IBN HALDUN UNIVERSITY
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PH.D. THESIS

BEYOND THE EMPIRICAL AND ETHICAL DIVIDE: IBN KHALDUN'S MULTIPLEX PHILOSOPHY OF POLITICS AND EDUCATION

SEDA ÖZALKAN

THESIS SUPERVISOR
PROF. DR. RECEP ŞENTÜRK

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A thesis submitted to the Alliance of Civilizations Institute for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Civilization Studies

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APPROVAL PAGE

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Civilization Studies.

Thesis Jury Members

Title - Name Surname	Opinion	Signature
Prof. Dr. Recep Şentürk	_____	_____
Prof. Dr. Tahsin Görgün	_____	_____
Dr. Önder Küçükural	_____	_____
Prof. Dr. Alparslan Açıkgenç	_____	_____
Dr. Mehmet Akif Kayapınar	_____	_____

This is to confirm that this thesis complies with all the standards set by the Alliance of Civilizations Institute of Ibn Haldun University.

Date of Submission Seal/Signature

ACADEMIC HONESTY ATTESTATION

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Seda Özalkan

Aug 16, 2023

ABSTRACT

BEYOND THE EMPIRICAL AND ETHICAL DIVIDE: IBN KHALDUN'S MULTIPLEX PHILOSOPHY OF POLITICS AND EDUCATION

Özalkan, Seda
Ph.D. in Civilization Studies
Student ID: 175071004
Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORC-ID): 0000-0001-9753-3548
National Thesis Center Reference Number: 10575480
Thesis Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Recep Şentürk

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Why is there a tension between the empirical and the ethical approaches in political and educational theory? This tension is often traced back to David Hume's demarcation between "is" and "ought" claims. This distinction was further solidified by the principles of logical positivism, which made a clear separation between facts and values, thereby further distancing empirical from normative modes of inquiry. This philosophical stance has contributed to an indecision in the field of political theory over the last century, oscillating between empirical-positive and ethical-normative approaches, or in other words, descriptive and prescriptive perspectives, as scholars have struggled to balance these two frameworks. There was a division of labor: empirical political theorists focused on the empirical "is" of politics, while normative political theorists concerned themselves with the ethical "ought" of politics. Empirical approaches to political theory are concerned with discovering the causal laws that explain why society is the way it *is*. Normative approach to political theory, on the other hand, is concerned with ethical considerations, values, and prescriptions about how societies *ought to be* organized and governed.

With the empirical and normative binary in mind, a contemporary reader of the *Muqaddimah* might find it challenging to ascertain under which of these two categories Ibn Khaldun's political theory most appropriately fits. To address this issue, the present study proposes revisiting Ibn Khaldun's political and educational theories in the context of the empirical-ethical binary and related discussions. One of the

guiding questions of this dissertation is how helpful this distinction is for an adequate understanding of Ibn Khaldun's socio-political thinking generally, and his political and educational theories in *Muqaddimah* more specifically. This study reveals that Ibn Khaldun's political theory addresses both types of questions: the ontological-descriptive question about the state as "What makes a certain object a state?", and the ethical-normative question about the state as "What makes a state a just or an ideal state?". This suggests that Ibn Khaldun's political theory defies categorization within the narrow confines of the empirical-ethical binary.

While Ibn Khaldun explicitly aimed to provide a scientific and realistic analysis of historical facts in a descriptive manner, differing from the utopian studies of the al-Farabi school, his work inherently serves a cognitive and instructive purpose to regulate society and guide policies, as implied in the name of his book, *Kitāb al-ʿIbar.* This aspect also speaks to the recent debate on ideal and non-ideal political theory, in terms of how to justify normative claims in order not to be 'too abstract.' The normative claims of the *Muqaddimah* are justified by the real facts of life and the divine revelation, which go hand in hand, providing a model for contemporary political theory that seeks to integrate the empirical and the ethical in how the ideal might be achieved in practical steps.

The primary goal of this dissertation is to elucidate why there is no exclusion between the empirical and normative dimensions in Ibn Khaldun's political theory and to explain how this integration is achieved. The main argument of this study is that the philosophical foundations of Ibn Khaldun's political theory provide a *multiplex* framework in which the empirical and ethical dimensions coexist harmoniously, without being mutually exclusive or in binary opposition. It is this multiplex paradigm that makes his thought resistant to modern ways of thinking that typically operate within set dichotomies, i.e., distinctions that have translated into separations. Once the multilayered framework underpinning Ibn Khaldun's socio-political thinking is in view, we can then understand how his political and educational theories are simultaneously empirical and ethical, or descriptive and prescriptive, and why they are inevitably so.

Keywords: Ibn Khaldun, empirical, ethical, multiplexity, political theory, educational theory, philosophy of science.

ÖZ

AMPİRİK VE ETİK AYRIMIN ÖTESİNDE:
İBN HALDUN'UN ÇOK KATMANLI SİYASET VE EĞİTİM FELSEFESİ

Özalkan, Seda

Medeniyetler İttifakı Doktora Programı
Öğrenci Numarası: 175071004
Açık Araştırmacı ve Katılımcı Kimliği (ORC-ID): 0000-0001-9753-3548
Ulusal Tez Merkezi Referans Numarası: 10575480
Tez Danışmanı: Prof. Dr. Recep Şentürk

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Siyaset ve eğitim teorisinde neden ampirik ve etik yaklaşımlar arasında bir ayrım vardır? Birçokları için bu ayrım, David Hume'un "olan" ve "olması gereken" hakkındaki ifadeler arasında ayırım yapmasından ve mantıksal pozitivizmin gerçekleri değerlerden sert bir şekilde ayırmasından kaynaklanır. Bu da dolayısıyla ampirik ve normatif araştırma biçimleri arasındaki ayrımı vurgular. Bu felsefi ilke, siyaset teorisi alanında geçen yüzyıl boyunca kararsızlığa sebep olmuş, bilim adamları bu iki çerçeveyi dengelemeye çalışırken ampirik ve normatif, veya diğer bir deyişle betimleyici (*descriptive*) ve kural koyucu (*prescriptive*) yaklaşımlar arasında gidip gelmiştir. Bunun sonucunda bir iş bölümü ortaya çıkmıştır: ampirik siyaset teorisyenleri siyasetin "ne olduğu" üzerine odaklanırken, normatif siyaset teorisyenleri "ne olması gerektiği" ile ilgilendiler. Ampirik siyaset teorisi yaklaşımları, toplumun vakıâdaki hâlini açıklayan nedensel yasaları keşfetmeye odaklıdır. Diğer taraftan, normatif siyaset teorisi, etik düşünceleri, değerleri ve toplumların nasıl düzenlenmesi ve yönetilmesi gerektiğine dair kuralları içerir.

Ampirik ve etik ikilemi düşünüldüğünde, çağdaş bir Mukaddime okuyucusu, İbn Haldun'un siyaset teorisinin hangi kategorinin altına daha uygun düştüğünü belirlemekte zorlanabilir. Bu sorunu ele almak için bu çalışma, İbn Haldun'un siyaset teorisini ampirik-etik ayrımı ve ilgili tartışmalar bağlamında yeniden ele almayı önermektedir. Bu tezin temel sorularından biri, bu ayrımın İbn Haldun'un sosyo-politik düşüncesini genel olarak ve Mukaddime'deki siyaset teorisini anlamak için ne

kadar işlevsel olduğudur. Bu çalışma, İbn Haldun'un siyaset teorisinin her iki tür soruyu da ele aldığını göstermektedir: ontolojik-tanımlayıcı bir soru olarak "Devlet nedir?", ve etik-normatif bir soru olarak "Bir devleti adil veya ideal bir devlet yapan nedir?". Bu, İbn Haldun'un siyaset teorisinin, ampirik-etik ikileminin her iki kutbunun da yeterince temsil edemeyeceği anlamına gelir. İbn Haldun'un asıl amacı, açıkça ifade ettiği gibi, Fârâbî'nin ütopyacı çalışmalarının aksine, tarihsel gerçekleri bilimsel ve gerçekçi bir şekilde tanımlayarak sunmaktı. Ancak İbn Haldun'un siyaset teorisindeki ampirik odağı ve vâkıâya mutâbakat kaygısı, kitabının adından da anlaşılacağı gibi (*Kitābu'l-İber*) toplumu düzenlemek ve politikalara rehberlik etmek amacıyla birtakım bilişsel ve öğretici bir amaç taşır. Bu yönüyle İbn Haldun, "ideal" ve "ideal olmayan" siyaset teorisi tartışmasına da katkıda bulunur; normatif iddialar, hayatın gerçeklerinin ve ilahi vahyin gerçeklerinin bir arada olduğu şekilde haklı çıkarılır ve bu da idealin nasıl pratik adımlarla nasıl gerçekleştirilebileceği konusunda ampirik ve etiği entegre etmeye çalışan çağdaş siyaset teorisine bir model sunar.

Bu tezin temel amacı, İbn Haldun'un siyaset teorisinde ampirik ve etik boyutlar arasında bir dışlama olmadığını ve bu entegrasyonun nasıl sağlandığını aydınlatmaktır. Bu çalışmanın temel argümanı, İbn Haldun'un siyaset teorisinin felsefi temellerinin, ampirik ve etik boyutları dışlamayan ve ikili bir karşıtlık olmadan uyumlu bir şekilde bir araya getiren çok katmanlı bir paradigma olduğudur. İşte bu çok katmanlı yaklaşım, İbn Haldun'un düşüncesini belirli ikilemler içinde çalışan modern düşünme biçimlerine karşı dirençli kılar. İbn Haldun'un sosyo-politik düşüncesini temellendiren çok katmanlı paradigma ortaya çıkarıldığında, siyaset ve eğitim teorilerinin aynı anda nasıl ampirik ve etik, veya betimleyici ve kural koyucu olduğunu anlayabiliriz.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İbn Haldun, ampirik, etik, çoklu yapı, siyaset teorisi, eğitim teorisi, bilim felsefesi.

To my family and my supervisor

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May this humble endeavor spark a renewed perspective on Ibn Khaldun's legacy, leading to a positive change in contemporary society across different domains of activity, particularly in politics and education, both in theory and in practice.

Seda Özalkan

September 24, 2023
Istanbul

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ARABIC TRANSLITERATION

Arabic script	English symbol	Arabic script	English symbol
ء	ʾ	ض	Ḍ
ا ، آ	A, Ā	ط	Ṭ
ب	B	ظ	Ẓ
ت	T	ع	ʿ
ث	Th	غ	Gh
ج	J	ف	F
ح	Ḥ	ق	Q
خ	Kh	ك	K
د	D	ل	L
ذ	Dh	م	M
ر	R	ن	N
ز	Z	هـ	H
س	S	و	ū or w
ش	Sh	ي	ī or y
ص	Ṣ	ة	a or t

INTRODUCTION

The empirical versus ethical divide has long been a source of tension in various fields of study, including political theory, education, and social science in general. This dichotomy manifests itself in a multitude of forms, often expressed as 'descriptive versus prescriptive,' 'is versus ought,' 'positive versus normative,' 'non-ideal versus ideal,' and 'fact versus value' (Oppenheim, 1973; Putnam, 1997, 2004; Putnam & Walsh, 2012). Despite the different terminology and subtle nuances, the underlying tension remains consistent: How do we navigate between the normative ideals or values we aspire to and what we objectively observe in the world? The divide is often associated with the distinction made by David Hume between 'is' and 'ought' claims, which claimed that one cannot derive normative 'ought' statements solely from descriptive 'is' statements about the world (Hume, 2020). Furthermore, the influence of logical positivism has further solidified the division between factual statements and value judgments. Logical positivism placed significant emphasis on empirical verifiability, restricting meaningful statements to those that could be subjected to empirical testing (Ayer, 1936).

Consequently, value judgments were considered subjective and believed to lie outside the domain of empirical investigation. These influences have contributed to a division of labor within the field of political theory in particular, where empirical approaches primarily concentrate on descriptive aspects of political phenomena. In contrast, normative approaches are concerned with ethical considerations and prescriptive analysis.

This distinction, known as Hume's Guillotine, asserts that ethical or normative conclusions cannot be derived from purely empirical premises. This philosophical principle has contributed to the indecision in political theory over the last century, oscillating between empirical and normative approaches, or, in other words, descriptive and prescriptive perspectives, as scholars have struggled to balance these two frameworks. There was a division of labor: empirical political theorists focused on the empirical "is" of politics, while normative political theorists concerned themselves with the ethical "ought" of politics. This division enabled both approaches

to coexist within the discipline. Empirical approaches to political theory are concerned with discovering the causal laws that explain why society is the way it *is*. Empirical political theory has been primarily associated with the "behavioral revolution" of the mid-twentieth century, which sought to understand the functioning of political systems through rigorous empirical analysis. As argued by David Easton, this shift transformed the discipline from a prescriptive, problem-centered field to one increasingly oriented toward being analytical rather than substantive, general rather than specific, and explanatory rather than ethical.

On the other hand, the normative approach to political theory is concerned with ethical considerations, values, and prescriptions about how societies *ought to be* organized and governed. This approach seeks to address questions of justice and the ideal political order. Much contemporary Anglo-American political philosophy operates as a branch of applied ethics and represents normative political theory. John Rawls, a central figure in the revival of normative political theory in the 1970s, played a significant role in shaping the belief that political theory encompasses solely normative aspects (Rawls, 2009). This perspective gained widespread acceptance in numerous works on the subject during the latter part of the twentieth century, as exemplified by publications such as Kymlicka (2002), Wolff (2023), and Swift (2019). This ongoing debate has led to a shift in focus and various methodological perspectives being developed in response to the perceived gap between empirical and normative approaches. Ian Shapiro's (2007) critique provides a profound reflection on the state of modern political thought:

> The specialization that has divided political philosophy from the rest of political science has been aided and abetted by the separation of normative from empirical political theory, with political philosophers declaring a monopoly over the former while abandoning the enterprise of 'positive' political theory to other political scientists. This seems to me to have been bad for both ventures. It has produced normative theory that is no longer informed, in the ways that the great theorists of the tradition took it for granted that political theory should be informed, by the state of empirical knowledge of politics. A result is that normative theorists spend too much time commenting on one another, as if they were themselves the appropriate objects of study. This separation has also fed the tendency for empirical political theory to become banal and method-driven—detached from the great questions of the day and focused instead on what seems methodologically most tractable. Both types of theory have evolved close

> to the point where they are of scant interest to anyone other than their practitioners. This might bump up citation indexes and bamboozle tenure committees, but it scarcely does much for the advancement of knowledge about what is or ought to be the case in politics. (Shapiro, 2007: 79)

This thesis aims to address this tension in the context of Ibn Khaldun's philosophy of politics and education, as it offers a unique perspective that transcends this divide, where empirical and ethical dimensions coexist symbiotically in a multiplex framework. In so doing, the thesis hopes to offer a fresh lens for rethinking this divide and its diverse manifestations in political theory, education, and broader social science discourses.

To ensure clarity in our exploration, we must first articulate what we mean by 'empirical' and 'ethical.' The term 'empirical' encompasses ontological, epistemological, and methodological aspects. Ontologically, it pertains to the tangible and observable aspects of existence, emphasizing concrete realities in the here and now. Epistemologically, the empirical is associated with knowledge derived from experience and observation, emphasizing sensory perception and experimentation as sources of understanding. Methodologically, an empirical approach is grounded in tangible evidence, relying on systematic observation, measurement, and experimentation as means of investigation. The specific emphasis on these dimensions can vary depending on the context in which the term is used.

