to power. For example, in the eighteenth century the Afshars, Zands and Qajars competed for and dominated power. The tribes were divided into five major ethnic groups, Iranian, Kurdish, Arab, Turkoman, and Baluch. Of particular importance, as far as the rise of the Safavid state is concerned, were the Turkoman tribes, which provided the tribal military support behind the Safavids' rise to power. Despite the obvious Khaldunian structure of Safavid history, there has been no systematic attempt to explain Safavid state formation in terms of Ibn Khaldun's theory.

A Khaldunian explanation of Safavid history is promising in that it can overcome certain deficiencies that arise from the

application of Marxist models to the study of the Safavids' rise and decline. While Marxist perspectives provide the tools with which to describe the Safavid political economy, the Khaldunian approach enables us to understand the broader dynamics of Safavid history. The Khaldunian approach on its own does not provide a means to conceptualize the Safavid political economy; the Marxist approach is not helpful when it comes to explaining the dynamics of its history. The rise and decline of the Safavid state can be explained in terms of Ibn Khaldun's cyclical theory of state formation, while the Safavid political economy can be described in terms of modes of production, such as the pastoral nomadic mode of production, by Marxist theory. The interaction between the modes of production and the state can be explained in terms of Ibn Khaldun's theory of the rise and decline of states.

Developing Khaldunian concepts

An example of a Khaldunian concept relevant to the study of the modern world is that of authority. *Khilāfa* refers to an Islamic political institution, which endorses and enables the behaviour required by religious insight into interests in both this and the other world. Worldly and otherworldly interests are interrelated as worldly interests are considered in terms of their value for the other world. The caliphate, as an institution, substitutes for the Prophet as lawgiver and functions to protect religion and exercise leadership (*Muq.*, i. 327–8 [i. 387–8]). The head of the Muslim state during the *khilāfa* period, the *khalīfa* (caliph) was therefore the keeper and enforcer of the Sharīʿa. The *khilāfa* period was brief and is usually seen to characterize the rule of the three or four *khulafāʾ al-rashidūn* or rightly-guided caliphs. The Umayyad dynasty, which followed the rightly-guided caliphs, represented a transition to *mulk* or kingship. Given that society needs a restraining influence in order to minimize

conflict among its members, it follows that the one who has the role of restrainer must have a group feeling superior to others', otherwise he cannot fill that role (*Muq.*, i. 226 [i. 284]). Kingship differs from caliphal authority in that it is founded on the ability of the ruler to rule by force rather than by popular allegiance to a regime upholding a divine order.[26]

Although the dynastic rulers continued to take the title of caliph, many were not caliphs in the strict sense of the term, as they ruled by force and not by allegiance to a divine order. Thus, in the period of kingship, as Ibn Khaldun notes, there was a strong element of arbitrariness in the sense that people frequently had their property confiscated and suffered other forms of injustice, such as the imposition of forced labour and the collection of taxes that were not justified on the basis of religious law (*Muq.*, ii. 80 [ii. 103–4]). Ibn Khaldun says: 'Government decisions are as a rule unjust because pure justice is found only in the legal caliphate that lasted only for a short while' (*Muq.*, ii. 221 [ii. 285]). He also says that the decisions of rulers, 'as a rule, deviate from what is right' (*Muq.*, i. 326 [i. 385]).

The period of caliphal authority, the immediate succession to the Prophet, was described by Max Weber as one of charismatic leadership (Weber, *Economy and Society*, ii. 1120). I do not believe this to be entirely accurate. The caliphate period as described by Ibn Khaldun bore some resemblance to Weber's rational–legal authority, that is, authority, 'resting on a belief in the legality of enacted rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands'. Furthermore, 'obedience is owed to the legally established impersonal order' (ibid, i. 215). During the period of kingship, obedience was not owed to the caliph as

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26 See above, ch. 2, pp. 71–2. For a more detailed account of *mulk* and its types, see Rabī', *The Political Theory of Ibn Khaldūn*, ch. 5.

such, as would have been the case with traditional authority, nor was his exceptional or exemplary character the only or most important aspect of his office, as would have been the case with charismatic authority. Obedience was owed to the divine order, and the caliph was merely the representative of the Prophet. I do not mean to exaggerate the similarities between caliphate and legal authority but only wish to refer to them. In Weber's legal authority, the 'members of the organization, insofar as they obey a person in authority, do not owe this obedience to him as an individual, but to the impersonal order' (ibid, i. 218). In the case of caliphal authority, this impersonal order was a divine one. The caliph was subject to the laws of the divine order in much the same way that the head of a modern state is 'himself subject to an impersonal order by orienting his actions to it in his own dispositions and commands' (ibid, 217).

With the establishment of the Umayyad dynasty, we have the transition to kingship or what approaches Weber's patrimonialism. Ibn Khaldun's description of injustice in terms of the precarious position of the Muslim commercial classes vis-à-vis the rulers corresponds to the 'unpredictability and inconsistency on the part of court and local officials and variously benevolence and disfavor on the part of the rulers and his servants' (ibid, ii. 1095). These accounts of the concepts of authority by Ibn Khaldun and Max Weber are meant to suggest the potential for concept formation in the social sciences that takes into account the modern Western tradition and the Khaldunian one.

Topics encouraged by a reading of Ibn Khaldun

Our interest in developing Khaldunian sociology also takes us to topics that remain important in our times and should be developed. An example is his study of corruption.

