

## **CONCLUSION**

**243** The hypothesis which inspired this research claims that there is hardly any coherent or comprehensive picture among the written documents on Ibn Khaldun's's Muqaddimah. Therefore, neither his method of analysis, nor his new science and his concept of socio-economic development <sup>1</sup> has been properly covered.

Ibn Khaldun's science of civilization <sup>73</sup> is composed of a twofold body of social sciences, local and urban civilization, and a method of analysis. The science and the method not only adapt to each other, but also general each other. This is what the present research claims to have demonstrated.

The methodology of Ibn Khaldun originates from a particular philosophical dualistic definition: The thing in itself and the thing in its context. For Ibn Khaldun, every event or phenomenon comes into being whether in connection with some essence, or as the result of action. This Aristotelian, not Kantian, dualism is behind Ibn Khaldun's conception of the world of existent things, his theories of evolution and all the rest of his writings.

He says that the world of existent things comprises two main categories. Firstly, it comprises pure essences represented by the elements, the things resulting from their interaction and the three things that comes into being from the elements, namely, minerals, plants and animals. Secondly, he says that the world of existent things comprises also ACTION that proceeds from living beings and happens through their INTENTIONS. While some of these actions are well arranged and orderly, such as the actions of human beings, others are not well arranged and ordered, such as the actions of other species. This reveals a comprehensive definition that envelops the social action, the event, happening, phenomenon or any other occurrence.

When we apply Ibn Khaldun's law of change to this definition and consider it in time and place, the result - in terms of social realities - will be the creation of customs and conditions, or, in other words, what is already being internalized through imitation and repetition during time, and what is accidental and depends on intentional actions by human beings resulting in socio-economic, political and cultural manifestation

**244** However, Ibn Khaldun's goal in his Muqaddimah is the discovery of the true nature or the reality of the phenomenon, or the social happening. The discovery of the true nature of what exists in society composes the predominant part of his new science.

By true nature he means conclusions that can be considered "true" or plausible through reflexivity, observation, speculation, comparison, argumentation around causes, differences and similarities and empirical conformity. The results obtained must not only give a simple picture or mere perception, but also and mainly an argued picture or an apperception.

To discover this true nature or the plausible reasons and arguments behind an event or happening or a phenomenon, we need a definition proper to the phenomenon in question or the event to be studied. This has to be done in two steps: First, we consider the phenomenon or the event as an isolated matter and extract from it its true nature or what is peculiar to its essence - in other words, we find out the plausible endogenous principles or variables underlying it. Second, we consider the phenomenon or event in its context and discover the accidental conditions or exogenous principles and variables that may attach themselves to it. The first step gives inherent descriptions and definitions, the second uncovers causal relations.

Ibn Khaldun's method of analysis is predominately sociological. Analysis does not stop at the investigation of an individual phenomenon. Results and data gathered from the analysis of different phenomena must be structured to enlarge our knowledge about the development and growth of civilization as a whole. Ibn Khaldun discussed centers and peripheries of the societies of his time, and in particular the North African society. He discloses the reciprocal influences and the causes of antagonism between the different segments of that society, based on an evolutionary model of equilibrium and conflict.

**245** Similarly to his dichotomous definition of the phenomenon or event to be analysed, he looks first at the two interdependent spheres of rural civilization <sup>122</sup> and urban civilization <sup>123</sup>, their respective socio-economic development and their *raison d'être*, or the socio-economic phases of growth each segment goes through. The phases of development of society are conceived depending on socio-economic conditions like politics, earnings, craft and industries and epistemological stage.

Ibn Khaldun's perception of society reflects a unified building composed of three system elements: the phenomenon or the event, the local society, with its class-structure in the center, and its division into different domains of activities. Based on his research, observations and concrete studies with the North African societies, he theoretize on civilization in its widest sense. <sup>116</sup>

The *raison d'être* of any socio-economic development is the realization of the comfort of companionship and the satisfaction of human needs. This results from co-operation in order to be able to make a living. Co-operation to Ibn Khaldun is a natural quality in human beings. The satisfaction of human needs, or livelihood <sup>104</sup> is materialized through trading, i.e. through buying and selling of goods and labour. Livelihood is the desire for sustenance <sup>210</sup> and the effort to obtain it.

Co-operation, as something natural to human beings, materializes through labour and trading whether through barter <sup>215</sup> or within a market system. <sup>206</sup>

Society should therefore first and foremost satisfy the conditions necessary for its existence and through a just economic system. If this is hindered, factors of force like group solidarity or "esprit de corps"<sup>146</sup>, would intervene to change the course of politics.

Local civilization is divided into rural and urban. This division into centre versus periphery adds a socio-economic and political dimension. When "l'ésprit de corps" is activated, the comfort of companionship and the satisfaction of needs are no longer limited to human co-operation within the context of a small social group, a tribe, or a one-system/one-market society. The antagonism **246** becomes between a centre of force and a plurality of peripheries at varying distances from it. This may give rise to new political power and a new course of socio-economic development. The economic factor is thus coupled with the political, to represent the driving force behind change.