The empirical inquiry leads us to a particular type of account known as the factual, positive, or constative, which aligns with the *ikhbārī* statements in Islamic thought. These statements can be characterized as true or false based on their correspondence with reality. They are descriptive, aiming to depict what exists or occurs. In science, constative statements play a significant role, and various types of explanatory statements fall under this category. In his influential 1961 work *The Structure of Science*, Nagel explores the logic of scientific explanation and identifies four types: deductive, probabilistic, teleological (functional), and genetic (historical) (Nagel, 1961, pp. 20–26). Each type offers a distinct approach to explaining phenomena, ranging from logical deduction to probabilistic inference, functional analysis, and historical contextualization. Despite differences in their level of conformity or purpose, constative statements share a standard function, which is to report, inform,

and describe reality. Constative utterances primarily take the form of declarative sentences and refer to the act of asserting something. They are intended to describe the world and make claims about reality. These statements are subject to evaluation regarding their truth-value or accuracy. Whether they involve logical deductions, probabilistic reasoning, functional analysis, or historical explanations, constative statements capture and convey knowledge about the world as it is perceived and understood.

In addition to the various uses of the term 'empirical,' it is essential to highlight the distinction between empiricism and empirical. While empiricism emphasizes the primacy of the empirical, the term empirical acknowledges that empirical aspects may represent only one of the many degrees or forms of entities, knowledge, or methods employed. That being said, it is crucial to recognize that qualifying Ibn Khaldun's work as 'empirical' or 'empiricist' carries distinct implications, which we will explore later.

The term 'ethical' also encompasses ontological, epistemological, and methodological dimensions. In ontology, attributing ethical qualities to entities involves assigning them a specific moral task or significance. For instance, humans can be considered ethical entities as they possess the capacity to discern right from wrong, make moral choices, and be held accountable for their actions. In contrast, animals are not typically regarded as ethical entities. This is not to claim that ethical behavior is a default setting in humans or that all individuals invariably behave morally. Rather, it acknowledges that humans have the potential to engage in ethical behavior and possess moral agency. Furthermore, ethical entities can extend beyond the individual to include collective or institutional entities such as political bodies, which bear responsibilities for protecting individuals and enforcing specific principles and rules.

Epistemologically, the term 'ethical' refers to the quality of knowledge pertaining to principles, values, and standards guiding human behavior, choices, and actions concerning what is considered morally right, just, and good. It involves evaluating actions based on their moral implications and considering the consequences they may have. Furthermore, an ethical epistemology might also mean that knowledge acquisition is related to being moral. It suggests that learning is not solely

intellectual but intimately tied to one's moral orientation. An ethical epistemology suggests that knowledge acquisition is intimately connected with moral integrity, resonating with the following verse in the Qurʾān: "And watch Allah's boundaries, and Allah will teach you" (2: 282).

Methodologically, an ethical approach involves a rigorous examination and evaluation of moral norms, principles, and values to discern the course of action that ought to be taken in a specific situation. It entails conducting normative analysis to establish ethical standards and guidelines for behavior. For instance, normative political methodology involves using critical analysis and moral reasoning by researchers and scholars to evaluate political institutions, processes, policies, and actions (Goodin, 2011, pp. 89-101). The primary objective is to address questions regarding the desired goals and principles that should guide political systems, the appropriate distribution of power, and the concept of just governance.

An ethical paradigm within theories often gives rise to normative statements, which express judgments about the desirability of certain actions or situations. These statements contain value judgments and typically include words such as "have to," "ought to," "must," or "should." Sometimes, these expressions can take the form of constative statements, but their meaning is performative. This means they go beyond describing a state of affairs and instead convey an action or intention.

One notable example of intertwining the descriptive and the normative is the 'circle of politics' in Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah*. This 'circle of politics,' a model for political organization, comprises eight interconnected sentences that outline a circular relationship among the constituents of society (London, 2011). It reads: "The world is a garden; its fence is the state. The state is the authority upheld by the Sunnah. The Sunnah is politics and regulation administered by the government. The government is an order promoted by the soldiers. The soldiers are assistants, provided for by wealth. Wealth is sustenance gathered by the subjects. The subjects are servants sheltered by justice. Justice brings about unity, and through it, the world persists." (Ibn Khaldun, 1967, 81-82). These sentences are linguistically constructed as constative statements. However, although they

appear descriptive and positive, they carry normative implications. The circle of politics suggests that establishing justice is essential for the well-being of social life and emphasizes the role of a governing body responsible for upholding justice. The line between 'is' and 'ought' becomes blurred in this account. While it explains the 'normal' functioning of things, it also carries normative implications, offering guidance towards specific ethical values and actions.

0.1. Research Question and Thesis Statement

Why is there a tension between the empirical and the ethical approaches in science in general and educational and political theory in particular? Is this separation necessary? With the empirical and normative binary in mind, a contemporary reader of the *Muqaddimah* might find it challenging to ascertain under which of these two categories Ibn Khaldun's political theory most appropriately fits. This thesis proposes that modern categories, marked by binary oppositions, are not suited to characterize Ibn Khaldun's nuanced framework. Thus, the central question arises: How does Ibn Khaldun's political and educational theorizing transcend the empirical-ethical divide, and how do these seemingly opposing poles coexist symbiotically within a unified and consistent framework?

This thesis aims to explore why there is no exclusion between the empirical and normative dimensions in Ibn Khaldun's theory of politics and education and how his theories go beyond the empirical and ethical divide. To achieve this, I employ Imre Lakatos' philosophical framework, known for its applicability in the philosophy of science. It offers a structured approach that is particularly suitable for our task of uncovering the philosophical foundations of Ibn Khaldun's theory in our quest to address the research question.

The primary argument advanced in this dissertation is that the philosophical foundations of Ibn Khaldun's political and educational theories offer a multiplex framework. This multiplex framework allows empirical and ethical dimensions to coexist harmoniously without being mutually exclusive or in binary opposition. Furthermore, Ibn Khaldun evades the potential for such a divide from the onset due to his underpinning multiplex paradigm, harmoniously incorporating both the empirical and the ethical.

Thus, this study asserts that Ibn Khaldun's multiplex paradigm makes his thought resistant to modern ways of thinking that typically operate within set dichotomies, i.e., distinctions that have translated into separations. The multiplex structure of Ibn Khaldun's philosophical framework holds the potential to make us rethink the way we think about politics and education such that what seemed to be in tension can now function in harmony.

0.2. Theoretical Approach: Imre Lakatos' Scientific Research Program

In examining the research question at hand, Imre Lakatos' Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes (MSRP) serves as the foundational framework for analyzing Ibn Khaldun's political and educational theories. Imre Lakatos, a philosopher of science, introduced the concept of "research programs" to understand and explain the progression of scientific theories (Lakatos, 1980; Lakatos & Musgrave, 1970). This concept addresses how scientific theories evolve and when they should be replaced.

Lakatos developed his concept of a "research program" in response to an ongoing debate in the philosophy of science, notably interacting with the views of Karl Popper and Thomas Kuhn (Agassi, 2014). Karl Popper argued that scientific knowledge is, by definition, refutable (Popper, 2002). Therefore, robust scientific theories are those that withstand rigorous attempts at falsification but persist in their explanatory and predictive power. On the other hand, Kuhn viewed scientific change as a series of non-rational, revolutionary paradigm shifts (Kuhn, 1970). He argued that scientific advancements predominantly occur during periods of 'normal' science, where dominant theories, despite known anomalies, are upheld (Kuhn, 1970). Lakatos suggests shifting the focus from isolated theories to interconnected sequences within research programs. Each research program consists of a hardcore, which comprises foundational assumptions that are protected by a negative heuristic, and a protective belt of auxiliary hypotheses that can be adjusted or replaced. This framework allows for both continuity and flexibility in scientific inquiry.

Lakatos' model of scientific research programs centers on the idea that scientific theories are not simply derived from empirical evidence but are also shaped by the underlying philosophical assumptions and frameworks that guide scientific inquiry. He proposes that scientific research programs consist of a "hard core" of unchangeable

assumptions and principles, surrounded by a "protective belt" of auxiliary hypotheses that can be modified or discarded in response to new evidence (Lakatos, 1980, p. 49).

Thus, for a systematic analysis of Ibn Khaldun's political theory, I utilize the framework of "research programs" developed by Imre Lakatos. He distinguished between two parts of a scientific theory: its "hardcore," which contains its basic assumptions (or axioms, when set out formally and explicitly), and its "protective belt," a surrounding defensive set of *ad hoc* (produced for the occasion) auxiliary hypotheses (Lakatos, 1980, pp. 48-49). Therefore, I first examine the hard core of Ibn Khaldun's political theory, followed by an exploration of his auxiliary hypotheses. I dig into his political theory's empirical and normative aspects, elucidating how these dimensions are integrated within his framework. In this undertaking, I aim to illustrate how Ibn Khaldun's political theory embodies empirical and ethical dimensions.

0.2.1. The Structure of Scientific Research Programs

As mentioned above, Imre Lakatos introduced the concept of "research programs" as a way of explaining scientific change (Lakatos, 1980; Lakatos & Musgrave, 1970). He proposed that scientific research does not operate around individual theories but rather within a larger structure of guiding principles and flexible hypotheses, termed "research programs" (Lakatos, 1980). Each program has a distinct design, with key components including a hardcore, auxiliary hypotheses, and a positive and negative heuristic (Lakatos, 1980).

At the center of a research program is the "hardcore," which consists of the primary axioms or assumptions that underpin the theory. These core principles are considered non-negotiable within the context of the research program—they are not put to the test and remain unchallenged, forming the basis upon which the rest of the research program is built (Lakatos, 1980). Changes to these principles would fundamentally alter the nature of the research program. Another concept that is related to the hardcore is the negative heuristic. The negative heuristic of a research program is an unwritten rule that dictates that the hard core should not be challenged or contradicted by (Lakatos & Musgrave, 1970). This rule leads scientists to alter the auxiliary hypotheses instead of the hardcore when faced with conflicting evidence.

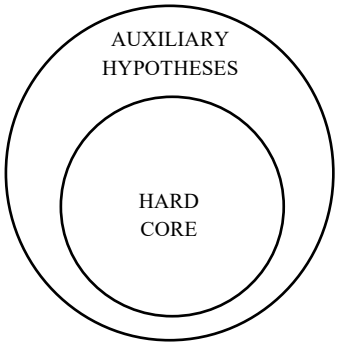

Figure 2: The Structure of Lakatosian Scientific Research Programmes

Surrounding the hard core is a protective belt of auxiliary hypotheses. These are supplementary theories or propositions designed to support and protect the hard core. They are more flexible propositions that can be adjusted, tested, or replaced as new evidence emerges. Unlike the hard core, auxiliary hypotheses can be altered or discarded in light of new evidence or empirical observations, which allows the research program to adapt and evolve while keeping its hard core intact. The changes within the protective belt, which do not affect the hard core, are known as intra-program problemshifts. In contrast to the negative heuristic, the positive heuristic is a methodological rule that guides the development and modification of the auxiliary hypotheses. It is a roadmap for the expansion and refinement of the research program, encouraging the creation of new hypotheses to accommodate new data or to explain phenomena not yet accounted for, all while staying within the boundaries defined by the hard core.

Lakatos distinguishes between two types of research programs: degenerative and progressive (Lakatos, 1980). A degenerative research program is characterized by the failure of its auxiliary hypotheses to withstand empirical testing and accumulating anomalies while the core assumptions of the program remain unchanged. In such a situation, the program becomes resistant to change and lacks the ability to generate new insights or predictions. Despite the accumulation of anomalies that challenge the program's explanatory power, the researchers or proponents of the program may defend the core assumptions by making *ad hoc* adjustments to the auxiliary hypotheses. These adjustments are made solely to maintain consistency with the existing framework rather than to address the emerging contradictions or anomalies. As a result, a degenerative research program fails to progress or adapt to new

knowledge and empirical findings. It becomes stagnant, unable to generate novel facts or successful predictions. Even in the face of mounting contradictory evidence, the lack of revision or modification of its core assumptions indicates a resistance to change and a failure to evolve. In some instances, new theories may challenge the hard core, leading to an inter-program problem shift and a new scientific research program.

On the other hand, a progressive research program is characterized by its ability to maintain its validity and explanatory power in the face of new phenomena and evidence. A progressive research program generates new hypotheses and predictions, subsequently confirmed through empirical evidence. It demonstrates the ability to adapt and adjust auxiliary hypotheses within its protective belt while maintaining the stability of its core assumptions. A progressive research program exhibits theoretical progress by expanding knowledge, providing explanations for observed phenomena, and making successful predictions of novel facts.

0.2.2. Hard Core: Ontology, Epistemology, Methodology

Within the Lakatosian framework, the hard core designates those foundational, axiomatic, non-negotiable assumptions underpinning scientific theories, as discussed previously. To effectively take on the task of analyzing Ibn Khaldun's hard core, I am compelled to develop a systematic framework of the hard core and categorize and classify these foundational assumptions. In my endeavor to categorize and classify these foundational assumptions to facilitate my task and help me along the way, I rely on a widely accepted classification that these assumptions can be grouped into three categories: ontological, epistemological, and methodological (Crotty, 2020). Thus, I introduce a clearer interpretation of the hard core of a scientific theory, which aims to enhance our comprehension of the hard core within scientific theories. Thus, I divided the first part of this dissertation, which focuses exclusively on the hard core of Ibn Khaldun's theories of politics and education, into three subsequent chapters on his ontology, epistemology, and methodology.

Ontological Assumptions: By "ontology," I refer to the fundamental assumptions about the nature of reality, which include the entities that exist, their properties, and the relationships between them (Wilson, 1983). At the heart of any theory lies the question of what constitutes reality. What is the nature of existence? What entities

exist, and how can they be grouped or categorized? Ontological assumptions answer these existential questions, providing researchers with a framework for understanding the nature of being and the structure of reality. It sets the stage by defining the boundaries of what exists, thus guiding researchers to what is 'real' in the theory context.

Epistemological Assumptions: Building upon our understanding of reality, epistemological assumptions delve into the nature and origin of knowledge about existing phenomena (Wilson, 1983). How do we know what we know? What constitutes valid knowledge, and how can it be acquired? Epistemological considerations involve determining the sources, limits, and validity of knowledge (Audi, 2010). They fundamentally shape our perspective on truth and its discernment, influencing the types of inquiries we pursue and the methodologies we employ in our quest for answers.

Methodological Assumptions: Once we have established our understanding of reality and knowledge, the next step is to determine how to study that reality systematically. Methodological assumptions are concerned with the strategies, tools, and techniques used in the research process (Acharyya & Bhattacharya, 2019). They guide our choices in research design, data collection, and analysis, ensuring that our investigations are both rigorous and coherent (Wilson, 1983).

0.2.3. Why Lakatos?

I have chosen to employ the Lakatosian framework in this dissertation for two compelling reasons. Firstly, in my opinion, the Lakatosian framework offers a robust theoretical framework that accurately characterize the structure of scientific theories. It provides a systematic approach for appraising research programs while also enabling a clear distinction between the foundational core assumptions and the adaptable auxiliary hypotheses (Lakatos, 1980). This framework, I believe, equips us with the necessary tools to conduct a sophisticated and insightful analysis of the progressive trajectories of scientific theories, including those articulated by Ibn Khaldun in the fields of politics and education.

Secondly, Lakatos's methodology of falsification can be used to assess Ibn Khaldun's theory in a new light as it provides a reasonable set of criteria for assessing research programs. By unearthing the hard core of Ibn Khaldun's theory, we can test its auxiliary hypotheses and evaluate their validity in the contemporary context. This approach allows us to redefine and update Ibn Khaldun's theory, while still maintaining the Khaldunian worldview and paradigm as the philosophical foundation. In doing so, we can demonstrate that his theory is not degenerative but progressive, emphasizing its ongoing relevance and applicability.

Thirdly, Lakatos's framework views science as a series of interconnected theories sharing a common core rather than individual isolated theories. This perspective allows us to identify the hard core of Ibn Khaldun's theory, which serves as the philosophical foundation of his work. By identifying this common core, or Khaldunian paradigm, we can lay the groundwork for future applications and extensions of Ibn Khaldun's ideas. This common core provides a framework for further research and exploration, ensuring the continuity and coherence of Ibn Khaldun's contributions to political and educational theory.