Among Muslim scholars, Ibn Khaldun should be particularly mentioned as one who studied the phenomenon of corruption. He was not only a theoretician but a judge and government official who experienced the benefits and pitfalls of high office and had much exposure to corrupt acts. In the *Muqaddima,* he explains the emergence of corruption as largely the result of the development of a luxurious lifestyle. There is a close relationship between luxury and desire on the one hand and corruption on the other. Ibn Khaldun understood dynasties as going through five stages of development, which are discussed in detail in Chapter Three of the *Muqaddima.* The first stage is the overthrow of the preceding dynasty and the appropriation of its royal authority. The spirit and practice are relatively egalitarian as the group feeling (between the ruler and members of his tribe) is strong, and the ruler has no interest in engaging in exclusionary practices. During the second stage, the ruler consolidates his power and begins to exclude his people from having a share in his kingship. The people of his descent are exchanged for clients because the latter have less claim to kingship (*Muq.,* i. 296–7 [i. 353–4]). The third stage is that of leisure (*farāgh*) and the emergence of certain types of desire (*nuzū⁽*). This is a very important stage as it is when the desire for acquisition of property, the erection of monuments and the quest for fame, takes hold. Tax collection and government expenditure are more systematically administered so as to finance the ruler's objects of desire and pay bounties and salaries to his people, clients, soldiers and guests (*Muq.,* i. 297 [i. 354]). While the fourth stage is the dynasty's maintenance of what was achieved in the previous stages, the fifth stage is one of waste and squandering. Luxury in earlier stages of the dynasty has a positive function in that a tribe that has just acquired royal authority reproduces more and acquires more clients and followers (*Muq.,* i. 294 [i. 351–2]). But, in

the fifth stage, the wealth accumulated by previous rulers is distributed to a narrower inner circle of followers and clients. At the same time, the ruler attempts to alienate the clients and followers of his predecessors. Funds are diverted from the salaries of soldiers to personal projects. Rulers also resort to torturing tax collectors and other officials and appropriating money from those who themselves may have accumulated money via illegal means (*Muq.*, ii. 71 [ii. 93]). This is the stage at which the dynasty becomes senile (*Muq.*, i. 297–8 [i. 355]). Corruption, the abuse of office for personal gain, emerges in that funds meant for government expenditure are diverted to the followers and clients of the ruler.

Ibn Khaldun sees this as part of the natural development of a dynasty. The goal of civilization is sedentary society and the luxury that it offers (*Muq.*, ii. 229 [ii. 296]). Once the dynasty is established and a more sedentary culture takes root among the ruler and his people, the satisfaction of desire through the consumption of luxury commodities and services drives up prices, customs duties and expenditure. The corruption is caused by the inhabitants' efforts to maintain luxurious lifestyles. It should be made clear that what Ibn Khaldun means by corruption or *fasād* has to do with decay and immorality and involves lying, gambling, cheating, fraud, theft, perjury and usury (*Muq.*, ii. 227 [ii. 293]). *Fasād* also includes corruption in the modern sense of the term, that is, 'the subordination of public interests to private aims involving a violation of the norms of duty and welfare...' (Alatas, *Problem of Corruption*, 9). Corruption does not merely refer to the quality of acts but to a quality of character (*khulq*) that is a result of sedentary life (*Muq.*, ii. 229 [ii. 296]).

In addition to the possible Khaldunian topics just mentioned, there is a need to consider new topics that arise as a result of reading his works. For example, Ibn Khaldun

discusses in some detail the meaning and significance of Jewish history from the point of view of the framework established in the *Muqaddima*. It would be interesting to see, on the one hand, how his interpretative accounts of Jewish history corroborate the theoretical perspective established in the *Muqaddima*, and, on the other, how far the application of that perspective to Jewish history enabled him to transcend the stereotypes about the Jews among other Muslim scholars, both during his time and today.[27] Another example is the study of desire and leisure. Desire and leisure play an important role in the development and decay of sedentary societies and dynasties and are aspects of his theory that have not received sufficient attention.[28]

THE KHALDUNIAN APPROACH

Another way in which Ibn Khaldun should be seen as being of continuing significance is his approach rather than the theory itself. I illustrate this point with an example that is not taken from the *Muqaddima*. This is the event of the killing of the Jews of the Banū Qurayḍa in Madina in 5/627, discussed briefly in Chapter 2. After his arrival in Madina, the Prophet made several agreements with the Jews there. Here it is necessary to refer once again to a basic principle of interpretation established by Ibn Khaldun, who warned against uncritically accepting historical information as transmitted, without knowledge of the principles of politics and culture (*Muq.*, i. 13–14 [i. 16]).

On the other hand, to establish the truth and soundness of information about factual happenings, a requirement to consider is the conformity (or lack of conformity) of the reported

27 See Kalman Bland, 'An Islamic Theory of Jewish History'.

28 See Mushsin Mahdī, *Ibn Khaldūn's Philosophy of History*, 176 ff., and Hilmi Ibrahim, 'Leisure, Idleness and Ibn Khaldun'.

information with general conditions. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate whether it is possible that the (reported facts) could have happened. This is more important than, and has priority over, personality criticism. For the correct notion about something that ought to be can be derived only from (personality criticism), while the correct notion about something that was can be derived from (personality criticism) and external (evidence) by (checking) the conformity (of the historical report with general conditions).

If this is so, the normative method for distinguishing right from wrong in historical information on the grounds of (inherent) possibility or absurdity, is to investigate human social organization, which is identical with civilization. (*Muq.*, i. 55–6 [i. 76–7])

The interpretation of the events related to the killing of the men of the Banū Qurayḍa is possibly a case of non-conformity of the reported information to general conditions.