Ibn Khaldun's system is built on four major governing conditions or main social media, each including the theories that support the structure and dynamic of society.

The four major conditions are:

- 1) the political aspect;
- 2) labour and earnings;
- 3) crafts and insutry or industries; and
- 4) the sciences.

These media differ according to the socio-economic and political context within which they interact. The interaction is best seen from within the centre of civilization, where these vital arteries are planned and co-ordinated according to an overall socio-economic policy.

Political power <sup>147</sup> is the first and most important - but not necessarily the decisive - aspect among the four media mentioned above. Political authority serves as a device of protection and co-ordination that conducts a just economic policy of bilateral interest where both subjects and holders of power profit from the development.

Ibn Khaldun says that public finances can be increased and financial resources improved only through the revenue from taxation. Meanwhile, this improvement depends on the equitable treatment of people and their activities, making their capital bearing fruit and as a consequence increase taxes. If this is not the policy of the state, then the whole system of power, which is based upon two foundations, may disintegrate. The first foundation is power -

**247** as expressed in group feeling, patron-client-relationship, esprit de

corps or socio-psychological solidarity. The second foundation is the material means that supports this population and provides the whole structure of the state.

Surplus earning is money comes from what the subjects earn. In his theory of value Ibn Khaldun defines this surplus earning <sup>211</sup> as the value realized from human labour. This theory of value, being of interest in the calculation of the financial revenue of the state, is elaborately explained by Ibn Khaldun in order to distinguish clearly between surplus earning and sustenance, or income after tax deduction. Surplus earning results from agriculture, commerce, professions, crafts, or other ways of making a living.

Among the different ways of making a living that are "natural" to human beings is the occupation with agriculture or commerce, though many of the practices of the latter are corruptive. Other professions are "unnatural" , for instance being a servant. The expression "natural" for these occupations is in relation to the nature of the labour it implies, considered from the employee's point of view.

crafts and insutry <sup>94</sup> are secondary to agriculture. As a rule, they exist only among urban people, because they are resource-based and scientific. Thinking and speculation are applied to them.

The sciences <sup>105</sup> their instruction and methods. Ibn Khaldun's considers scientific instruction itself as a craft because of the dominant role played by the authority-scholar or teacher-craftsman who, at Ibn Khaldun's time, stood as independent institutions of learning occupied with the theories of science, thinking, perception communication, method and curriculum of instruction.

**248** The development of civilization has its final target urban culture, <sup>201</sup> the stage of opulence. Therefore, any increase as measured through the four media discussed above, leads to an increase in civilization. But, when the stage of opulence becomes extravagant, expenditure of the state and of the entrepreneurs grows beyond reasonable limits. High taxes and impositions are levied so as to cope with the situation, and economic expansion declines. This is the point at which civilization disintegrates, unless a process of revival is undertaken. Ibn Khaldun argues that excessive urban culture and luxury corrupt civilization in respect of markets, business undertakings, and social life.

From the previous discussion, we see a dialectical method of analysis adapted to a comprehensive system of society with its structures - world versus local, rural versus urban and areas of social complexities. There is a clear expression of the importance of the economic factor. Ibn Khaldun's new science of civilization <sup>73</sup> stand as a direct expression of a "developmental economic sociology", and demonstrates a materialistic conception of society. By making economy the nucleus, the motivation and the foundation for all social activities, he predates at least the rudimental ideas of Proudhon and Marx.

Ibn Khaldun has influenced and inspired many of the 19th. century sociologists and has been claimed as the forerunner of a great many Western scholars: Machiavelli, Bodin, Comte, Durkheim, Herder, Hegel etc. In our opinion, however, the one that has most and real affinities with Ibn Khaldun is Karl Marx. It is neither our intention to compare Ibn Khaldun with other authors nor do I see the point to offend others or to underline who took what from whom.

Ibn Khaldun includes in his sociology a composition of political sciences, political economy, psycho-cultural fields and history. In addition he wanted this ordered whole to be **249** a foundation for historical research. For Ibn Khaldun a social phenomenon should be placed in its historico-spatial context and in relation to relevant social facts.

To Ibn Khaldun, the interdependency between sociology and history necessitates that historians and sociologists share two major areas of knowledge. The first represents knowledge about the principles of politics and the second knowledge about the true nature of existent things.

Ibn Khaldun distinguishes between two aspects of knowledge. He says that knowledge is either a perception of the picture of things - a primitive kind of perception not accompanied by the exercise of judgement - or it is apperception, that is, the judgement that a thing is so, i.e. argued, reasoned and plausible. Criticizing his contemporaries, Ibn Khaldun says that they did not verify their statements or clarify them with the help of plausible arguments and proofs, nor did they substantiate them with arguments from the world of existence. However, he says, if the researcher knows the plausible or true nature of events and of conditions in the world of existence, and their requirements this will help to distinguish truth from untruth in investigating the historical information critically. A clear materialistic conception of history appears here.