To accomplish this objective, this dissertation employs the Lakatosian framework, which distinguishes between the "hard core" and the "protective belt" of a scientific research program. The hard core represents the unchangeable assumptions and principles, while the protective belt consists of auxiliary hypotheses that can be modified or discarded. By employing the Lakatosian framework, our aim is to uncover Ibn Khaldun's philosophical foundations and examine how these foundational principles manifest in his political and educational theories. Examining Ibn Khaldun's work through this lens unveils how his political and educational theories encompasses both descriptive and prescriptive dimensions. Through this perspective, we discern his underlying multiplex paradigm, which enables Ibn Khaldun to evade the potential for such a divide from the onset. This investigation not only facilitates understanding of the fundamental assumptions and principles that form the foundation of his work but also establishes a robust foundation for conducting further analysis and interpretation of his contributions to political and educational thought.

0.3. Structure of the Thesis

The structure of this dissertation is based on the Lakatosian framework of scientific research programs. It is divided into two main parts, focusing on examining Ibn Khaldun's political and educational theories and thoroughly exploring their underlying philosophical foundations. The first part delves into the hard core or philosophical underpinnings of Ibn Khaldun's *science of society*, specifically his political and educational theories. The first part of this study is divided into three sub-chapters, which cover ontology, epistemology, and methodology, respectively. This deliberate subdivision provides clarity in response to a somewhat ambiguous definition of the hard core, as previously discussed. For Lakatos, the hard core of scientific research programs includes laws of nature, scientific postulates, and general conjectures about physical reality (Lakatos, 1978, 118). To clarify this ambiguity, I align with the belief that ontology, epistemology, and methodology form a unified framework or paradigm, serving as the philosophical underpinnings and assumptions for any scientific theory (Şentürk et al., 2020). Therefore, I incorporate this view into my interpretation of the hard core of a scientific theory as described by Lakatos, which consists of the axioms, the unfalsifiable central tenets. To summarize, the first part of this thesis focuses on the hard core of Ibn Khaldun's political theory, exploring his ontology, epistemology, and methodology. These philosophical underpinnings provide the basis for understanding his approach to politics and education. By clarifying the core assumptions, we can establish a solid foundation for the analysis of Ibn Khaldun's political and educational theories and make sense of the symbiotic coexistence of the empirical and the ethical.

Lakatos maintains that "all scientific research programs may be characterized by their hard core" (Lakatos, 1978). In this sense, the first part of this study, which revisits the philosophical assumptions of Ibn Khaldun, is of great significance for several reasons. One key reason is that this discussion can prompt a reevaluation of our understanding of Ibn Khaldun's approach in the *Muqaddimah*. Our literature review revealed that the hard core of Ibn Khaldun's science of society has been insufficiently studied or misinterpreted, leading to diverse and often contradictory characterizations of his work. This highlights the need to carefully reexamine Ibn Khaldun's philosophical assumptions. Therefore, the primary goal of this discussion is to reidentify Ibn

Khaldun and his theoretical approach. This is a critical component of our overall research, where we seek answers to our research questions.

The second part of the thesis focuses on the heuristic or auxiliary hypotheses, which encompass Ibn Khaldun's actual political and educational theory. This part of the thesis examines Ibn Khaldun's ideas in light of the hard core, exploring how his philosophical assumptions shape his theories. By analyzing Ibn Khaldun's research program using a Lakatosian framework, this thesis provides a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of his work and its significance in the history of social thought. In summary, the second part of the thesis delves into the auxiliary hypotheses of Ibn Khaldun's political theory, examining how his philosophical framework shapes his ideas. Through this analysis, we aim to demonstrate the simultaneous presence of descriptive and prescriptive elements in Ibn Khaldun's work. His political theory addresses both ontological-descriptive questions about the nature of the state and ethical-normative questions about the ideal state.

Below, I draw a table that summarizes the manifestations of the empirical and ethical dimensions across the hard core and auxiliary hypotheses of a theory, thus shedding light on how these dimensions shape the theoretical framework of analysis. The table illustrates different levels of theoretical analysis, ranging from the hard core of theory to auxiliary hypotheses, and highlights the corresponding manifestations of the empirical and ethical aspects. However, the purpose of the table is not to reduce Ibn Khaldun's approach to a mere juxtaposition of these two dimensions. Ibn Khaldun's approach is not a patchwork of these two aspects. Instead, Ibn Khaldun's theory transcends this binary by concurrently integrating and harmonizing these dimensions within a cohesive framework (i.e., multiplexity).

			EMPIRICAL	ETHICAL
THEORY	**Hard Core**	**Ontology**	Real, Sensible	Meaningful, Regulated, Accountable
		Epistemology	Sensory Experience	Religious, Intuitive, Rational
		Methodology	Inductive	Mostly Deductive
	Auxiliary Hypotheses	**Theory (Linguistic Analysis)**	Constative (*ikhbārī*) Positive	Performative (*inshāʿī*) Normative
		Theory (Function)	Descriptive	Prescriptive

Figure 2: Theoretical Analysis and the Manifestations of Empirical and Ethical Dimensions

In the subsequent sections, our exploration of Ibn Khaldun's theory will take us through its various theoretical levels, allowing us to delve deeper into his ideas and uncover how he evades the empirical versus ethical divide from the very beginning. By analyzing the hard core of his theory, which encompasses ontology, epistemology, and methodology, we will gain insights into Ibn Khaldun's approach to understanding the world.

Moving beyond the core, we will examine the auxiliary hypotheses, including linguistic and functional analysis, which provide further layers of understanding within Ibn Khaldun's framework. Throughout our exploration, we will strive to demonstrate how Ibn Khaldun's theory extends beyond the confines of a binary framework, offering a multiplex perspective that incorporates both empirical and ethical dimensions.

0.4. Literature Review, Significance, and Contribution of the Study

By presenting an alternative reading of Ibn Khaldun's political and educational theories with the the empirical-ethical binary in mind through the Lakatosian framework, this thesis contributes to four major areas: political theory, educational theory, the literature on Ibn Khaldun, and post-colonial studies. Regarding the literature on Ibn Khaldun that seeks to identify his approach, some scholars label him as a 'naturalist, empiricist' (Kalpakian, 2008: 367), 'positivist' (Turner, 1971, 45), or

'functionalist' (Arnason & Stauth, 2004, 29). These scholars view Ibn Khaldun as a modern thinker or a precursor to modern social sciences, arguing that he adopted a 'secular,' 'rational,' and 'empirical' approach in his investigations of history, society, and politics. E. Rosenthal, K. Ayad, Z. V. Togan, and Ü. Hassan, for instance, maintain that even though Ibn Khaldun was a devoted Muslim, he was able to separate "religion" from the "world." Conversely, scholars such as Muhsin Mehdi, Barbara Stowasser, Howard Becker, and Harry Elmer Barnes dispute the idea that Ibn Khaldun was an empiricist, arguing that he regarded both empirical and supernatural elements as part of the same reality. Similarly, Lawrence Rosen and Jon W. Anderson assert that Ibn Khaldun went beyond mere description, examining the moral purpose underlying these descriptions (Anderson, 1983, 272; Rosen, 2005). In line with their arguments, this dissertation concurs that the empirical and ethical dimensions functioned in tandem in the *Muqaddimah*. However, it goes a step further by seeking to comprehend why this is the case and how this integration is accomplished.

In the realm of political theory, this study aims to address the longstanding tension between empirical and normative approaches and the resulting dichotomy between the description of political realities (the "is") and the exploration of ethical ideals (the "ought"). This tension has persisted over the past century, marked by oscillations between empirical and normative frameworks as scholars grappled with how to integrate these contrasting approaches effectively. The division of labor that emerged saw empirical political theorists striving to uncover the causal laws shaping political dynamics, while normative political theorists focused on articulating the ethical foundations and ideals for societal organization and governance. This dichotomy can be traced back to the mid-twentieth century "behavioral revolution," which prioritized empirical analysis to understand the functioning of political systems. As noted by David Easton, the discipline underwent a significant transformation during this period, shifting from a problem-oriented, prescriptive discipline to one largely focused on analytic, general, and explanatory concerns, minimizing the emphasis on ethical considerations (Easton, 1951).

On the other side of the spectrum, the normative approach to political theory centers on ethical considerations, values, and prescriptions about how societies should be organized and governed. This approach is particularly evident in much of

contemporary Anglo-American political philosophy, which often functions as a form of applied ethics. Central figures such as John Rawls, whose work in the 1970s significantly shaped the revival of normative political theory, have contributed to a perception of political theory as a predominantly normative domain. This viewpoint gained widespread acceptance towards the end of the twentieth century, with works by scholars such as Kymlicka (2002), Wolff (2015), and Swift (2013) reinforcing the dichotomy between the empirical and the normative.

This research, therefore, holds particular significance as it endeavors to reconcile these divergent approaches within the framework of Ibn Khaldun's political theory. In other words, it aims to demonstrate that this stark divide between these perspectives is not inevitable. In challenging the existing division in political and educational theory, this dissertation highlights the merit of a multiplex approach that intertwines both empirical and normative dimensions right from the outset, thereby shedding new light on the ongoing debate described by David Easton as the "death of political theory" (Easton, 1951). Rather than being trapped between the extremes of 'naive objectivism' of modernism and 'problematic relativism' of post-modernism, this study highlights the need to view the past not merely as an archive of facts, but as a source of ethical significance that can inform and guide future actions.

In the field of educational theory, this research provides a significant contribution by addressing the long-standing dichotomy of nature versus nurture and structure versus agency in human development, as well as the fact/value divide in educational research (Culp vd., 2022; Kershner vd., 2020; Wegerif vd., 2015). This binary opposition has dominated the discourse of human development, leaving little room for a more comprehensive perspective that takes into account the interplay of various factors. The discussions on the educational theory of Ibn Khaldun will contribute to this debate with offering an alternative multiplex framework that gives primacy to human agency, without overlooking the significant influences of both hereditary and environmental factors.

The discourse surrounding human development has evolved significantly over the centuries. The dichotomy between nature and nurture has persisted in various forms, more recently manifesting as the environment versus genetics debate. John Locke, a

prominent figure in this debate, argued in the seventeenth century that the human mind is a blank slate (*tabula rasa*) and that their development is shaped entirely by their learning and experiences (Locke, 1948). However, by the twenty-first century, this viewpoint had been widely criticized as overly reductionist (Wright et al., 2012, 56). Scholars recognized the determinacy of genetic factors, leading to the environment vs. genetics debate. While recent research focuses on the interplay of genetic predispositions and environmental factors giving rise to behavioral genetics, these debates often portrayed individuals as passive recipients of genetic predispositions and environmental influences, with structural factors perceived as the ultimate determinants of behavior and development (Wright et al., 2012, 56). This debate neglects the significance of individual agency in shaping one's development.

In contemporary society, which can be characterized by the resurgence of post-truth ideology, on the other hand, there has been a tendency to minimize or even dismiss the significance of structural factors, placing a strong emphasis on individual self-formation. Rooted in the constructivist and postmodern philosophy, this perspective privileges personal agency and autonomy, conceiving individuals as free agents who can shape their identities and truths. Structural factors like societal norms, cultural influences, and institutional frameworks are often perceived as constraints that limit individual freedom, leading to a focus on deconstructing and challenging these elements to make room for individual self-expression and alternative narratives. While this perspective extols individual autonomy and diverse perspectives, it often neglects how structural factors shape and influence our experiences and opportunities.

Ibn Khaldun's educational theory prompts us to reevaluate these reductionist understandings and dichotomies. It considers both individual agency and structural factors, recognizing the role of geographical, societal, cultural, and historical contexts in human development whilst also acknowledging the role of individual volition and self-formation. Unlike approaches that attribute ultimate determinacy to structural factors, Ibn Khaldun's framework maintains cognitive or moral development as an active and intentional process that unfolds within the context formed by these structural factors.

Therefore, this research aims to illuminate Ibn Khaldun's multiplex perspective on human development, which transcends the simplistic binary oppositions of nature versus nurture and structure versus agency. It highlights the indispensable role of human agency through the acquisition of '*malaka'* while also taking into account the structural factors that shape the context within which individuals develop and learn. His educational theory provides a more nuanced understanding of the factors influencing human development, a crucial contribution to educational theory.

In terms of its contribution to the literature on Ibn Khaldun, this research brings clarity to the ongoing debate concerning Ibn Khaldun's intellectual approach. Some scholars identify him as a 'naturalist, empiricist' (Kalpakian, 2008: 367), 'positivist' (Turner, 1971, 45), or 'functionalist' (Arnason & Stauth, 2004, 29). These scholars view Ibn Khaldun as a modern thinker or a precursor to modern social sciences, arguing that he adopted a "secular," "rational," and "empirical" approach in his investigations of history, society, and politics. E. Rosenthal, K. Ayad, Z. V. Togan, and Ü. Hassan, for instance, maintain that even though Ibn Khaldun was a devoted Muslim, he was able to separate "religion" from the "world." Conversely, scholars such as Muhsin Mehdi, Barbara Stowasser, Howard Becker, and Harry Elmer Barnes dispute the idea that Ibn Khaldun was an empiricist, arguing that he regarded both empirical and supernatural elements as part of the same reality. Similarly, Lawrence Rosen and Jon W. Anderson assert that Ibn Khaldun went beyond mere description, examining the moral purpose underlying these descriptions (Anderson, 1983, s. 272; Rosen, 2005: 599). In line with their arguments, this dissertation concurs that the empirical and ethical dimensions functioned in tandem in the *Muqaddimah*. However, it goes a step further by seeking to comprehend why this is the case and how this integration is accomplished.

Lastly, this study holds significant value for post-colonial studies as it presents an alternative paradigm, termed multiplexity (Şentürk et al., 2020), to the hegemonic modernist or post-modernist conceptions of being and human nature prevalent in Euro-centric literature. The Western scholarly landscape has largely been shaped by uniplex or single-layered approaches, such as positivism and idealism, which champion reductionist perspectives. These approaches focus on a single level of existence and a particular type of knowledge and methodology, often overlooking the complexities and nuances of human experience and existence.

Multiplexity, on the other hand, proposes a multilayered approach to existence, knowledge, truth, and norms. It moves away from the reductionist tendencies of modernist and post-modernist paradigms and provides a more comprehensive framework to understand the intricacies of human nature and existence. This alternative paradigm encourages a more pluralistic and nuanced exploration of these phenomena, moving away from the monist or singular perspective and accommodating multiple layers of understanding.

The decolonizing the curriculum (DtC) in post-colonial studies has emerged as a significant movement aimed at challenging and dismantling the Euro-centric bias in education (Charles & Boyle, 2020). The introduction of multiplexity into the academic discourse will contribute to this movement by providing a robust alternative to dominant Western theories. This may pave the way for alternative ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies that are rooted in a non-western worldview, thereby facilitating a diverse and decolonized curriculum. The study highlights the need for recognizing and embracing alternative worldviews in scholarly investigations, thereby paving the way for a more inclusive and diverse academic landscape.

PART I
The *Hard Core* or the Philosophical Foundations of Ibn Khaldun's Political and Educational Theory

CHAPTER ONE

ANATOMY OF EXISTENCE AND ONTOLOGICAL HIERARCHIES

This chapter presents a comprehensive analysis of Ibn Khaldun's ontology, covering his views on the nature of reality, human beings, society, and politics, with a particular focus on his seminal work, the *Muqaddimah*. The central aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that Ibn Khaldun's paradigm is characterized by a multi-layered and hierarchical worldview. Our analysis will be primarily directed toward an overarching concern that pertains to the research question of this study: whether Ibn Khaldun's descriptive account of the nature of existence and beings yield normative implications.

Should we establish this connection, our discussions on ontology will serve as the linchpin for our central argument that Ibn Khaldun's political and educational theories are both descriptive and prescriptive, and empirical and normative, and this is due to the distinct (i.e., multiplex) features of the hard core of his research program. We assert that Ibn Khaldun's ontology, delineating his conception of the fundamental nature of reality and beings, informs his political and educational theorizing in both descriptive (i.e., explicating the way things are) and normative (i.e., prescribing how things ought to be) ways.