One of the hallmarks of the formative period of Islam was the drafting of a document called the *Ṣaḥīfa,* which contained a series of agreements between the Quraysh, the Anṣār of Madina and the Jews of Madina and detailed the privileges, rights and responsibilities of each group. Provisions for the Jews, as non-Muslims, are summarized as follows (Ahmad, *Muhammad and the Jews,* 46):

1   All groups are to be part of the *umma.*
2   The security of God is equal for all the groups.
3   Non-Muslim members of the *umma* have political and cultural rights equal to the Muslims and freedom of religion and autonomy.
4   Non-Muslims will join Muslims in the armed defence of the *umma* and share the cost of war.
5   Non-Muslims will not be obliged to take part in the religious wars of the Muslims.

In 627 CE, during their war against the people of Madina, the Quraysh besieged the city at the Battle of the Trench

(*ghazwat al-khandaq*). The Banū Qurayḍa entered into negotiations with the Quraysh, reneging on the agreements in the *Ṣaḥīfa*. The Prophet got wind of these negotiations, which for various reasons fell through. Upon the order of the Prophet, the Muslims besieged the men of the Banū Qurayḍa. The widely accepted account of what happened is found in Ibn Isḥāq's (d. 151/768) biography available in Ibn Hishām's recension, *Kitāb Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*.

The siege of about five thousand of the Qurayḍa lasted for twenty-five days. During the siege negotiations between the Jews and the Muslims took place. For the sake of the Banū Aws, old allies of the Banū Qurayḍa, the Prophet appointed as arbitrator Saʿd ibn Muʿādh from the Aws. Saʿad asked the Prophet and the Aws if they would accept the terms of his judgement. Upon receiving their agreement, he gave the judgement that the men should be killed, the property divided and the women and children taken as captives. The Banū Qurayḍa then surrendered. The Prophet ordered that they be held in the quarters of a woman in Madina and trenches dug at the market. The Qurayḍa men were brought out in groups, beheaded and their heads thrown into the trenches. Ibn Isḥāq reports that 600 to 900 men were executed (cited in Ahmad, *Muhammad and the Jews*, 72). Barakat Aḥmad has provided a thorough analysis of the reports concerning the executions and presents a number of reasons why he doubts that the event happened in the way reported and handed down from generation to generation. These include the following:

1   The credibility of Ibn Isḥāq had been called into question by some of the scholars of Islam, most notably Mālik b. Anas (ibid, 11–12);
2   None of the Jewish reporters or reporters who were Jewish converts to Islam who were part of Ibn Isḥāq's

chain of transmission in his biography of the Prophet mentioned the mass killing (ibid, 14–16);

3   Historical works of the Jews up until the nineteenth century do not contain accounts of the mass execution (ibid, 24).

Inspired by Ibn Khaldun, Aḥmad makes some interesting observations that further weaken the accepted version of the story. He notes Ibn Khaldun's rule that it is necessary to investigate the possibility or impossibility of reported events. He makes a few interesting points in this regard:

1   Madina in the time of the Prophet was not equipped to imprison and execute 600 to 900 men in a day. To begin with, there would have been the problems associated with the disposal of the dead bodies (ibid, 85).
2   ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, later the fourth caliph, was known for his gallantry and sympathy and was far from being a hard-hearted executioner. He was often affected by his relatively few acts of killing, legitimate as he would have seen them. Yet, there is no recollection in his sermons, letters and discourses collected in the *Nahj al-Balāgha* of such an event (ibid, 86–7).
3   It is strange that none of the Jews of Qurayḍa who were to be executed, with one exception, attempted to escape death by conversion to Islam. Nor were there any reports of attempts to escape, again with one exception (ibid, 84, 85).
4   It is strange that the Prophet would have brought 5,000 Jews, 900 of whom were to be executed, to Madina, a distance of about six to seven hours on foot from where the Banū Qurayḍa lived. It would have been more efficient to carry out the executions closer to their homes (ibid, 84).

This is not the place to go into a lengthy discussion on the killing of the men of Qurayḍa in which the various arguments for or against the conventional account can be assessed. The purpose here is to illustrate how Ibn Khaldun's approach invites a critical perspective on Islamic history, a perspective that has often not been taken seriously, particularly with regard to the formative period of Islam.

CONCLUSION

To the extent that there is interest in the history of the social sciences and their pre-modern heritage, Ibn Khaldun will be seen as a founder or precursor. Interest in him, however, should not be confined to that. Nor should his works be viewed merely as sources of information about North African history. Ibn Khaldun remains underutilized as a source of concepts for the modern social sciences. Even when his work is studied, it is usually within the context of Western concepts and theoretical perspectives. There is a lack of attention to intellectual and research activities that would lead to the development of Khaldunian social science. Stressing the need for more work to develop Khaldunian social science is part of the politics of knowledge. The politics of knowledge does not merely have consequences for the relative hegemony of certain paradigms or schools in the social sciences within the Western tradition. It also brings about the elision of other civilizational discourses. That elision is there even though, as we have seen, Ibn Khaldun is often referred to in the literature of the social sciences and Middle East studies. The problem is not that Ibn Khaldun is not mentioned but that he is not theoretically applied.

Further reading and Works cited

It is impossible in the space available here to attempt a survey that does justice to the vast body of modern scholarship on Ibn Khaldun. The range and scale of it can be gauged from the list of bibliographies in the first section of this chapter. Thereafter, I restrict my suggestions for further study to those titles that I believe to be most useful for an orientation of the general reader to the field. After editions and translations of the major works and biographies of Ibn Khaldun, the suggested reading is arranged thematically. In most cases I give author names and titles, with place and year of publication, which should suffice to identify and locate the works. However, for the works cited in preceding chapters the necessary bibliographical detail is presented in the separate, alphabetically arranged 'List of works cited' at the end.