Ibn Khaldun says that man is essentially ignorant, capable of imitation, and has an ability to think. Man requires studying and teachers for all his knowledge and qualities. Man is mostly conditioned by his milieu. Man is the child of the customs and the things he has become used to. He is not the product of his natural disposition and **250** temperaments, <sup>255</sup> says Ibn Khaldun (I, p. 229 A; p. 258 E).

considering the impact of the ideas of the social and political Elite on others, Ibn Khaldun says that the "State and government serve as the world's market place, attracting to it the products of scholarship and craftsmanship alike....Whatever is in demand on this market is in general demand everywhere else." (I, p. 34 A; p. 46-47 E). However, he says that the intelligent critic must, in this market, judge for himself as he looks around.

To Ibn Khaldun labour is mankind itself. He says that "...man cannot afford to give away his labour for nothing, because it constitutes his surplus earnings and source of his livelihood." (II, p. 311 A; p. 351 E) In his

theory of value Ibn Khaldun affirms that surplus earning is the value of human labour. He further says that "...what a person earns in money and acquires of capital in kind, if resulting from a craft, then the know-how labour from which he earns represents the value of his labour. This is the meaning of the value of acquisition. There is nothing here originally except the labour." (II, p. 274 A; p. 313 E)

**251** According to Ibn Khaldun labour produces wealth for others. He says: "We find that the person of rank who is highly esteemed is in every material aspect more fortunate and wealthier than a person who has no rank. The reason for this is that the person of rank is served by the labour of others. They try to approach him with their labour, since they want to be close to him and are in need of the protection his rank affords. People help him with their labour in all his needs, whether these are necessities, conveniences, or luxuries. The value realized from all such labour becomes part of his surplus earnings." (II, p. 287 A; p. 326 E)

For Ibn Khaldun labour is the sine qua non of all. He says: "It should be known that differences of socio-economic conditions among people result from the different ways in which they make their living." (I, p. 220 A; p. 249 E)

**252** Ibn Khaldun says that "...the conditions of the inhabitants within a single city can be observed to differ according to the different distribution of luxury and abundance." (I, p. 161 A; p. 180 E) Further, he says: "It should be known that treasures of gold, silver, precious stones, and utensils are no different from other minerals and acquired capital, from iron, copper, lead, and any other real property or ordinary minerals. It is civilization that causes them to appear, with the help of human labour, and that makes them increase or decrease. All such things in people's possession may be transferred and passed on by inheritance. They have often been transferred from one region to another, and from one dynasty to another, in accordance with the purposes they were to serve and the particular civilization that required them.... Such things are merely means ('a-lāt) and acquired capital <sup>103</sup>. It is civilization that produces them in abundance or causes them to be in short supply." (II, p. 285-286 A; p. 325 E)

The overall title of the Muqaddimah shows that civilization in itself is envisaged economic and geographic determinants. However, civilization in its context, i.e. when based on the study of specific societies, is envisaged through the determinants that influence its stages of development within its rural and the urban segments. This context is the political and the socio-economic mix represented by political authority, earnings, crafts and sciences.

The subtitle of each chapter of the Muqaddimah stands as a theory which is then discussed with reference to observable political and socio-economic conditions. That is the reason why these subtitles include concrete concepts like basic or constitutive principles <sup>9</sup>; rules or basic propositions <sup>66</sup> which are less important and questions (masā'il) or problems that need further discussion. **253** This illustrates that the

Khaldunian science of civilization is planned in harmony with its own method. Ibn Khaldun says that when investigating human social organization (at- 'umrān) one must distinguish between the conditions which attach themselves to it, whether they are endogenous, exogenous or other conditions. This makes it possible to have a law or a normative method (qānūn) for distinguishing right from wrong and truth from falsehood. He further adds "Such is the purpose of this first book of our works( i.e. the Muqaddimah).

Plato had ambitions that his organization of society in the "Republic" would be applied. Abu Nasr al-Fārābi (+ 950 A. D.) took the same path as Plato in his " al-Madinah al-Fādilah " ("The Model City"). Ibn Khaldun, by contrast, did not construct a pattern to be followed. He made studies of societies he visited and observed and took also interest in societies with which he was not familiar, but came to know through the studies and narratives of others. He then formulated laws and theories to which social phenomena could be subjected. His goal was to better understand the present, explain past and "predict" the future. The genius and monumental achievement contained in the Muqaddimah are still a source of wonder centuries after Ibn Khaldun's death, and suggests the value of undertaking a detailed and protracted study of his other works. This will firmly establish him in the tradition of great sociologists.

---

A complete copy of this research can be obtained from the Library of the University of Oslo, Faculty of Social Sciences, under ISBN 82-570-0743-9.