The crux of our argument is that Ibn Khaldun's multi-layered ontology facilitates a harmonious interplay between description and prescription, or the empirical and the normative, fostering a symbiotic relationship rather than a mutually exclusive binary in his political and educational theorizing. Put differently, his understanding of reality and human nature forms the bedrock of his perspectives on the nature of politics and education, enabling the derivation of an idealized blueprint for the governance of society and the cultivation of individuals.

Our analysis will reinforce the assertions put forth by Voyé and Billiet (1999, 15-16), who noted that Ibn Khaldun's view of the universe allowed for the coexistence of reason and religion without necessitating the subjugation of one to the other.

Furthermore, we will corroborate Hamès' (1999, 174) emphasis on Ibn Khaldun's non-contradictory view of reason and religion as complementary elements that can coexist harmoniously within a single worldview, and that description cannot be separated from prescription, normativity, and ethics. Consequently, we concur with their assertion that this interconnectedness implies that description is inextricably linked to prescription, normativity, and ethics.

The vast literature on Ibn Khaldun and his political and educational theories tends to overlook his ontological views on the nature of reality, human beings, society, and politics. Although some references mention these views even briefly (see Mahdi, 2015; Zaidi, 2011) or focus on a specific detailed aspect of it such as causality (see Çaksu, 1999; (Moad, 2017), their aim is not to provide a systematic and organized explanation concerning his ontological views. Moreover, Annalisa Verza argues that some scholars misinterpret Ibn Khaldun's ontological views by applying August Comte's tripartite scheme of progress, which places the positive scientific system as the pinnacle of intellectual development, preceded by the "immature" theological and metaphysical phases (Verza, 2021). This view leads some scholars, like Bouthoul, to emphasize Ibn Khaldun's exceptionality in being able to break free from Islamic theological interpretation of history (Bouthoul, 1930; Verza, 2021, s. 41). Constant Hamès (1999, 173) argues that similar interpretations can also be found in Ernest Renan's account of Averroes (Renan and al-Afghani 1883), where Averroes is only considered for his Aristotelianism, leading to the implicit conclusion that the loss of vitality in the Islamic scientific spirit is essentially due to the rigid influence of the Muslim religion, specifically its metaphysical and theological explanations (Hamès, 1999, 173). Hence, it is evident that the current literature lacks a comprehensive understanding of Ibn Khaldun's ontology and its relationship with his political and educational theory. This chapter aims to fill this gap by thoroughly analyzing Ibn Khaldun's ontological views and examining their potential normative implications.

Ibn Khaldun's ontological views are expounded throughout the *Muqaddimah*. However, the primary sources for his views on reality are the sixth prefatory discussion of the first book and the final sixth book of the *Muqaddimah*. Hence, here, I primarily refer to these two parts. This chapter is structured into four major sections, each focusing on a specific ontological aspect of Ibn Khaldun's worldview. The first section

analyzes Ibn Khaldun's most general view of the universe (*ʾālam*) and its fundamental principles. This discussion encompasses his perspectives on the categories and levels of existence and being and the principles of being and becoming, such as the concepts of essence-accidents, nature, and causality. By laying the foundation of this general ontology, the chapter sets the groundwork for the subsequent sections on human, social, and political ontologies, which are all integral parts of the same reality.

The following section of this chapter explores Ibn Khaldun's unique perspective on the nature of human existence and how it fits within the larger conception of reality. Here, I present two main discussions. The first discussion centers around the human being as an ontological entity, considering its fundamental properties and how it fits within the broader reality. This analysis will delve into Ibn Khaldun's views on the essence and modes of existence of the human being, its relationship with the universe, and broader metaphysical principles. The second discussion focuses on the human being as a social being and human nature, examining its universal inherent qualities, such as their innate tendency towards good or evil. This section is crucial to our goals in this thesis, as we will see how these ontological principles and qualities concerning the human being inform Ibn Khaldun's political and educational theorizing in the second part of the thesis.

The third section of this chapter focuses on the social ontology in the *Muqaddimah*. While studies on Ibn Khaldun are increasingly expanding and forming a vast literature, none of them, as far as I am aware, address his theory of civilization in the context of the newly emerging discipline of social ontology, except Tahsin Görgün's works in Turkish (Görgün, 2006). In this section, I will try to elucidate the concept of *ʿumrān,* one of Ibn Khaldun's original contributions, which allowed him to establish a new field of study called *ʿilm al-ʿumrān*, whose subject matter (*mawḍūʿ*) is human social organization and the social world that emerges from human actions. Ibn Khaldun viewed the social reality as an ontological entity, as a *being qua being,* with several items that accidentally occur to (*yaʿriḍu li-*) itself, including politics, sciences, crafts, and education. Ibn Khaldun's authentic perspective on society as an ontological entity predates John Searle, widely regarded as the founder of the emerging field of social ontology (Andina, 2016). However, it is important not to position Ibn Khaldun simply as a precursor to social ontology or the Orientalist view of him as the forerunner of

social sciences, as this labeling could imply that his ideas are outdated and less relevant to contemporary discourse. Instead, Ibn Khaldun offers a distinctive perspective that offers an alternative to both social sciences and social ontology.

In the fourth section of this chapter, I explicate the concept of political ontology in the *Muqaddimah* similarly to Philip Pettit's interpretation of political ontology as a social ontology of political institutions (Pettit, 2012, 288). I demonstrate how Ibn Khaldun regarded political rule (*mulk*) as an ontological construct characterized by inherent essential properties and the capacity to adapt to changing conditions that occur to it while maintaining specific relationships with other societal elements.

After outlining Ibn Khaldun's major ontological views, we will have a solid foundation for our discussion on epistemology, as one's understanding of knowledge cannot be fully comprehended without a framework for understanding what exists. Furthermore, this will provide a basis for our subsequent discussions on his methodology, and ultimately for his political and educational philosophy.

1.1. The Very Core of the *Hard Core*: General Ontology

In order to understand the world or a specific aspect of it, one must make assumptions about the existence and nature of entities within that domain. These assumptions, whether explicitly stated or not, delineate the types of entities that exist, their properties, the conditions under which they exist, and the nature of their relationships. This comprehensive catalog of existing entities and their relationships is known as an ontology (Scott & Marshall, 2009, 531). The ontological assumptions held by a scholar profoundly inform their interpretation of evidence and construction of theories. Often, these presuppositions operate at an unconscious level. Hence, when investigating a scholar's ideas to identify the distinct features of their methods and theories, it is imperative to uncover their underlying ontological assumptions.

In the case of Ibn Khaldun, uncovering his ontological assumptions is not a challenging task, as he expounds them throughout the *Muqaddimah*. Moreover, his views on ontology can also be inferred from his commentary on Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's treatise on *kalām*, *al-Muḥaṣṣal*, known as *Lubāb al-Muḥaṣṣal fī Uṣūl al-Dīn* (Extracts from Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's *Muḥaṣṣal*).

Ibn Khaldun's views on existence in general mold his overall set of core assumptions and the façade of his political and educational theory. This section will uncover Ibn Khaldun's views on the levels of existence, the hierarchy of beings, and the fundamental principles of reality and beings.

1.1.1. Levels of Existence: Multiplex Ontology

The question of what exists is fundamental and underpins all other investigations. As we begin our examination of Ibn Khaldun's ontological views, it is noteworthy to consider his introduction, wherein we encounter a captivating 'teaser' for the remainder of his book. In keeping with Islamic scholarly tradition, Ibn Khaldun begins his work with a doxology that invokes Allah's name (*basmala*), praises Him (*ḥamdala*), and prays for His messenger, the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ (*ṣalwala*). This practice, known as *barāʿat al-istihlāl* or "brilliant exordia," is a ubiquitous literary standard of classical Islamic texts that venerates Allah and eloquently introduces the book's themes while adhering to the Quranic model. For our purposes, it is worth emphasizing this introductory passage, with the intention of engaging the contemporary reader, who may not be familiar with this standard preliminary remarks that reveals the author's most fundamental ontological assumptions.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

يقول العبد الفقير إلى الله تعالى الغنيّ بلطفه عبد الرّحمن بن محمّد بن خلدون الحضرميّ وفّقه الله:

الحمد لله الّذي له العزّة والجبروت، وبيده الملك والملكوت، وله الأسماء الحسنى والنّعوت، العالم فلا يغرب عنه ما تظهره النّجوى أو يخفيه السّكوت، القادر فلا يعجزه شيء في السّماوات والأرض ولا يفوت، أنشأنا من الأرض نسلا واستعمرنا فيها أجيالا وأمما ويسّر لنا منها أرزاقا وقسما، تكنفنا الأرحام والبيوت، ويكفلنا الرّزق والقوت، وتبلينا الأيّام والوقوت، وتعتورنا الآجال الّتي خطّ علينا كتابها الموقوت وله البقاء والثّبوت، وهو الحيّ الّذي لا يموت، **والصّلاة والسّلام على سيّدنا ومولانا محمّد** النّبي العربيّ المكتوب في التّوراة والإنجيل المنعوت، الّذي تمحّض لفصاله الكون قبل أن تتعاقب الآحاد والسّبوت، ويتباين زحل واليهموت، وشهد بصدقه الحمام والعنكبوت، وعلى آله وأصحابه الّذين لهم في محبته واتباعه الأثر البعيد والصّيت، والشّمل الجميع في مظاهرته ولعدوّهم الشّمل الشّتيت، صلى الله عليه وعليهم ما اتّصل بالإسلام جدّه المبخوت. وانقطع بالكفر حبله المبتوت، وسلم كثيرا.

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate

> The servant in dire need of Allah the Most High, who is rich by His kindness and blessings, ʿAbd al-Raḥman bin Muḥammad bin Khaldun al-Ḥaḍramī—May Allah grant him success!—says:
>
> Praise be to Allah, to whom belong majesty and power, and in whose hand are the physical world (*mulk*) and the metaphysical world (*malakūt*). His are the most beautiful names and attributes. He is the All-knowing, from whom nothing revealed in whispered conversations or concealed in silence escapes. He is All-capable; nothing in the heavens and the earth can incapacitate or escape Him. He created us from the earth as living beings and made us inhibit it as generations and nations. He facilitated for us sustenance and provisions for it. The wombs of our mothers and our homes shelter us. He guarantees our sustenance and food. Time wears us out, and the predetermined terms claim us as written in the Book of Destiny. To Him belongs permanence and constancy, for He is the Ever-living who does not die. Peace and blessings be upon our master, Muḥammad, the Arab prophet mentioned and described in the Torah and the Gospel. He, for whose birth the universe was already in labor before the succession of Sundays and Saturdays, and before the differentiation of Saturn and Jupiter, and whose truthfulness was witnessed by the pigeon and the spider. And upon his family and companions, who have a far-reaching impact and reputation in their love for and allegiance to him and maintain an all-encompassing unity by supporting his mission, while their adversaries embody a disjointed collectivity. May Allah bless him and his fortunate predecessors by Islam, where they connected. And, by disbelief, was his severed bond cut off. And give manifold blessings (to him and them)![1]

This introductory account of the *Muqaddimah* provides valuable insights into Ibn Khaldun's ontological views. First, it indicates that, according to Ibn Khaldun, there are three different levels of existence: the physical (*mulk*), the metaphysical (*malakūt*), and divine worlds. This multi-layered conception of existence contrasts with monist philosophies (e.g., materialism and ontological idealism) that reduce existence to a single ontic category. These different levels are not separated from one another. Ibn

[1] All translations from the original text are my own unless otherwise noted. While using Franz Rosenthal's renowned English translation for reference, I have identified certain inaccuracies in his translation, such as his rendering of the word *'mulk'* in this paragraph as 'royal authority,' which is not accurate. In this context, *'mulk'* and *'malakūt'* refer to the physical and metaphysical realms of existence."

Khaldun's mention of Allah's control over the physical and the metaphysical realms emphasizes the interconnectedness of different levels of existence and the dependency of these created realms on the divine. This emphasis implies the concept of *tawḥīd*, which indicates the uniqueness of Allah as the ultimate source of all existence.

Another important theme indicated in this introductory paragraph concerns a fundamental ontological principle pertaining to both the Creator and the creation. This principle states that Allah is the only being with the attribute of permanence, whereas all other beings are impermanent and subject to change and decay.

This fundamental ontological principle of impermanency, which applies to created things, including human societies and civilizations, manifests itself in Ibn Khaldun's political theory, which will be explored in detail in the second part of the thesis. Ibn Khaldun draws an analogy between the life of a civilization and that of a human being, as both belong to the same ontic category of contingent beings. Consequently, they are subject to the same principle of impermanence, lacking any inherent quality of continuity or stability. This perspective leads him to propose that social and political structures undergo recurring patterns of birth, growth, maturity, and decline, akin to the life stages of a living organism, thus molding his theory into a cyclical form characterized by the rise and fall of civilizations.

Drawing from this principle, the Muslim philosophers and theologians categorized existence into two: the necessary being (*wājib al-wujūd*) and contingent existence (*mumkin al-wujūd*) as per the former; pre-eternal (*qadīm*) and originated (*ḥādith*) as per the latter (al-Rāzī, 2020: 57, 72; IK, L: 92, 103).[2] The necessary and pre-eternal being, i.e., Allah the Highest, is independent of any other being to exist and is Himself the principle of being and the agent of creation (al-Rāzī, 2020: 57; IK, L: 95). Contrastingly, all created beings have originated existence, which is contingent and dependent on a cause beyond themselves. Furthermore, Ibn Khaldun's conception of God is not that of an inactive clockmaker who programmed the universe to sustain itself and withdrew to watch it from afar, but rather an active Creator and Provider, as evidenced by over a thousand expressions in the *Muqaddimah* that testify to the

[2] IK: Ibn Khaldun; L: *Lubāb al-Muḥaṣṣal fī Uṣūl al-Dīn* (Dār al-Maʿrifa al-Jāmiʿiyyah, 1996).

dependency of all creation on the Creator. In other words, God does not create the world and then step back to let it run on its own but is continuously involved in the ongoing activity of the world, providing for it and guiding it towards its ultimate end. This concept of an active and providential God implies a purpose behind the universe and that everything that happens is part of that plan. Ibn Khaldun sees history as a manifestation of God's providence, with events unfolding according to God's will and purpose.

The purpose or will of God, according to Ibn Khaldun, is to construct the world through human beings and to make them His vicegerents (*iʿtimār al-ʿālam bihim wa-istikhlāfihi ʾiyyāhum)* (IK, ME, 1: 91).[3] He asserts that this is the essence of *ʿumrān* means, which is the subject matter of his new science. Notably, Ibn Khaldun does not merely rely on a pure *factual-ontological* assumption about the existence of God and his active role in the creation; he also considers God's purpose in creating the world and human beings, which has *ethical-ontological* implications. Ibn Khaldun's acknowledgment of God's purpose in creation allowed him to view the world and human beings as factual entities and entities with intrinsic value and ethical implications. This particular juncture is where the fact and value intertwined, imbuing his empirical-descriptive theory with an ethical dimension. This perspective also carries a prescriptive aspect, implying a responsibility on the part of individuals to align themselves with God's plan.

After establishing the existence of God in Ibn Khaldun's worldview and its ethical implications, our inquiry into his ontological views proceeds to other levels of existence.