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L'Oeuvre d'Ibn Khaldun dans la recherché contemporaine depuis 1965 by Emilie Tixier-Wieczorkiewicz (Paris, 1999–2000).

ARABIC EDITIONS OF THE *MUQADDIMA*

In spite of the fact that the *Muqaddima* is well represented by manuscripts (discussed in Nathaniel Schmidt, 'The Manuscripts of Ibn Khaldun', *Jnl. of the American Oriental Society*, 46 [1926]: 171–6), there are, as Franz Rosenthal remarked, as many editions of the *Muqaddima* as there are manuscripts. Most are incomplete and riddled with errors. Of the few complete editions, the best that I have seen is the five-volume one by Abdesselam Cheddadi (2005) – the one that I have used here. Cheddadi has done an excellent job of presenting a readable Arabic text, with footnotes explaining technical terms and identifying citations in the text; vols. 4 and 5 contain appendices about mss. located in Great Britain and the Netherlands.

TRANSLATIONS OF THE *MUQADDIMA* AND THE *ʿIBAR*

The first translation of the *Muqaddima* into a European language was by William MacGuckin de Slane in Paris, 1862–68. The selections in the abridged translation by Charles

Issawi, *An Arab Philosophy of History* (1950) are thematically organized so that it serves well for a quick introduction to the book.[29] The best English translation is by Franz Rosenthal, generously annotated, with a detailed account in the Introduction of Ibn Khaldun's life and the *Muqaddima*'s textual history ([1958] 1967). An abridged version of it by N. J. Dawood was first published in London, 1967. Vincent Monteil's French translation *Discours sur l'histoire universelle* ([1967–8] 3rd edn., Paris, 1997) is good too, with the merit of frequently providing Arabic technical terms in parentheses.

There is no complete translation of *Kitāb al-ʿIbar* in any language. The parts on the history of the Arabs and Berbers were translated into French by de Slane: *Ibn Khaldoun, Histoire des Berbères et des dynasties musulmanes de l'Afrique septentrionale* (new edn., Paris, 1968–9). An English translation from *al-ʿIbar* on the dynasties of Yemen was included by Henry Cassels Kay in *Yaman,... the Abridged History of its Dynasties by Ibn Khaldun...* (London, 1892). More important are the extracts translated in Abdesselam Cheddadi's *Ibn Khaldûn, Peuples et nations du monde, la conception de l'histoire des Arabes... extraits des ʿIbar* (1986).

Translations often transform works and give them a function the original did not have. This issue is explored by Abdelmajid Hannoum in his article on the translation of Ibn Khaldun's works into French: 'Translation and the Colonial Imagery: Ibn Khaldûn Orientalist', *History and Theory*, 42/1 (2003): 61–81.

BIOGRAPHIES

The best edition of Ibn Khaldun's autobiography, beautifully illustrated with French translation on facing

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29　For a differing view on the usefulness of Issawi's extracts, see Cedric Dover, 'The Racial Philosophy of Ibn Khaldun', *Phylon*, 13 (1952), 107–19, at 110.

pages is, again, by Cheddadi: *Ibn Khaldoun, L'Autobiographie* (2006). Of the few modern biographies, the most well-known is by the Egyptian sociologist Muhammad Abdullah Enan (Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh ʿInān) and is available in Arabic (1953) and in English: *Ibn Khaldun: His Life and Works* (2007). Ibn al-Khaṭīb wrote a biography of Ibn Khaldun, which is found in his *al-Ihāta fī akhbār Gharnāta* (A Comprehensive History of Granada, 1973–4). In the West, the first biography of Ibn Khaldun appeared in the *Bibliothèque Orientale* of d'Herbelot in Paris in 1697. On Ibn Khaldun's Egyptian period, particularly valuable are Walter J. Fischel's two studies: *Ibn Khaldūn in Egypt* (1967), and *Ibn Khaldūn and Tamerlane* (1952). Finally, mention must be made of the historical novel, *The Polymath* by Bensalem Himmich (in Arabic, Cairo, 2001; English transl. by Roger Allen, Cairo, 2004). This is an entertaining account of Ibn Khaldun's life and thought, with a degree of literary license that some may find uncomfortable.

IBN KHALDUN AS A FORERUNNER OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Two generations of scholars across the Muslim and Western worlds have written overviews of the *Muqaddima*, striving to present Ibn Khaldun as the precursor of various disciplines in the social sciences. This is symptomatic of a tendency that risks interpreting the *Muqaddima* out of context and anachronistically, attributing to it meanings that distort the intent of its author.[30] Not all who claim forerunner status for Ibn Khaldun are guilty of this, however. Among the earlier studies that present Ibn Khaldun as a forerunner

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30 See Franz Rosenthal, 'Ibn Khaldun in his Time (*May 27, 1332– March 17, 1406*)' *Jnl. of Asian and African Studies*, 18 (1983): 166–78, at 167.

are: ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ʿIzzat's 1932 thesis *Ibn Khaldun et sa science sociale*;[31] ʿAli ʿAbd al-Wāḥid Wāfī on Ibn Khaldun as the founder of sociology: 'Ibn Khaldūn, awwal muʾassis li-ʿilm al-ijtimāʿ ', in *Proceedings of the Ibn Khaldūn Symposium* (Cairo, 1962): 63–78; Georges-Albert Astre, 'Un précurseur de la sociologie au XIVe siècle: Ibn Khaldoun' in *L'Islam et l'occident* (Paris, 1947): 131–50; James E. Conyers, 'Ibn Khaldun: The Father of Sociology?', *International Jnl. of Sociology*, 9/4 (1972): 173–81; Syed Hussein Alatas, the Malaysian sociologist, who considered Ibn Khaldun to have established the principles of modern sociology: 'Objectivity and the Writing of History', *Progressive Islam*, 1/2 (1954): 2–4. Also in this vein are: Mahmoud Dhaouadi, 'Ibn Khaldun: The Founding Father of Eastern Sociology', *International Jnl. of Sociology*, 5/3 (1990): 319–35; M. Abdul Qadir, 'The Social and Political Ideas of Ibn Khaldūn', *Indian Jnl. of Political Science*, 3 (1941): 117–26; and Lilia ben Salem, 'Ibn Khaldoun, Père de la sociologie?' in *Les Savoirs en Tunisie* (Tunis, 1996). Claims for Ibn Khaldun's forerunner status have also been made for economics. Of particular interest are the papers by Joseph J. Spengler, 'Economic Thought of Islam: Ibn Khaldun', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 6/3 (1963–4): 268–306; Jean David C. Boulakia, 'Ibn Khaldûn: A Fourteenth Century Economist', *Jnl. of Political Economy*, 79/5 (1971): 1105–18; Abdol Soofi, 'Economics of Ibn Khaldun Revisited', *History of Political Economy*, 27/2 (1995): 387–404; and Ibrahim M. Oweiss, 'Ibn Khaldun, the Father of Economics', (n.d.) at http://www9.georgetown.edu/faculty/imo3/ ibn.htm. Last accessed 12 July 1212.

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31 Cited by Alain Roussillon, 'La représentation de l'identité par les discours fondateurs de la sociologie Turque et Egyptienne: Ziya Gökalp et ʿAli ʿAbd al-Wahid Wafi' in *Modernisation et mobilisation sociale II, Egypte–Turquie* (Cairo: Dossier du CEDEJ, 1992): 31–65, at 56 n. 48.

Comparative studies of Ibn Khaldun and seminal Western thinkers

Alongside seeing Ibn Khaldun as a forerunner of ideas in the modern social sciences, there was a drive to compare him and the giants of Western thought. Again, not all those who carried out such studies indulged in anachronistic interpretations. The Egyptian sociologist Aḥmad Zāyid noted that many Arab sociologists compared Ibn Khaldun and Western scholars in order to prove that it was he who founded sociology: 'Sabaʿūn ʿāmāʾ li-l-ʿilm al-ijtimaʿ fī Miṣr' (Seventy Years of Sociology in Egypt), *Majallat Kulliyat al-Ādāb*, 56/4 (Cairo, 1996): 1–38 (see p. 14). Western scholars also undertook such comparative studies, impressed by what many of them considered to be a lone towering figure in pre-modern Muslim scholarship. While some of these studies are of poor quality and make spurious comparisons, a few deserve attention. Ibn Khaldun has been compared to Durkheim by ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ʿIzzat, *Étude comparée d'Ibn Khaldun et Durkheim* (Cairo, 1952), by Ernest Gellner, 'Cohesion and Identity' in *Muslim Society* (1981), and by Majd al-Dīn ʿUmar Khayrī, 'Tāʾsīs ʿilm al-ijtimāʿ: ishkāliyāt al-mawdūʿ wa-l-minhaj ʿinda Ibn Khaldūn wa-Aujust Kumt wa-Imīl Dukāym', *Dirāsāt*, 28/4 (Amman, 1991). To Machiavelli by Barbara Stowasser, *Religion and Political Development: Some Comparative Ideas on Ibn Khaldun and Machiavelli* (Washington, DC, 1983), by ʿAbdullāh al-ʿArawī, 'Ibn Khaldūn wa-Mākyāfīlī', *Aʿmāl Nadwa Ibn Khaldūn* (Rabat, 1979): 183–204, and by Abdallah Laroui, 'Ibn Khaldun et Machiaval' in *Islam et modernité* (Paris, 1987): 97–125. To Comte by Khayrī in 'Tāʾsīs ʿilm al-ijtimāʿ (cited just above), by ʿAlī ʿAbd al-Wāḥid Wāfī, *al-Falsafa al-ijtimaʿiyya li-Ibn Khaldūn wa-Aujust Kumt* (Cairo, 1951), and by Fuad Baali, *Ilm al-Umran and Sociology: A Comparative Study*

(Kuwait, 1986). To Marx and Engels by Baali and Brian Price, 'Ibn Khaldun and Karl Marx: On Socio-historical Change', *Iqbal Review*, 23/1 (1982): 17–36. To Fustel de Coulanges by Bryan S. Turner, 'Sociological Founders and Precursors: The Theories of Religion of Emile Durkheim, Fustel de Coulanges and Ibn Khaldûn', *Religion*, 1 (1971): 32–48. And to Thucydides by Lenn Evan Goodman, 'Ibn Khaldūn and Thucydides', *Jnl. of the American Oriental Society*, 92/2 (1972): 250–70.