> إنّا نشهد في أنفسنا بالوجدان الصّحيح وجود ثلاثة عوالم: أوّلها: عالم الحسّ، ونعتبره بمدارك الحسّ الّذي شاركنا فيه الحيوانات بالإدراك، ثمّ نعتبر الفكر الّذي اختصّ به البشر فنعلم منه وجود النفس الإنسانيّة علما ضروريّا بما بين جنبينا من مدارك العلميّة الّتي هي فوق مدارك الحسّ، فتراه عالما آخر فوق عالم الحسّ. ثمّ نستدلّ على عالم ثالث فوقنا بما نجد فينا من آثاره الّتي تلقى في أفئدتنا كالإرادات والوجهات، نحو الحركات الفعليّة، فنعلم أنّ هناك فاعلا يبعثنا عليها من عالم فوق عالمنا وهو عالم الأرواح والملائكة. وفيه ذوات مدركة لوجود آثارها فينا مع ما بيننا وبينها من المغايرة.
>
> (IK, 2004: 2: 161)

[3] ME: *Muqaddimah* trns. by Franz Rosenthal (Bollingen Series XLIII, Princeton University Press, 1958); 1: Vol I.

> We observe in ourselves through sound intuition the existence of three worlds. The first of them is the world of sensual perception. We become aware of it by means of the perception of the senses, which the animals share with us. Then, we become aware of the ability to think which is a special quality of human beings. We learn from it that the human soul exists. This knowledge is necessitated by the fact that we have in us scientific perceptions which are above the perceptions of the senses. They must thus be considered as another world, above the world of the senses. Then, we deduce (the existence of) a third world, above us, from the influences that we find it leaves in our hearts, such as volition and an inclination toward active motions. Thus, we know that there exists an agent there who directs us toward those things from a world above our world. That world is the world of spirits and angels. It contains essences that can be perceived because of the existence of influences they exercise upon us, despite the gap between us and them. (IK, ME, 2: 419-420)

As understood from the above excerpt, Ibn Khaldun mentions the existence of three distinct worlds: the world of sensual perception (*ʿālam al-ḥiss*), the world of the human soul (*ʿālam al-nafs al-insāniyyah*), and the world of souls and angels (*ʿālam al-arwāḥ wa al-malāʾikah*). Ibn Khaldun argues that the knowledge of the existence of these three worlds is attained through sound intuition (*al-wijdān al-ṣaḥīḥ*) and not through revelation, as relying on the latter would result in a circular reasoning or logical fallacy. This perspective is significant for understanding how he justifies his ontological views through his multi-level epistemology, which will be further discussed in the following chapter.

The physical world, known as *the world of sensual perception* (*ʿālam al-ḥiss*), is the first level of existence in Ibn Khaldun's ontology. It is a material realm that is accessible to human and animal senses. This tangible world, with its colors, shapes, textures, sounds, and smells, can be directly perceived through our senses.

In addition to the physical world, Ibn Khaldun identifies a second level of existence, which is *the world of the human soul* (*ʿālam al-nafs al-insāniyyah* or *ʿālam al-fikr*), which is unique to humans and allows us to comprehend and analyze knowledge beyond what our senses can perceive. According to Ibn Khaldun, this world should be considered separate from the world of sensual perception. This level of existence is distinct from the physical realm in that it is not directly observable through the senses

but is accessed through our reasoning (*al-fikr*). Ibn Khaldun argues that the human soul, at an ontological level, is a spiritual entity that possesses perception and causes motion. It is seen as an intermediate level of existence, connecting the physical world with the higher level of existence occupied by the angels.

The third world is *the world of souls and angels* (*ʿālam al-arwāḥ wa al-malāʾikah*), which is above us and deduced from the influences that we feel in our hearts, such as volition and an inclination towards action. It is important to note that while this world cannot be directly observed, its existence is inferred through its influences on the individual's physical and mental aspects. Humans and animals share the world of the senses, while the world of the intellect and spirits is shared by humans and angels, whose essences are similar to the entities in that world. These essences are free from corporeality and matter and are pure intellect where the intellect, the thinker, and the object of thinking are one. This ontological assertion that the essences of the intellect and souls are similar will play an important role in shaping Ibn Khaldun's epistemology.

This excerpt makes it evident that according to Ibn Khaldun, existence is multiplex: different layers of reality are connected and ordered hierarchically. Let us now explore the interconnections between these levels of existence and their fundamental ontological principles.

1.1.2 Fundamental Ontological Principles: An Endless Pattern in Beings

The interconnection between the vertical spectrum of multiplex reality is defined by four main principles: (1) *order* and regularity (*al-tartīb wa al-iḥkām*); (2) intelligible *nexus* between cause and effect (*rabṭ al-asbāb bi al-musabbabāt*); (3) *junction* between entities (*ittiṣāl al-akwān bi al-akwān*); and (4) *transformation* of some entities into others (*istiḥālat baʿḍ al-mawjūdāt ilā baʿḍ*). Firstly, he emphasizes the importance of order and solid construction, known as *al-tartīb wa al-iḥkām*, a fundamental principle in his philosophy. As mentioned above, all existent beings in all their simple and composite worlds are arranged in a natural order of ascent and descent so that everything constitutes an uninterrupted continuum (IK, ME, 2: 422-23).

Secondly, he highlights the nexuses between causes and things caused or *rabṭ al-asbāb bi al-musabbabāt*. This principle highlights the importance of understanding the relationship between causes and their effects. This principle, as will come below, applies in the social world as well and constitutes the ontological basis of the formation of the social world.

Thirdly, Ibn Khaldun emphasizes the connection between parts of the creation, or *ittiṣāl al-akwān bi al-akwān*, which is a central theme in his understanding of the natural world. Finally, he highlights the transformations of some entities into others, or *istiḥālat baʿḍ al-mawjūdāt ilā baʿḍ*, which emphasizes the dynamic nature of the universe and the constant change that occurs within it. Ibn Khaldun justifies his multiplex epistemology, including the knowledge of the prophets, through this final ontological principle. The combination of these principles offers a complete comprehension of Ibn Khaldun's ontological views, including his understanding of the social and natural world, which constitutes an endless pattern in creation.

According to Ibn Khaldun, these principles apply to the different worlds and their constituents. He illustrates these principles by examining various entities at different levels of existence. Here, we make use of Pîrîzâde Mehmed Sahib Efendi's Turkish translation (2015) as it is more accurate and gives more insight to the Arabic original text than the English translation.

> Ma'lum ola ki biz nûr-ı çeşm-i basiret ile bu âleme naẓar ettiğimizde arz ve semâyı ve bunlarda vâki' olan mahlûkât u masnû'âtın cemî'îsini nizâm-ı acîb ve tertib-i garib ile müretteb ü muntazam bulup kârhâne-i sun'-ı İlahî'de mevcûd olan âsâr ve sanâyi'in ba'zisini ba'zisina merbût ve silsile-i mevcûdâtin tertib ü nizami ve devâm ü kiyâmi esbâb-ı âdiyeye menût olduğu, mahsûs ve mevcûdâtin bazısı bazısına münkalib ve müstahil olduğu meşhûdumuz olup kârgâh-ı sun'u îcâdın acâyib ü garâibi münkazî vü müntehi değildir. İcmâlen beyâni böyledir ki Sâni'-i hakiki celle şânuhu hazretlerinin asâr-ı kudret-i kâmilesi olan mevcûdât-ı mümkine ki âlem ondan ibârettir, iki kısma münkasim olup ya mahsûs ve müşâheddir ya değildir. Eğer mahûs ise ona âlem-i mahsûs-i cismanî derler; arz ve semâ ve onlarda mevcûd olan sâir eşyâ gibi. Eğer mahsûs değil ise ona âlem-i rûhânì derler; melâike-i kirâm ve ervah gibi. Alem-i mahsûs-i cismânî dahi ya ulvidir, ona âlem-i eflak ıtlâk olunur; ecrâm-ı semâvât ve onlarda merkûz olan kevâkib gibi. Ya süflidir, ona âlem-i

> anâsir ıtlâk olunur; nâr ve havâ ve mâ ve türâb ve bunlardan mürekkeb olan maden ve nebât ve hayvân gibi. (IK, MO: 1: 302-303)[4]

In this passage, Pîrîzâde makes a semantic rather than a literal translation of this part of the original text. The contingent beings (*al-mawjūdāt al-mumkina)* is the art of the divine power of God (*al-ṣāniʿ al-ḥaqīqī*) is classified into two: (1) the physical world which is corporeal (*maḥsūs*) and perceptible (*mushāhad*) including (a) elements (i.e. earth, water, air, fire) up to the celestial spheres and planets, and (b) compounds (*ʿālam al-takwīn*) such as minerals, plants, animals, and human beings; and (2) the spiritual world which is not corporeal consisting of souls and angels.

[4] MO: *Muqaddimah* in Ottoman Turkish by Pîrîzâde Mehmed Sâhib Efendi and Ahmed Cevdet Paşa (Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı, 2015).

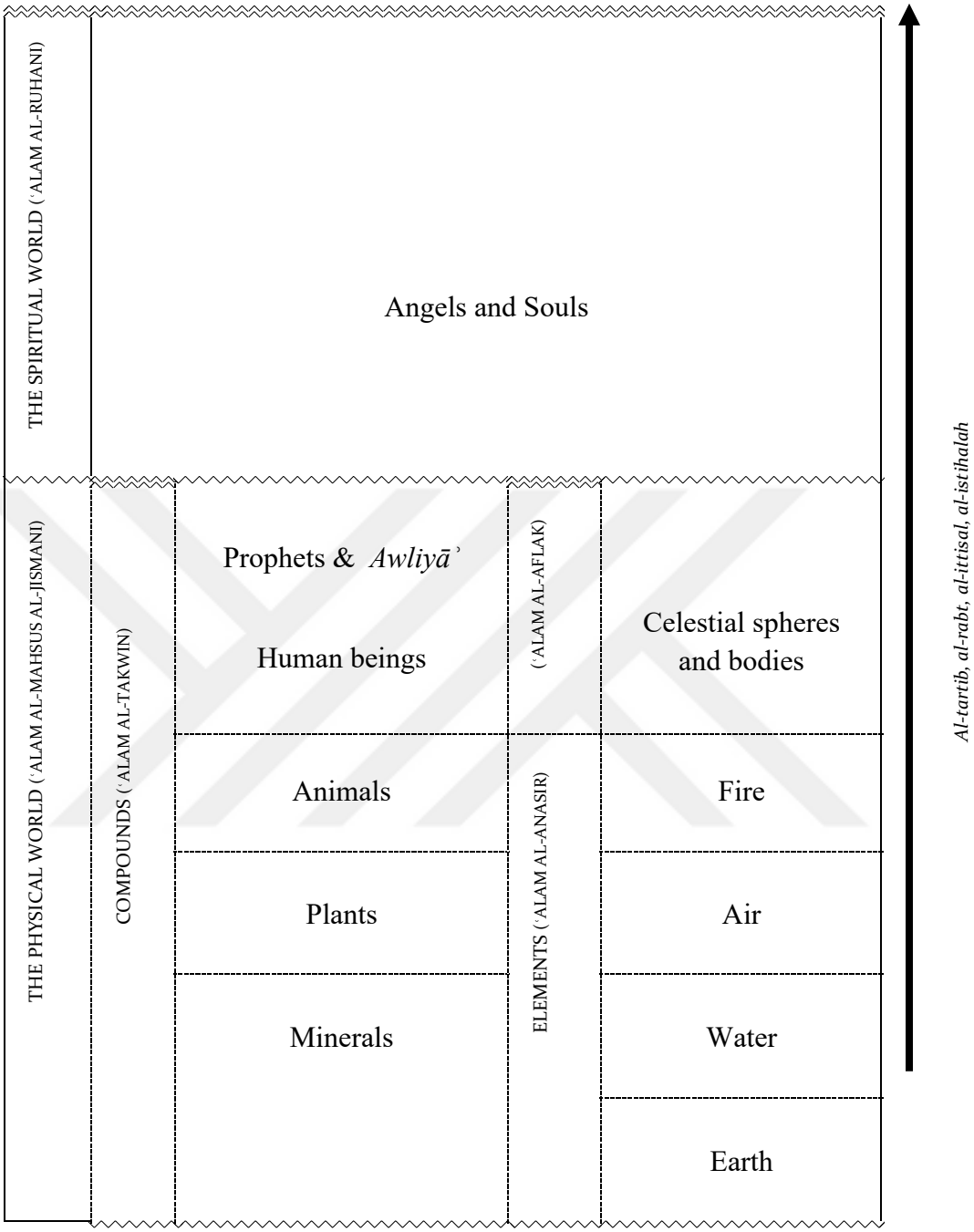

Figure 3: Multiplex Ontology and Hierarchy of Beings

As understood from the above figure, all existence with different degrees is arranged in a natural order of ascent and descent. At the end of each degree, the essences are prepared to be transformed into the adjacent essences, either above or below them. This concept applies to simple material elements, plants, animals, and to humans and prophets as a bridge between the physical and the spiritual realms consisting of angels.

The preparedness for transformation on either side of each stage of existence is what their connection or junction means.

This ontological schema has significant implications for Ibn Khaldun's human ontology and theory of knowledge. It is worth noting that some readers have interpreted the concepts of *ittiṣāl* and *istiḥālah* as evidence of Ibn Khaldun's support for the theory of evolution. However, this interpretation is incorrect. Ibn Khaldun's discussion of *ittiṣāl* and *istiḥalah* does not address the origins or emergence of entities but rather their inherent qualities and how they relate to one another. The idea of readiness to transform into each other is a general quality that entities possess as long as they exist and is not a statement about their evolutionary history.

Another important ontological assertion that is found in *Shifāʾ al-sāʾil li-tahdhīb al-masāʾil*, Ibn Khaldun's work on *tasawwuf* is as follows:

> When God created the world, He did not immediately thrust it into material existence but did so gradually and in phases. First, God deposited all of its realities and essences, great or small, collectively or individually, in a book He named the Tablet (*al-lawḥ*), and He called the creative principle Pen, as is attested to in the Qurʾān. On this Tablet are recorded the truths that have been, are, and will be until the Day of Resurrection. Then, God gradually introduced His creation to the material world of the universe. (IK, S, 60)[5]

This paragraph from *Shifāʾ al-sāʾil* presents another aspect of Ibn Khaldun's ontological views on creation and introduces the concept of *al-lawḥ*, a tablet that exists on the spiritual level of existence. On this tablet, the truths of past, present, and future until the Day of Resurrection are recorded. This is a crucial concept in Ibn Khaldun's worldview, and its implications on his epistemology will be further explored in the second chapter.

Before we discuss Ibn Khaldun's human ontology, it is crucial to address two essential topics that lay the groundwork for our discussions on ontology in general and human and social ontology in particular. The first topic pertains to the inherent structure of

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[5] S: *Shifāʾ al-sāʾil li-tahdhīb al-masāʾil* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr al-Muʿāṣir, Dimashq: Dār al-Fikr, 1996).

entities and how they are defined in terms of their essences and accidents. The second topic focuses on the concept of nature and its significance in understanding the essential qualities of things.

1.1.3. Temporal Beings (*ʿālam al-ḥawādith)*: Natural and Social World

As mentioned above, the Muslim theologians, the *mutakallimūn*, classify existence into two: pre-eternal (*qadīm*) and originated (*ḥādith*). Expanding on this classification, Ibn Khaldun refers to originated beings as having a world of their own, known as *ʿālam al-ḥawādith*. This world of temporal things consists of created things (*al-kāʾināt)* that Ibn Khaldun classifies into two categories: entities themselves (i.e., elements, minerals, plants, animals, and humans) and actions of living beings (i.e., animals and humans). The first category exists solely by the will and power of God without any human intervention, while the second category of actions of living beings emerges through their intentions and the power given to them by God. Ibn Khaldun says:

> It should be known that the world of existent things comprises pure essences, such as the elements resulting from their influence, and the three things that come into being from the elements, namely, minerals, plants, and animals. All these things are connected with the divine power. It also comprises actions proceeding from living beings that happen through their intentions and are connected with the power that God has given them. Some of their actions are well-arranged and orderly. Such are human actions. Others are not well arranged and orderly. They are the actions of living beings other than man. (IK, ME: 2: 413-414)

The second category of actions that arise from living beings (*al-afʿāl al-ṣādira an al-ḥayawānāt*), specifically humans, is related to the social world that originates from human activities. This realm, which emerges from human social organization, is referred to by Ibn Khaldun as *ʿumrān* or *ʿālam al-ḥawādith al-fiʿliyyah.* Ibn Khaldun, inspired by God, discerned the existence of this social realm and recognized it as a distinct subject of study, which is the subject matter of his new science. We will elaborate on this further in the subsequent section on social ontology.