REVIEWS AND DESCRIPTIONS OF THE IDEAS IN THE *MUQADDIMA*

On this subject I can mention here only a few of those works that are useful in terms of providing readable introductions to Ibn Khaldun's ideas. Worthwhile is Alfred von Kremer's 'Ibn Chaldun und seine Kulturgeschichte' (1879) translated by S. Khuda Bukhsh as 'Ibn Khaldûn and His History of Islamic Civilization' (1927). There is a good account of Ibn Khaldun's social thought and its reception in his and modern times in §2 of Enan's *Ibn Khaldūn* (2007). An excellent and systematic treatment of Ibn Khaldun's political thought is Muhammad Mahmoud Rabīᶜ, *The Political Theory of Ibn Khaldūn* (1967). For a short and readable orientation to Ibn Khaldun, Fuad Baali's *Social Institutions: Ibn Khaldūn's Social Thought* (Lanham MD, 1992) is useful, as also his more in-depth study, *Society, State, and Urbanism: Ibn Khaldun's Sociological Thought* (Albany NY, 1988). Similarly accessible in style is Heinrich Simon, *Ibn Khaldun's Science of Human Culture* (1978). Two other works worth reading as introductions to Ibn Khaldun are Erwin Rosenthal's 'Ibn Khaldūn as a Political Thinker' (1979), and Vincent Monteil's 'Introduction à la sociologie religieuse d'Ibn Khaldûn (1332–1406)', *Social Compass*, 25/3–4 (1978): 343–58.

Among encyclopaedia articles, which are useful points of entry to the field, the standard reference is M. Talbi's 'Ibn Khaldūn' in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden, 1971). Franz Rosenthal's 'Ebn Khaldūn' in *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (New York, 1998), viii. 32–5, is useful in that it assesses Ibn Khaldun's views on Persia. Riaz Hassan's 'Sociology of Islam' gives a sociologist's perspective on Ibn Khaldun in the *Encyclopaedia of Sociology* (New York, 2000), pp. 2937–53. There is also Yūsif Rahīmlū's article on Ibn Khaldun in *Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif-i Buzurg-i Islāmī* (Tehran, vol. iii, 1990).

A great many studies dwell on the central concepts in Ibn Khaldun's theory – dynastic succession, the rise and fall of states, group feeling, the city, sedentary and nomadic societies, production relations, etc. However, there are also numerous others that deal with sundry peripheral topics. By way of example: Cedric Dover, 'The Racial Philosophy of Ibn Khaldun,' *Phylon*, 13 (1952): 107–19); Kalman Bland, 'An Islamic Theory of Jewish History: The Case of Ibn Khaldun' (1983); Walter J. Fischel, 'Ibn Khaldun's Use of Jewish and Christian Sources', *Proceedings of the 23rd International Congress of Orientalists* (Cambridge, 1954), pp. 332–3); S. Mahdihassan, 'A Brief History of Alchemy as Unknown in the Time of Ibn Khaldūn', *Islamic Culture*, 57 (1983): 147–52; Mushegh Asatrian, 'Ibn Khaldūn on Magic and the Occult' (2003); D. V. Subba Reddy, 'Sociology of Medicine in the *Muqaddima* of Ibn Khaldun,' *Indian Jnl. of the History of Medicine*, 4 (Madras, 1959): 13–23; 5 (1960): 10–21. Also too numerous to list here are discussions of Ibn Khaldun's views on specific theological matters; by way of example: Harry A. Wolfson, 'Ibn Khaldun on Attributes and Predestination', *Speculum*, 34 (1959): 585–97.

IBN KHALDUN'S METHODOLOGY

There are, by comparison, few analytical studies on the epistemological and methodological aspects of Ibn Khaldun's work. A substantive work is Muhsin Mahdi's *Ibn Khaldun's Philosophy of History* (1957). Mahdi discusses Ibn Khaldun's use of dialectics to critique Muslim historiography and his use, in order to construct his new science of society, of the method of demonstration derived from Aristotle. Mahdi was critiqued by ʿAlī al-Wardī (in *Manṭiq Ibn Khaldūn* [The Logic of Ibn Khaldun], Cairo: 1962), who disagreed about the Aristotelian origins of Ibn Khaldun's methods. Rabīʿ, in *The Political Theory of Ibn Khaldūn* (cited above), reviewed four trends in the study of Ibn Khaldun's methods: his alleged secular thinking, the unoriginality of his methods, his indebtedness to Aristotle, and his rootedness in Islamic tradition. Relevant to this discussion are ʿAli Oumlil's *L'Histoire et son discours: essai sur la methodologie d'Ibn Khaldoun* (Rabat, 1982), and Muḥammad ʿĀbid Al-Jābirī's *al-ʿAṣabiyya wa-l-dawla* (Group Feeling and the State) (Beirut, 1971) on the historicization of Ibn Khaldun's discourse, Stephen Frederic Dale's paper, 'Ibn Khaldūn: The Last Greek and the First Annaliste Historian', is excellent on the meaning of historical explanation and Ibn Khaldun's roots in Aristotelian logic. Nurullah Ardıç, in 'Beyond "Science as a Vocation": Civilisational Epistemology in Weber and Ibn Khaldun', *Asian Jnl. of Social Science*, 36 (2008): 434–64, looks at how Islamic epistemological ideas influenced Ibn Khaldun. James Winston Morris, 'An Arab Machiavelli? Rhetoric, Philosophy and Politics in Ibn Khaldun's Critique of Sufism', focuses on Ibn Khaldun's use of rhetoric. Johan Meuleman, 'La causalité dans la *Muqaddima* d'Ibn Khaldun', *Studia Islamica*, 74 (1991): 105–42, makes the issue of causality

central to discussion of Ibn Khaldun's new science. Of considerable interest also are: Abou Yaareb al-Marzouki's 'Ibn Khaldun's Epistemological and Axiological Paradoxes' in Ahmed Ibrahim Abushouk (ed.), *Ibn Khaldun and Muslim Historiography* (Kuala Lumpur, 2003), pp. 47–82; and Hans P. van Ditmarsch's 'Logical Fragments in Ibn Khaldūn's *Muqaddima*' in S. Rahman, Tony Street and Ḥassan Tahiri (eds.), *The Unity of Science in Arabic Tradition* (Dordrecht, 2008), pp. 281–94.