1.1.4. The Anatomy of Existence: Essences and Accidents

The history of Islamic philosophical thought presents two predominant ontological approaches to the analysis of the external world: Aristotelian-Avicennan theory of form and matter (*ṣūrah wa māddah* = hylomorphism) of the *falāsifah;* and the *kalām*

theory of atoms and accidents (*jawhar wa ʿaraḍ*) of the great majority of the Ashʿarite-Māturīdite *mutakallimūn* (Setia, 2006,113). The theory of matter and form held by the *falāsifah* proposes a level of ontic and causal independence to matter, which is deemed problematic by the *mutakallimūn*. According to their belief, the world, including matter, is entirely reliant on God for its existence at every moment in time and space. Classical Ashʿarite *kalām* emphasized God's omnipotence and rejected the Aristotelian concept of nature or inherent potentialities (sing. *ṭabīʿah;* pl. *ṭabāʾiʿ*) capable of determinig their future states, forming an explanation of physical change known as occasionalism (Griffel & Zalta, 2020, 1038). Occasionalism suggests that there is no causal efficacy among any elements in the created world, and that only God is the cause of events without employing secondary agents or intermediaries (Lee, 2020). God recreates the world at every moment and arranges the relationship between its elements anew, without any prior causal connection. The regularities we observe in the natural world, as natural laws, are simply God's customary way (*ʿādat* or *sunnat Allah*) of creating specific events sequentially.

This understanding leaves room for miraculous occurrences in which God breaks his custom, for instance, to confirm the claims of His prophets. Given the debate between the *falāsifah* and the *mutakallimūn*, some readers of *Muqaddimah* may find it perplexing that Ibn Khaldun incorporates concepts from both Aristotelian hylomorphism and kalam atomism. For instance, in his explanations, Ibn Khaldun draws on concepts from both the *falāsifah*, such as natures, essences, accidents, form, and matter, as well as the *mutakallimūn*, referring to the concept of *sunnat Allah* in his explanations.

Additionally, some readers might assume that Ibn Khaldun leaned more towards *kalām* atomism as he abridged the *Muḥaṣṣal* by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (1149–1210), who rejected Aristotelian hylomorphism. While it is true that Ibn Khaldun is often associated with the *kalām* tradition, which includes thinkers like al-Ghazālī and al-Rāzī, as opposed to the Aristotelian philosophical tradition represented by al-Fārābī, Ibn Sina, and Ibn Rushd, it would be incorrect to assume that Ibn Khaldun was more aligned with *kalām* atomism. Likewise, al-Rāzī's rejection of hylomorphism does not inevitably commit him to the totalizing and reductive atomism of classical *kalām*, either (Ibrahim, 2020). This association between Ibn Khaldun and the tradition of

kalām is indeed accurate, as evidenced by his critical stance on the methods employed by the philosophers in the metaphysical realm and their epistemology, which will be expounded upon in the following chapter. The association of Ibn Khaldun with the *mutakallimūn* in epistemological terms does not necessarily imply that his philosophical framework is aligned solely with the ontological tradition of *kalām* atomism.

Furthermore, the post-classical period of *kalām* saw a blending of Aristotelianism and Ashʿarite *kalām*, with no clear boundaries between the two (Griffel, 2020, 1038). Al-Ghazālī, for instance, adopted the methods of the Aristotelian *falāsifah* in the natural sciences but rejected their metaphysics as a demonstrative science. Besides, according to al-Ghazālī, many teachings of the *falāsifah* were true because they originated from earlier revelations of prophets like Abraham and Moses—peace be upon them—, however, they concealed this fact and erroneously attributed the origin of their ideas to Greek philosophers like Aristotle (Griffel, 2020: 1039).

Similar to al-Ghazālī's position, Ibn Khaldun also employed Aristotelian logic to some extent and incorporated some aspects of Aristotelian ontology into his framework, as we will discuss in more detail later on, but this did not necessarily align with the reductive accounts of Muhsin Mahdi regarding Ibn Khaldun's Aristotelianism, either (Mahdi, 2015). Nonetheless, our objective in this section is not to undertake the challenging task of pinpointing Ibn Khaldun's position on *kalām* atomism and Aristotelian hylomorphism. Instead, we seek to shed light on the concepts utilized by Ibn Khaldun in the *Muqaddimah*, such as essence (sing. *dhāt* or, pl. *dhawāt*), accident (sing. *ʿaraḍ* or, pl. *ʿawāriḍ*), form (*sūrah*), and matter (*māddah*), which are relevant to classical metaphysics as a whole.

Before we zoom into the basic structure of entities in Ibn Khaldun's framework, due to its significance, I will start with the issue of causality in Ibn Khaldun's general framework.

1.1.5. Causality: Aristotelianism or Ashʿarism?

The dispute on causality has two dimensions. The first one is ontological and it is about the nature of relationship between cause and effect, namely, how and by what means does the cause bring about the effect. The second is epistemological which is the

feasibility of acquiring knowledge of causality, specifically, how, if possible, can we obtain such knowledge. In this section of the chapter, we will concentrate on the former issue.

Ibn Khaldun's position on the nature of causality and the quality of the relationship between cause and effect has been the subject of much debate, with some categorizing Ibn Khaldun as Aristotelian and others as Ashʿarite. The central issue concerns the nature of causation, whether causation is necessary or contingent, and whether causes possess inherent powers or are mere sequential events created by God without any inherent agency. The Aristotelian tradition maintains that causes possess intrinsic powers that necessarily result in their corresponding effects. Conversely, the Ashʿarite theologians reject natural causality and argue that causes are merely sequential events created by God without any inherent agency. One can recognize evidence *prima facie* for both sides in the *Muqaddimah*. Therefore, it is common to read Ibn Khaldun in light of this debate.

Some literature on Ibn Khaldun has attempted to apply the Aristotelian theory of four causes to his work, as he has been labeled by some as an Aristotelian, such as S. F. Dale's characterization of him as "the last Greek" (Dale, 2006). However, Ali Çaksu argues that this approach oversimplifies and distorts Ibn Khaldun's theory, particularly in terms of his understanding of causality (Çaksu, 1999). This is because Ibn Khaldun's theological and ontological commitments, as well as his application of the theory of causes to the flow of history, led him to develop dynamic, dialectical, and context-specific notions that are distinct from the original Aristotelian scheme (Çaksu, 2017: 29). Çaksu provides a detailed elaboration of the problems that arise when attempting to identify the Aristotelian four causes in Ibn Khaldun's theory. While reading Ibn Khaldun through an Aristotelian lens is a possible interpretation, it comes with limitations and is not necessarily true to understand his framework. Interested readers may refer to Çaksu's work for a detailed elaboration.

Still, other literature views Ibn Khaldun as an occasionalist, in line with the Ash'arite theologians (Moad, 2017; Muhtaroglu, 2017; Alatas, 2012; Gibb, 1933; Azmeh, 1981; Wolfson, 1959). The Ashʿarites rejected the idea of causal necessity held by the philosophers, such as the Peripatetics and the Neoplatonists, and believed that the universe's existence does not require intermediate causes or a chain of causality. They

held that any attempt to explain the universe's existence rationally or naturally would limit God's omnipotence and freedom. According to the Asharites, the universe and all its events and phenomena are the direct result of God's will and power, and God is the sole true cause, while everything else serves as an occasion for the manifestation of His will. Similarly, occasionalism is a metaphysical doctrine that denies the existence of efficient causation in the natural world. It holds that finite created beings, such as minds or bodies, have no causal efficacy and that all events in the natural world are caused directly by God. According to occasionalism, the so-called 'secondary causes' that we observe in the world are merely occasions for God to bring about the effects we perceive. In this view, causation is not a necessary relationship between events but is rather an act of divine will. The occasionalist perspective is based on the idea that there is no observable necessary connection between events, only a constant conjunction.

Let us now turn to Ibn Khaldun's ideas on causality and examine his perspective to see whether he adopts an Aristotelian or Ashʿarite position.

1.1.5.1. Ibn Khaldun on Causality

To properly evaluate Ibn Khaldun's position on this debate, there is an important issue to clarify. The Arabic equivalent of 'cause' is *'sabab'* in the *Muqaddimah*. The term cause is a loaded concept, implying a necessary efficacy on the things caused. It refers to an agent that brings something about. To say X causes Y is equal to saying X is sufficient to bring about Y. When we look at the Arabic original word Ibn Khaldun uses, which is *sabab*, it does not inherently carry such connotations. This is why Ibn Khaldun emphasized the nexus (*rabṭ*) between cause and effect (*al-asbāb bi al-musabbabāt*). Because *sabab* does not inherently carry the meaning of a necessary relationship between cause and effect, if so, that expression (i.e., *rabṭ al-asbāb bi al-musabbabāt*) would have been a tautology.

The term cause may still be employed to translate the term *sabab.* However, it should be remembered that it does not carry the connotation of necessary efficacy in the Khaldunian ontological framework. Rather, it signifies a regularity or order in the emergence of phenomena, which is neither in the form of occasionalism nor secondary causation. This is evident from Ibn Khaldun's use of the term *rabṭ*, which emphasizes

the connection between cause and effect, as explained previously. Further evidence is required to ascertain Ibn Khaldun's position on this debate.

While Ibn Khaldun's use of the term "cause" does not explicitly indicate his stance on the nature of causation, he acknowledges the regularity in the universe and a sequential order between certain phenomena, forming a sort of cause-and-effect relationship. He observes an order in the world, where the emergence of everything depends on other factors, making the world intelligible. The universe operates under a sequential order of events (i.e., causes and effects), wherein the created beings (*kāʾināt)* possess subtle principles (*mabādiʾ*) as well as events (*waqāʾiʿ)* are causally connected (*sabab*). Identifying these how and why of events is the inner (i.e., real) meaning of history and what his new science is about.

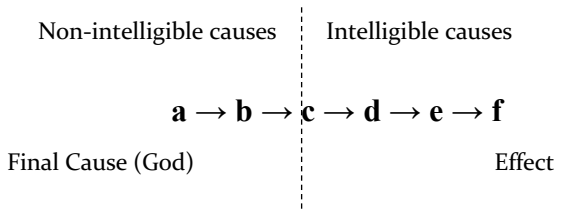
Ibn Khaldun offers an intriguing perspective on causality, one that not only applies to physical entities but also extends to human or animal actions. According to him, any event or occurrence in the world must have preceding causes that lead to its manifestation. Each cause is also a phenomenon or event in itself, implying that it must have its own preceding causes. This chain of causality, Ibn Khaldun suggests, ultimately culminates in the Supreme Being, the initiator and the creator of all causes, highlighting the centrality of monotheistic belief in his thought.

The idea of causality becomes complex and overwhelming as these chains of causes ascend, multiply, and branch out in numerous directions. In fact, comprehending the full extent of these causal networks requires a degree of knowledge that only the omniscient possesses, especially when considering the complex causes behind human and animal actions. These actions are not only determined by visible, physical causes but are also shaped by abstract factors such as intentions and wills, which Ibn Khaldun categorizes as "psychic matters." These psychic matters, he argues, mainly emerge from preceding conceptualizations, which themselves could be influenced by other concepts.

As for concepts (*taṣawwurāt*), their range is broader than the psyche (*al-nafs*) because they belong to the mind (*al-ʿaql*), which is above the scope of the psyche (*al-nafs*). Therefore, many of the concepts are not grasped by the human psyche. What is particularly intriguing about this hierarchy of concepts is that their origin and order

remain unknown, suggesting that they are divinely instilled within the human mind, according to Ibn Khaldun. The individual is not fully capable of discerning their beginnings or ends, revealing a profound epistemic limitation in human cognition. While human knowledge can often grasp causes that are apparent and perceptible, the more abstract concepts that belong to the realm of the mind often elude human comprehension. Thus, despite their influence on human actions, many of these concepts remain beyond full human understanding.

Despite Ibn Khaldun's intelligible ontological model, he acknowledges the limitations of our understanding of the nature of causation. Ibn Khaldun argues that the nature the efficacy (*taʾthīr*) between concurred things is unknowable because we attribute causes to effects habitually (*bi al-ʿādah)* based on our observation and experience of regularities between events. It is the habit of seeing regularities between events that leads to the belief in necessary causal relationships. The notion of *ʿādah* implies that the attribution of a cause to an effect is due to our observation and experience. Our conviction of the concurrence or coexistence of two things (the purported cause and effect) that we witness is based on their appearance (*qaḍiyyat al-iqtirān al-shāhid bi al-istinād ʾila al-ẓāhir*). Therefore, the regularities we observe do not necessarily indicate a necessary causal relationship. The views of David Hume and Kant echo Ibn Khaldun's agnostic stance on the nature of efficacy (Nadler, 1996). The cause-and-effect relationship in Ibn Khaldun's ontological framework can be illustrated as follows:



(a: God)
(b,c,d,e: secondary causes; events)
(f: effect; event)
(→: efficacy; the nature of efficacy is unknowable)

As we have seen, Ibn Khaldun refrains from taking a definitive stance on whether God creates events in the world through occasionalism or secondary causality. The symbol → denotes a relationship, but its quality cannot be definitively established. The nature

of causation and efficacy remains a metaphysical belief that cannot be proven as either necessary or contingent. Thus, Ibn Khaldun discourages speculation on this matter and instead suggests turning to the Cause of all causes (*musabbib al-asbāb*), who brought everything into existence, whether through occasionalism, secondary causes, or some unknown means.

1.1.5.2. Are There Natural Laws?

Another concept of relevance to this discussion is natural laws. According to the Aristotelians, the relationship between cause and effect is necessary, which implies that there are necessary and immutable natural laws governing the universe. In contrast, the Ashʿarī position maintains that the relationship between cause and effect is not necessary but contingent upon God's will and power. In this view, nature does not have inherent natural laws; instead, it follows a pattern determined by the divine will, known as *sunnat Allah*. This consistent pattern, stemming from God's will, leads to the development of a habitual feeling called *ʿādah* in humans, where they come to expect certain outcomes based on their experience of the world.

Whether knowledge gained from natural sciences is based on unerring and immutable laws has been debated throughout history. Some argue that universal principles forming the subject matter of natural sciences are necessary and unchanging, while skeptics and probabilists contend that immutable natural laws do not exist.

Drawing upon Immanuel Kant's ideas, Elmalili Hamdi Yazir (1878-1942) offers a perspective that resonates with Islamic theologians' views and holds relevance for Ibn Khaldun's ontological framework (Yazır, 2021). According to both Kant and Elmalili, the laws of natural science are not necessary but assertorical, contingent upon our observation and experience. This means that our understanding of natural laws is based on the regularities we have perceived up until now, without any guarantee that they will continue to hold in the future. Given its significance and relevance to Ibn Khaldun's ontological framework, extracting the relevant section from his commentary would be beneficial. In the 123rd verse of the *Sūrah al-Aʿrāf* in his nine-volume Quranic commentary titled Hak Dini Kur'an Dili (Religion of the Truth, Language of the Qurʿān), Elmalili writes:

> What is the value of our knowledge in the natural sciences in terms of certainty? Are the general principles that make up the subject matter of the natural sciences unerring and immutable laws? Some accept them as unerring and immutable necessary principles, but they are not the real authorities on this issue. To have such an idea is to deny the development in the natural sciences and to not allow the possibility of modification and change in such fundamental rules with new discoveries. Therefore, there are many skeptics and probabilists who stand against them. The best solution between these two is the solution brought by the German philosopher Kant. Kant said that the principles of the natural sciences are not necessary but assertoric since they are derived from observation and experience. These theories, called "mutlaka-i amme" in logic, report what actually happens. In other words, they are obtained from observation, and they are so because they happened that way in the experiment. They are not necessarily so because they should be. Therefore, it cannot be ruled that they always and necessarily have to be this way and that the opposite is impossible. It is possible that tomorrow's experiment may lead us to a different conclusion and show that things we do not see today may emerge. Kant's solution is a middle ground between those who claim certainty and necessity in the natural sciences and skepticism, and therefore, it is in line with the approach of Islamic theologians to the subject. (Yazır, 2021, 3: 120)

Elmalili Hamdi Yazir draws upon Kant's solution to the debate surrounding the certainty and necessity of natural laws. Like Kant, Elmalili argues that the laws of natural science are not necessary but *assertoric*, contingent upon our observation and experience. This implies that our understanding of natural laws is based on the regularities we have perceived so far, and there is no guarantee that they will continue to hold in the future. Likewise, Ibn Khaldun remains agnostic about the nature of causality and how God creates events in the world, whether through occasionalism or secondary causality. In this regard, Ibn Khaldun's viewpoint aligns with Kant's proposition that natural laws are not necessary but rather assertoric, stating a fact about the world based on our observation and experience, not a normative claim about how it should be in the future.