A significant contribution to debates on the place of rationality in Islam with reference to Ibn Khaldun was made by the late Moroccan scholar, Mohammed ʿAbed Al-Jabri (Muḥammad ʿĀbid al-Jābirī). Among his themes are the continuity between Ibn Ḥazm and Ibn Rushd as representatives of Arab rationalism, and the innovative work of Ibn Khaldun: *Arab-Islamic Philosophy: A Contemporary Critique* (Austin TX, 1999); 'Ibistīmūlūjiyā al-maʿqūl wa-l-lāmaʿqūl fī *Muqaddima* Ibn Khaldūn' in *Aʿmāl Nadwa Ibn Khaldūn* (Rabat, 1979), pp. 73–132. Among other valuable work in Arabic on Ibn Khaldun's methodology and epistemology are: ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ṭāhā, "ʿAn al-Istidlāl fī l-Naṣṣ al-Khaldūnī' in ibid, pp. 57–72; Abī l-ʿAlā ʿAfīfī, 'Mawqif Ibn Khaldūn min al-Falsafa wa-l-Taṣawwuf' in *Aʿmāl Mahrajān Ibn Khaldūn* (Proceedings of the Ibn Khaldun Symposium) (Cairo, 1962), pp. 135–43; ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Badawī, 'Ibn Khaldūn wa-Arastū' in ibid, pp. 152–62; Ḥasan al-Sāʿātī, 'Al-Minhaj al-ʿIlmī fī Muqaddima Ibn Khaldūn' in ibid, pp. 203–27; Abū Yaʿrub al-Marzūqī, 'Minhajiyya Ibn Khaldūn wa-ijtimāʿahu al-naẓarī', *al-Majallat al-Tārīkhiyya al-Maghribiyya*, 27–28 (1982): 247–76; and Muḥammad al-Ṭālbī, 'Minhajiyya Ibn Khaldūn al-Tārīkhiyya wa-Āthāruhā fī Dīwān *al-ʿIbar*', *al-Ḥayāt al-Thaqāfiyya*, 9 (1980): 6–26.

ANALYSIS AND CRITIQUE OF IBN KHALDUN'S THEORY

Three kinds can be distinguished in the studies that offer analytical critique of Ibn Khaldun's theory, namely (a) critique of his overall theory or thought on philosophical grounds that relate to methodological or theological or other issues; (b) critique of specific concepts; and (c) critique of his perspectives and biases:

(a) Michael Brett in 'The Way of the Nomad' (pp. 251–69 in his *Ibn Khaldūn and the Medieval Maghrib* [Aldershot, 1999]), provides a brief, excellent account of the main positions in critical assessment of Ibn Khaldun's thought. H. A. R. Gibb's 'The Islamic Background of Ibn Khaldūn's Political Theory' (1933) holds that belief took precedence over reason in Ibn Khaldun's thought. Mahdi (*Ibn Khaldūn's Philosophy of History*, 1957) argues that Ibn Khaldun's thought is the product of the rationalist philosophical tradition. Aziz Al-Azmeh (*Ibn Khaldun*, 1993), while not seeing a conflict between faith and reason, finds Ibn Khaldun's nominalism, not allowing for the derivation of the particular from the general, a problem. That then leads Al-Azmeh to conclude that the promise of the *Muqaddima* to reinterpret history is not fulfilled in *al-ʿIbar*. Cheddadi, takes the opposite view: he argues that the particular *is* related to the general in the way that the *Muqaddima* determines the arrangement of the *akhbār* or events in *Kitāb al-ʿIbar* so that it *does* deliver on the promise of the *Muqaddima* ('Ibn Khaldūn: anthropologue ou historien?' in Cheddadi's translation of extracts from *al-ʿIbar*, *Peuples et nations du monde* (cited above).

(b) An excellent account disagreeing with some dominant views of Ibn Khaldun's thought and the methodological and conceptual issues is in Cheddadi's *Actualité d'Ibn Khaldūn:*

Conférences et entretiens (Témara, 2006). His 'Le Système du Pouvoir en Islam d'après Ibn Khaldun', *Annales, Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, 3–4 (1980): 534–50, discusses the concepts of rank (*jāh*) and kingship (*mulk*). Helmut Ritter's 'Irrational Solidarity Groups: A Socio-Psychological Study in Connection with Ibn Khaldûn' is an extensive study of *ʿaṣabiyya*. Peter von Sivers, 'Back to Nature: The Agrarian Foundations of Society according to Ibn Khaldūn', *Arabica* 27/1 (1980): 68–91, is a critical paper of a more general cast on Ibn Khaldun's theory.

(c) Among works that criticize Ibn Khaldun's perspectives and biases: his views on the differing capacities of racial groups are presented in G. H. T. Kimble, *Geography in the Middle Ages* (London, 1938), 180, and in (the previously cited) Cedric Dover, 'The Racial Philosophy of Ibn Khaldun'.

APPLYING IBN KHALDUN'S THEORY AND CONCEPTS

Attempts to apply Ibn Khaldun's theory and concepts in a systematic way are few, but more have been appearing recently. Again, three trends can be distinguished in such works: (a) those that are guided by Ibn Khaldun in a general way without linking historical data to specific concepts and ideas in his theory; (b) those that do make such links; and (c) those that try to integrate the theory of Ibn Khaldun with the modern social sciences.