According to Ibn Khaldun, the patterns humans recognize in the universe are indicative of how God governs the universe, referred to as *sunnat Allah*. This divine governance is consistent and unchanging, suggesting that the divine principles and laws governing the cosmos are universally applicable, transcending time and space. The universality of these divine principles and regularities does not arise from the necessity of cause

and effect relationships; rather, it is rooted in the divine decree, as stated in the Qurʾān (33:62): "[This is] the established way of Allah with those who passed on before; and you will not find in the way of Allah any change." The task of uncovering these principles governing the universe, as ordained by God, is an epistemological and methodological matter that will be explored in the following chapters.

In summary, Ibn Khaldun acknowledges that there is an order in nature, and everything that emerges depends on other things, which we know through the concept of *ʿādah* and deductive propositions that attest to an apparent relationship. This implies that Ibn Khaldun does not adopt a strict Aristotelian or Ashʿarite position on causality but proposes a nuanced view incorporating elements of both. He recognizes that there may be a certain regularity in the world, but at the same time, the ultimate cause of all events is God, and thus, the relationship between cause and effect is ultimately contingent upon God's will. Therefore, in his understanding of causality, it is not accurate to label Ibn Khaldun as strictly Aristotelian or Ashʿarite.

1.1.5.3. Determinism: One Possible Future?

The earlier examination of the nature of causation and the existence of natural laws has broader implications on other significant matters. One such matter pertains to determinism. Ibn Khaldun's systematic treatment in the *Muqaddimah* has appeared to some as a deterministic outlook (Choudhury, 2008). Determinism is often associated with cyclical theories; however, this does not necessarily apply to Ibn Khaldun's ideas. In the following discussion, I will demonstrate why Ibn Khaldun's theory is not deterministic.

Determinism offers a metaphysically coherent way of understanding the universe by asserting that every event is necessary and caused by preceding events. This perspective is grounded in the concept of causal chains and the assumption that causation operates according to natural laws, leading to only one possible future. In contrast, indeterminism posits that some events "just happen" without a causal antecedent. This weaker position relies on a "panicky metaphysics" in which chance occurrences are possible.

Ibn Khaldun's ontology incorporates both the ideas of regularity and order between events and the contingency of the relationship between cause and effect. However,

neither determinism nor indeterminism fully captures the essence of Ibn Khaldun's cyclical theory. There is a degree of determinacy in his theory, but this determinism is not indispensable. Ibn Khaldun's theory is not deterministic in the sense that it does not imply a strict causality that determines the course of events, but it does recognize the presence of underlying patterns and cycles that shape the rise and decline of civilizations. These patterns are not absolute or fixed but rather contingent upon various factors and subject to change. The idea of divine principles that govern the universe also provides a framework for understanding the regularity and order of events without implying a rigid determinism that negates human agency and creativity. Under the broader umbrella of the universal divine principles that apply to all created beings, certain events unfold in specific ways. These events can be redirected by taking the universal divine principles into account. In this sense, Ibn Khaldun's theory maintains a balance between determinacy and contingency, recognizing the role of universal divine principles in shaping the course of events while allowing for human agency and adaptability within this framework. This nuanced approach transcends the limitations of determinism and indeterminism, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the patterns and cycles in human history.

1.1.6. Essence (*Dhāt*) and Accident (*ʿAraḍ*)

The term *dhāt* holds a somewhat intricate meaning. Within the *falsafa* tradition, it is the Arabic counterpart of "essence" with a particular Aristotelian implication. In this sense, it is sometimes used synonymously with the terms quiddity (*māhiyyah)* and reality (*ḥaqīqah*) (al-Tahānawī, 1995, 1424). Yet, within the *kalām* tradition, the term *dhāt* carries a distinct meaning. It refers to something that can be characterized by its properties and, therefore, can be distinguished or recognized as similar or alike. In other words, it denotes a thing or an entity, with a specific focus on 'what falls under' (*mā-ṣadaq*) and its quiddity (*māhiyyah)* in external reality (al-Tahānawī, 1995, 817). If we set aside these nuanced variations in usage, we can conclude that both meanings are valid and relevant for comprehending Ibn Khaldun's employment of this concept in the *Muqaddimah*. While the term is often translated into English as 'essence,' it encompasses both connotations of the term in Arabic. Ultimately, essence refers to an entity with reference to its inherent attributes that make an entity what it is (*mā bihi al-shayʾ huwa huwa*). In other words, it defines its identity and distinguishes it from others. It is also related to the concept of nature, which will be explained below. As a

matter of fact, Ibn Khaldun means by it both entities, real or conceptual, with specific reference to its internal qualities (i.e., nature). In this sense, everything is a *dhāt,* including his new subject matter *ʿumrān,* with the inherent necessary properties that define them.

Concerning the essences of entities (*dhawāt)*, certain things occur to themselves (*yaʿridu li or yalḥaquhu li*). They are called accidents (*ʿawāriḍ*, sing. *ʿaraḍ)*. In the terminology of the logicians, the term *ʿaraḍ* is used for two different meanings. The first meaning of *ʿaraḍ* is opposed to essence (*dhāt*) or essential (*dhātī*) and refers to a property of an entity that is not essential to its identity (*al-khārij min al-ḥaqīqah)* or, in other words, whose presence or absence does not alter the identity of the entity. In this sense, *ʿaraḍ* is translated as an 'accident.' The second meaning is opposed to the concept of substance (*jawhar*) and refers to that which does not subsist in itself (*laysa qāʾim bi nafsihi)* but in a receptacle or a substrate (*maḥall* or *mawḍūʿ*) (al-Tahānawī, 1995, 602). In this sense, *ʿaraḍ* may be translated as 'mode,' 'state,' or 'condition' (sing. *ḥāl* or, pl. *aḥwāl*), which is another important concept in Ibn Khaldun's ontological framework. Ibn Khaldun employs the term *ʿaraḍ* to denote both meanings simultaneously, as no accident occurs to an entity (*dhāt*) that does subsist in itself. I will use the term accident for *ʿaraḍ* to refer to both meanings.

Extending on this, Ibn Khaldun further classifies accidents into two categories: essential accidents (*ʿawāriḍ al-dhātiyyah*) and non-essential accidents (*ʿawāriḍ ghayr al-dhātiyyah*). The former refers to properties that occur to an entity due to its very essence or nature, while the latter denotes properties caused by factors extrinsic to its essence. When considering the first meaning of *ʿaraḍ*, the term 'essential accidents' may initially sound paradoxical. In using *ʿawāriḍ al-dhātiyyah*, Ibn Khaldun meant the second meaning of the term *ʿaraḍ,* which can be translated as mode, state, or condition. Therefore, to avoid confusion, it is appropriate to translate *ʿawāriḍ al-dhātiyyah* as essential modes, states, or conditions. Nevertheless, since there is a consensus in the literature regarding the use of the terms essential and non-essential accidents, I will also use them. The concept of nature is crucial to differentiate between what constitutes an essential or non-essential accident for an entity, as we will discuss in the next section.

To clarify our discussion so far, let's consider the example of a tree. The tree is an entity or an essence (*dhāt*), and various accidents occur to it, some of which are a result of its inherent nature, while others are caused by external factors. Roots, trunks, and branches represent the tree's essence that defines its identity and distinguishes it from other entities. Its ability to produce oxygen and its capacity to photosynthesize are all essential accidents of a tree, which occur to its essence due to its very nature. On the other hand, those properties caused by factors extrinsic to its essence, such as the color of its leaves, the number of its branches, or the position of its branches, are non-essential accidents that occur to a tree. What determines an essential or non-essential accident to a tree is its very nature, which we will discuss below.

1.1.7. Nature: How the Inherent Essence Determines its Accidents

The concept of nature (sing. *ṭabīʿah;* pl. *ṭabāʾiʿ*) plays a significant role in Ibn Khaldun's general ontological framework. He utilizes this concept to describe the intrinsic qualities or essences of existent things and phenomena, such as elements, human beings, the social world, and political rule. The notion of nature originally denotes the underlying first principle of both the movement and the rest of a thing (*mabdaʾ awwal li-harakati mā hiya fīh wa-sukūnihi bi al-dhāt lā bi al-ʿaraḍ*) (al-Tahānawī, 1995, 1127). This primary principle, known as nature, is inherent to the thing itself and not a result of any superficial feature or an effect of an external force or agent. In this sense, every concept or reality, due to its very essence, has an inherent nature that governs how it will behave and determines what accidents or conditions will occur to it. The concept of nature is universally applicable to the genus of a thing, meaning that it applies universally to its particulars.

As discussed above, entities, real or conceptual, possess inherent essences, as well as conditions or accidents that arise in relation to them. While an entity's essence remains constant, its conditions and accidents undergo continuous change. When the natures of things concerned, there are three modes of relationship between the essence of a thing and its conditions or accidents: necessity (*ḍarūrah*), possibility (*imkān*), and impossibility (*imtināʾ*). Certain conditions or accidents are intrinsically linked to an entity's essence, while others are not. Some conditions or accidents are necessarily caused by an entity's essence or its fundamental nature; these are referred to by Ibn Khaldun as *al-aʿrād al-dhātiyyah*. On the other hand, others are caused by factors

extrinsic to its essence.; these are called non-essential accidents *aʿrād ghayr al-dhātiyyah*. Lastly, there are things that cannot possibly occur to it.

An inquiry into the nature of a thing is critical to any scientific study, as each concept (*mafhūm*) and reality (*haqīqah*) may have its own scientific discipline with respect to its essential accidents (*ʿawāriḍ dhātiyyah*). Every scientific and philosophical discipline is considered to consist of four major components: (i) foundational principles (*mabādiʾ*), (ii) subject matter (*mawḍūʿ*), (iii) pertinent issues (*masāʾil*), and (iv) its purpose (*ghāyah*). These components contribute to the structure and coherence of the given field of inquiry. Sciences are distinguished from each other based on their subject matters (*mawḍūʿ*). Subject matter is defined as an entity whose essential accidents (*ʿawāriḍ dhātiyyah*) are studied within a particular discipline.

However, obtaining knowledge about the individual states of a particular entity can be challenging since they are in a constant state of transformation. As a result, disciplines deal with universal concepts and judgments, whether essential or non-essential and examine their conformity to particular entities or phenomena. Therefore, a discipline's fundamental goal is to distinguish between essential and non-essential accidents or qualities that occur to the subject matter, to reveal the nature of a thing, and to provide universal knowledge to serve the ultimate purpose (*ghāyah*) of that particular discipline. Once we know about the nature of an entity, we may easily identify phenomena that must, may, or cannot occur to it. In this way, a discipline aims to formulate apodictic evidence about issues that pertain to the subject matter.

Ibn Khaldun employed the same conceptual framework in his new science of society, *ʿilm al-ʿumrān*. In the introduction of the *Muqaddimah*, he explicitly outlined the structure of this new science, which aimed to understand the nature of human civilization and social organization. As with all sciences, *ʿilm al-ʿumrān* consists of two essential integral components: subject matter (*mawḍūʿ*) and pertinent issues (*masāʾil*).

As the name suggests, this new discipline's subject matter is al-*ʿumrān*, human civilization, and social organization. Its pertinent issues involve the essential accidents and conditions of these phenomena. This novel discipline sought to distinguish

between essential and non-essential accidents of human society to uncover its underlying nature and provide universal knowledge.

> وهذا هو غرض هذا الكتاب الأول من تأليفنا. وكان هذا علم مستقل بنفسه. فإنه ذو موضوع وهو العمران البشري والاجتماع الإنساني، وذو مسائل، وهي بيان ما يلحقه من العوارض والأحوال لذاته واحدة أخرى. وهذا شأن كل علم من العلوم وضعياً كان أو عقلياً.
>
> (IK, MA: 1:128)[6]

> This is the purpose of this first book of our work. It is an independent science in itself. It has its own subject matter: human civilization and social organization. It also has its own set of issues, that is, explaining the accidents and conditions that occur to the essence of civilization, one after the other. And this is the case for every science, mentally posited or rational. (IK, ME: 1: 77)

Ibn Khaldun's primary objective in developing the science of *ʿilm al-ʿumrān* was to provide a normative standard, or as Franz Rosenthal translates it, a normative method (*qānūn*) for the evaluation of historical reports and distinguishing right from wrong and truth from falsehood based on empirical verification that admits of no doubts. According to Ibn Khaldun, to evaluate the accuracy and reliability of historical reports, it is essential to examine and verify them in light of the nature of human civilization. By understanding the nature of civilization, one can distinguish between what is possible or likely to have occurred and what is improbable or impossible. Thus, Ibn Khaldun's approach to historical criticism involves a profound understanding of the nature of society and its internal dynamics.

In pursuing his objective, Ibn Khaldun aimed to establish a systematic understanding of human civilization and social organization that could provide a foundation for further inquiry and analysis. While this is the formal explanation of the purpose of his new discipline, one cannot deny that it also serves other purposes, whether directly or indirecty. This comprehensive knowledge aids in identifying the reasons behind socio-economic and political decline, which has significant implications for providing insights into regulating society accordingly. Thereby, it offers a theoretical understanding and practical measures to address the challenges faced by human

[6] MA: *Muqaddimah* in Arabic (Dimasq: Dār al-Yaʿrib, 2004).

societies universally. This is where one can derive 'ought' from 'is'. For instance, an ophthalmologist diagnoses eye problems based on prior factual knowledge of the eye's essential structure and functions and then prescribes appropriate treatment. Without his prior factual knowledge about the eye, the ophthalmologist could not diagnose the problem and prescribe its cure accordingly. This discussion will be further elaborated in chapter three on methodology. For now, let us proceed to another crucial ontological aspect of the hard core of Ibn Khaldun's theory.

1.2. Human Ontology

Ibn Khaldun's conception of human ontology and human nature is central to Ibn Khaldun's theory of politics and education. The preceding accounts have indicated that humans occupy a unique position in the hierarchy of beings between the animals and the angels. While humans are essentially part of the animal kingdom, they are distinguished from other animals by their God-given ability to think. Human beings are endowed with this unique essence that transcends mere materiality and situates them within a broader ontological framework. Ibn Khaldun makes reference to a verse in the Qurʾān: It is He who has created for you ears and eyes and hearts—that is, the ability to think (23:78; IK, ME, 2: 453). This ability to think allows humans to organize their actions in an orderly manner, leading to the emergence of the social world.

As previously discussed, the philosophical principles of *ittiṣāl* (connection) and *istiḥalah* (transformation) apply to all things in existence. In the case of humans, they are connected to both the physical and spiritual worlds through their physical bodies and souls, respectively. While the soul is invisible, its impact on the body is evident. Every part of the body, whether used in combination or individually, serves as an organ of the soul and its powers. These powers of action include the ability to touch with the hand, walk with the foot, speak with the tongue, and move the entire body.