(a) Examples of generalized references to Ibn Khaldun are: José Ortega y Gasset's 'Abenjaldún nos revela el secreto' ([1934] 1976–78), an endeavour to explain the history of Melilla in Khaldunian terms; Ernest Gellner's application of Ibn Khaldun's cyclical theory in his well-known paper, 'Flux and Reflux in the Faith of Men' to understand changes in faith over time: ch. 1 of *Muslim Society* (1981; see also his 'Cohesion and Identity: the Maghreb from Ibn Khaldun to

Emile Durkheim', *Government and Opposition*, 10/2 (1975): 203–18); Abdallah Laroui's *L'Etat dans le monde arabe contemporain* (Louvain, 1980); and, in the special issue of *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 18/3–4 (1983): Cornell Fleischer, 'Royal Authority, Dynastic Cyclism, and "Ibn Khaldunism" in Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Letters', pp. 198–220; Bruce Lawrence, 'Ibn Khaldun and Islamic Reform', pp. 221–40; Warren Fusfeld 'Naqshbandi Sufism and Reformist Islam', pp. 241–62; Gordon N. Newby, 'Ibn Khaldun and Frederick Jackson Turner: Islam and the Frontier Experience', pp. 274–85.

(b) The only examples of applications of Ibn Khaldun's theory to specific historical data relate to the modern state. Gerard Michaud in 'Caste, confession et société en Syrie: Ibn Khaldoun au chevet du «Progessisme Arabe»', *Peuples Mediterranéens*, 16 (1981): 119–30, discusses what he calls the Khaldunian triad of ʿaṣabiyya, daʿwa and *mulk* in the context of the modern Syrian state. Olivier Carré, in two important essays, also critically assesses the relevance of Ibn Khaldun to the understanding of the contemporary Arab state: 'Ethique et politique chez Ibn Khaldûn, juriste musulman: Actualité de sa typologie des systèmes politique', *L'Année sociologique*, 30 (1979–80): 109–27, and 'A propos de vues Néo-Khalduniennes sur quelques systèmes politiques arabes actuelles', *Arabica*, 35/3 (1988): 368–87.

(c) Yves Lacoste's *Ibn Khaldun: The Birth of History and the Past of the Third World* (1984) was crucial in suggesting research applicable to Ibn Khaldun with modern concepts in mind. Ibn Khaldun's theory of the dynamics of tribal state formation is applicable to the Ottoman empire and Safavid Iran, combining his idea of cyclical change with the concept of modes of production: see Syed Farid Alatas, 'Ibn Khaldun and the Ottoman Modes of Production', *Arab Historical Review for Ottoman Studies*, 1–2 (1990): 45–63; 'A Khaldunian

Perspective on the Dynamics of Asiatic Societies', *Comparative Civilizations Review*, 29 (1993): 29–51. Other examples of applications of Ibn Khaldun's approach are discussed in the same author's 'Khaldunian Applications' (2007). The dynamics of the rise and decline of states can also be restated in terms of historical time frames or what Peter Turchin calls 'the Ibn Khaldun cycle' in his *Complex Population Dynamics: A Theoretical/Empirical Synthesis* (Princeton NJ, 2003, ch. 7). Turchin and Thomas D. Hall define this cycle as a secular wave 'that tends to affect societies with elites drawn from adjacent nomadic groups' and that operates on a time scale of about four generations or a century, and apply it to the rise and fall of four Chinggisid dynasties: 'Spatial Synchrony among and within World-Systems: Insights from Theoretical Ecology', *Journal of World-Systems Research*, 9/1 (2003): 37–64; http://jwsr.ucr.edu/archivevol9/number1/pdf/jwsr-v9n1-turchinhall.pdf (last accessed, 12 July 1212).

While, as noted above, there are few works that apply Ibn Khaldun's theory and concepts to historical cases, more such works have begun to appear and represent a necessary stage in the systematic understanding of Ibn Khaldun's work. Examples include Stephen Cory, 'Breaking the Khaldunian Cycle? The Rise of Sharifianism as the Basis for Political Legitimacy in Early Modern Morocco', *Journal of North African Studies*, 13/3 (2008): 377–94, and Diana Wylie's 'Decadence? The Khaldunian Cycle in Algeria and South Africa', in the same journal issue, 395–408.

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Index

Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406) was one of the most remarkable Muslim scholars of the pre-modern period. He founded what he called the science of human society or social organization, as well as a new methodology for writing history and a new purpose for it, namely to understand the causes of events. While his ideas had little impact on the development of Muslim thought for several centuries, they hugely impressed European thinkers from the nineteenth century on – some of them proclaimed Ibn Khaldun a progenitor of sociology and modern historiography.

Alatas's essay introduces Ibn Khaldun's core ideas, focusing on his theory of the rise and decline of states. It connects the ups and downs of his political life and his character with the development of his ideas. The concept of *'asabiyya* (group solidarity) and the factors that lead to its dilution are presented in detail, as also the method of testing (historical) reports for their plausibility. Alatas also devotes a chapter to Ibn Khaldun's ideas about education and knowledge and society. Thereafter, he recounts the reception of Ibn Khaldun in his own and modern times, in the Islamic world and in the West: the responses range from those who thought that he merely reworked ideas found in the works of al-Farabi and the Ikhwan al-Safa' to those who compare him to the giants of Western political and sociological thought, from Machiavelli to Marx. Finally, a dense few pages review the best editions and translations of Ibn Khaldun's work, and pick out key works in the vast corpus of scholarship on Ibn Khaldun in Arabic, English and other Western languages.

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