In this hierarchy of beings, the soul is constantly moving either upwards or downwards, depending on the power of thinking. The human soul, which is the essence of humans, desires to be free from the grip of animal powers and transcend its natural preparedness (*bi al-quwwah*) to proceed to active intellection by assimilating itself (*bi al-fiʿl*) to the highest spiritual beings (i.e., angels), without the help of any acquired faculty but by virtue of a primary natural disposition that God has placed in it.

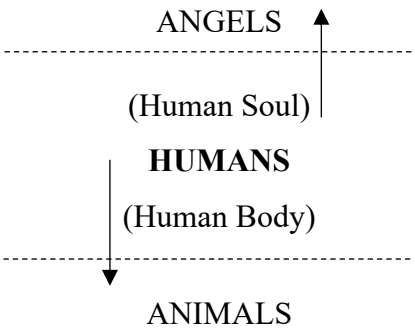


Figure 7: The Ontological Place of Humans in the Hierarchy of Beings

This process of transformation from humanity to angelicality may occur through deliberate efforts to purify the soul (i.e., spiritual practices such as praying, fasting, and constant remembrance of God) to help cultivate the natural disposition towards angelicality that is present in every soul as seen in the examples of *awliyā'*, or may occur naturally, as in the case of the prophets.

Concerning the disposition of the human soul between these two different modes of its existence—physical and spiritual—human souls are of three kinds. The first kind of soul is weak, and its disposition is downward to the animals. The second kind of soul is naturally predisposed towards the spiritual world. And the third kind, possessed only by prophets, is naturally suited to exchange humanity altogether and become angelic in a moment of revelation, free from the limitations of the body. This exposition regarding the classification of human souls represents the intersection of Ibn Khaldun's general ontology, human ontology, and epistemology. Further discussions will take us beyond the scope of ontology to that of epistemology. In the interest of maintaining focus on our current discussion on ontology, a thorough exploration of this subject, which pertains to epistemology, will be reserved for the subsequent chapter.

1.2.1. Human Nature: Good or Evil?

One of the fundamental assumptions of theories, social, educational, or political, is their conception of the nature of human beings. Discussions on human nature are common among philosophers and social and political scientists, with varying and conflicting uses of the concept. Some believe that a true social or political theory must build on prior knowledge of human nature, while others argue that the concept of human nature is inherently problematic. The famous debate between Noam Chomsky and Michel Foucault on justice is an example of this (Chomsky & Foucault, 2006).

The concept of human nature brings into play other related claims. When we begin talking about human nature, we take for granted other related claims, and it is important to unpack them. First and foremost, the concept of human nature assumes essentialism in contradistinction to existentialism, constructivism, and relativism, as it enables us to talk about a generic concept of nature or quiddity that applies to individuals universally before their actual particular existence. It may also be a potential carrier for another set of claims, especially Aristotelian themes and his teleological metaphysics, meaning the form to which it is disposed to develop.

However, I do not claim that Ibn Khaldun's usage of human nature has teleological implications, as this view comes with its own problems, some of which contradict Ibn Khaldun's overall worldview. For instance, teleological understanding of nature implies voluntarism and determinism. Even though causal relationships (*sunnat Allah*) are the motor of Ibn Khaldun's political theory, this is not deterministic as it was in Spengler (Spengler, 1991). Because human beings have free will, by taking necessary measurements, both on an individual and societal level—as an individual in their lives and as a political ruler in their government— may be reversed.

Ibn Khaldun's human ontology is based on the idea that human beings are not fixed in their nature but rather are shaped by the social and economic conditions in which they live. Each way of life, whether it be the settled life of the city or the nomadic life of the desert, has its own set of virtues and vices that are parable from each other. These virtues and vices are not fixed or permanent but are rather subject to change over time. Goodman says, according to Ibn Khaldun, "man himself bends with the ebb and flow of history (Goodman, 1972, 268).

Discussions about human nature often involve normative implications. For instance, some people may argue that certain forms of social organization are impossible due to human nature, while others may claim that ethical theories must be grounded in a prior understanding of human nature. Among those who accept this concept, significant disagreements exist about the content and explanatory significance.

1.3. ʿ*Umrān* as an Entity: Social Ontology

In the vertical spectrum of existence, extending from simple material entities to composite beings, the spiritual realm, and ultimately to God, Ibn Khaldun identified a novel level of being: the world of temporal things that arise through human agency (ʿ*ālam al-ḥawādith al-fiʿliyyah*). Certain things emerge as long as humans exist. Ibn Khaldun calls them as ʿ*umrān*. This realm of existence, consisting of things that came into being as a result of human action, along with human society, makes up civilization or what Ibn Khaldun calls as ʿ*umrān.* The term ʿ*umrān* is usually translated to English as human society or civilization. It means the entities and phenomena that emerge from the actions of individuals, which in turn shape their attitudes, behaviors, and natures. It is the totality of social facts and institutions that humans construct. ʿ*Umrān* is a self-contained entity that has its own nature and existence, as a being in its own right, with its own being-ness or essence.

One of the original contributions of Ibn Khaldun is that he developed a new science called ʿ*ilm al-*ʿ*umrān*, whose subject matter (*mawḍūʿ*) is the social world that emerges from human actions. He viewed the social world as an ontological entity, as a *being qua being,* predating John Searle in his accounts of social ontology. However, it should be noted that the fact that Ibn Khaldun engaged in social ontology before John Searle does not necessarily require us to position him as a precursor to social ontology or align him with the predominant Orientalist view of Ibn Khaldun as the forerunner of social sciences. Instead, this article posits that Ibn Khaldun represents an alternative to social sciences in general and social ontology in particular.[7] Labeling him as a

[7] This perspective is attributed to Prof. Recep Şentürk, who asserts that "Ibn Khaldun is not simply a forerunner of modern social thought, but has the potential to provide an alternative to it" in Şentürk, R. (2008). Introduction. *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 36, 371-374.

precursor could imply that his ideas are outdated and less relevant to contemporary discourse.

Ibn Khaldun's views on human society or civilization align with modern social research in various ways. Firstly, he recognized society (*al-ijtimāʿ al-insānī*) as a distinct subject of study. Secondly, he proposed to describe and explain society in a methodologically non-normative manner, although it is important to note that his theory is not entirely free from normativity. Many scholars find these similarities in other fields sufficient to categorize him as a "modern" social scientist. Additionally, his binary differentiation between created beings, one resulting directly from God's supreme power and the other being the outcome of human actions, has a clear parallel to the essential differentiation that Hobbes in Leviathan and later Western political and social theorists made two centuries later, which was revived again by John Searle in the context of the newly emerging discipline of social ontology. While studies on Ibn Khaldun are increasingly expanding and forming a vast literature, as far as I am aware, none of them address his theory of civilization in the context of social ontology, except Tahsin Görgün's works in Turkish (Görgün, 2006).

In his magnum opus, the *Muqaddimah*, Ibn Khaldun establishes a new discipline called the science of society *(ʿilm al-ʿumrān*) and a new realm of existence, namely the world of temporal originations that come into existence through human actions (*ʿālam al-ḥawādith al-fiʿliyyah*) as the subject of his new science. This new realm of existence exists dependently on human beings and includes things that happen through the intentions of human beings, though created by the divine power.

Even though Ibn Khaldun says that the explanation of the emergence of human society is a voluntary contribution to his new science of human society, the reason why he chose to make this arbitrary contribution rather than skipping it is that the picture he draws regarding the human nature, condition, and behavior at this stage underlies his social and political theory, and therefore, it is a voluntary but not pointless contribution. That is, the individual human being needs society to do away with the constraints originating from his own nature —the need for food to survive— and from outer nature —the need for defense against other animals to survive. Once the human

association achieved, a political authority is needed to protect man against other men, he says:

> When mankind has achieved social organization, as we have stated, and when civilization in the world has thus become a fact, people need someone to exercise a restraining influence and keep them apart, for aggressiveness and injustice are in the animal nature of man. The weapons made for the defense of human beings against the aggressiveness of dumb animals do not suffice against the aggressiveness of man to man, because all of them possess those weapons. Thus, something else is needed for defense against the aggressiveness of human beings toward each other. It could not come from outside because all the other animals fall short of human perceptions and inspiration. Therefore, the person who exercises a restraining influence must be one of themselves. He must dominate them and have power and authority over them so that no one of them can attack another. This is the meaning of royal authority (*mulk*). It has thus become clear that royal authority is a natural quality of man that is absolutely necessary to mankind... outside of human beings, these things exist as the result of natural disposition and divine guidance and not as the result of an ability to think or to administrate. (IK, ME, 1, 91)

This also means that just like human association is necessary for the individual human being, political authority (*mulk*) is necessary for the human society to endure. After establishing the necessity of the political organization for mankind—not the necessity of prophecy as the philosophers argue—Ibn Khaldun asserts three types of *mulk*: namely, natural, political, and caliphate. He explains the natural political authority in the following paragraph:

> Political authority (*mulk*) requires superiority and force, which express the wrathfulness and animality (of human nature). The decisions of the ruler will, therefore, as a rule, deviate from what is right. They will be ruinous to the worldly affairs of the people under his control since, as a rule, he forces them to execute his intentions and desires, which may be beyond their ability (to do). This situation will differ according to the different intentions found in different generations. (But) it is for this reason difficult to be obedient to (the ruler). Disobedience makes itself noticeable and leads to trouble and bloodshed. Therefore, it is necessary to reference ordained political norms, which are accepted by the mass and to whose laws it submits. (IK, ME, 1, 385)

In Ibn Khaldun's insightful observation, he highlights the universal truth that societies also experience rise and fall just like individual human beings. Through his observation of the natural world and the conditions that affect human existence, he recognizes the cyclical nature of societies and the transient nature of human creations, including sciences and crafts. He says:

> Minerals, plants, all the animals, including man, and the other created things come into being and decay, as one can see with one's own eyes. The same applies to the conditions that affect created things, especially those that affect man. Sciences grow up and then are wiped out. The same applies to crafts and similar things. (IK, ME, 1, 278)

1.4. Political Ontology

Ibn Khaldun considered politics as an accident, the form (*sūrah*) of the social order, and the matter (*māddah*) of religion. The subject matter in Ibn Khaldun's new science is the society. However, this is not only the people living together or the collectivity of human individuals. It has certain properties. He did not conceive society and politics as two distinct domains of human life but inseparable (parts) of the whole. As he says: "What *mulk* is to *ʿumrān*, form is to matter." From that statement, we can infer that no distinction between social and political ontology exists. We can only differentiate between the ontology of the social facts and political institutions. This is why, in this thesis, I elaborate on the two separately.

Conceiving politics as an entity concerned with making way for new possibilities of being requires reimagining politics itself. Specifically, it requires politics to be thought of as something that arises from human beings as a possibility. Adapting Uskali Mäki's thoughtful reflections on economic ontology to the political realm, we might identify the following as ontological questions: What is the polity made of? What are its constituents, and how do they hang together? What kinds of general principles govern its functioning and its change? Are they causal principles, and if so, what is the nature of political causation? What drives political actors, and what mental capacities do they possess? Do individual preferences and social institutions exist, and in what sense? Are (any of) these things historically and culturally invariant universals, or are they relative to context? (Mäki, 2001, 3). Such questions readily establish a simple analytical agenda for political ontology, which will be discussed in detail in the second

part. They also serve to indicate that no political analysis can proceed in the absence of assumptions about political ontology.

Ibn Khaldun explains the circumstances (*al-aḥwāl*) concerning the political authority. Once the political authority based on the animal side of human nature emerges in a society out of a necessity, it does not stay as it is, but either dissolves or evolves towards a finer state which can fully succeed in establishing the supremacy of its rule. At this more advanced and sophisticated level of political organization, the laws that go beyond the self-interests of the powerful are needed for the continuation of human society. And *mulk* takes different names according to the source of these laws:

> If these norms are ordained by the intelligent and leading personalities and (best) minds of the political organization, the result will be a political (institution) on an intellectual (rational) basis. If they are ordained by God through a lawgiver who establishes them as (religious) laws, the result will be a political (institution) on a religious basis, which will be useful for life in both this and the other world. (IK, ME, 1, 386)

After making a differentiation between rational (*al-siyāsah al-ʿaqliyyah*) and religious politics (*al- siyāsah al-sharʿiyyah*), he asserts that, since the intention of the Lawgiver concerning mankind is their welfare in the other world, religious politics is necessary in accordance with the religious law, if not the reason (*al-ʿaql*). That is to say, he mentions three types of political authority (*mulk*): natural (*al-mulk al- ṭabīʿī*), political (*al-mulk al-siyāsī*), and the caliphate (*al-khilāfah*). While the first two tend to transform into the latter —namely, the natural to the political and the political to the caliphate— the caliphate is the final and perfect form of the *mulk*:

المُلك الطبيعي:
هو حمل الكافة على مقتضى الغرض والشهوة.

والمُلك السياسي:
هو حمل الكافة على مقتضي النظر العقلي في جلب المصالح الدنيوية ودفع المضار.
والخلافة:
هي حمل الكافة على مقتضى النظر الشرعي في مصالحهم الأخروية والدنيوية الراجعة إليها،
إذ أحوال الدنيا ترجع كلها عند الشارع إلى اعتبارها بمصالح الآخرة،
فهي في الحقيقة خلافة عن صاحب الشرع في حراسة الدين وسياسة الدنيا به.

(IK, MA, 1, 360)

> (To exercise) natural political authority (*al-mulk al- ṭabīʿī)* means guiding the masses as required by needs and desires. (To exercise) political authority (*al-mulk al-siyāsī*) means guiding the masses as required by rational insight (*naẓar ʿaqlī*) as the means of furthering their worldly interests and avoiding anything that is harmful (in that respect). (And to exercise) the caliphate means guiding the masses as required by religious insight (*naẓar sharʿī*), considering their interests in the hereafter and this world. (The worldly interests) have a bearing upon (the interests of the other world), since according to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, all worldly conditions are to be considered in their relation to their value for the other. Thus, (the caliphate) in reality, substitutes for the Lawgiver (Prophet Muhammad ﷺ) in as much as it serves, like him, to protect the religion and to exercise (political) leadership of the world. (IK, ME, 1, 386)

As is demonstrated above, the emergence of *mulk* is indispensable regardless of race or religion, and what makes it necessary is human nature. At first, it is a *natural authority* based on ends and desires and produces unbridled laws. Then it inclines to turn into either *political authority,* which produces laws based on rational insight (*naẓar ʿaqlī*), or a *caliphate,* which produces laws based on the *Sharīʿah* through religious insight (*naẓar sharʿī*). To put it crudely, if human beings want to preserve their lives on earth, they have to live in a society with their fellow beings, and only through this can they also realize the purpose of their creation, that is, the construction of the world and becoming the caliphate on earth. In short, since the starting point of his social theory is the individual, and the endpoint is the caliphate, the scope of this thesis covers the whole of his science of society.

1.5. Conclusion

Our exploration of Ibn Khaldun's ontology and political theory reveals a comprehensive understanding that even Ibn Khaldun's ontological framework that lies at the very basis of his theory transcends the empirical-ethical divide. This thesis argues that Ibn Khaldun's ideas are grounded in four fundamental principles that define the multiplex reality and elucidate its multiplex relationality. These principles include (but are not limited to) the notions of causality, contingency, the unity of existence, and the hierarchical organization of the universe. Through his emphasis on these principles, Ibn Khaldun engages with the philosophical and theological traditions of his time and offers a unique perspective on the nature of reality. These principles

are critical for understanding the complex relationships between human societies, individuals, and the natural world, and form the basis of his political theory.

This chapter on Ibn Khaldun's ontology has revealed the foundational principles that underpin his science of society in general, and his educational and political theories in particular. These principles, including causality, contingency, the unity of existence, and the hierarchical organization of the universe, shape his understanding of the multiplex reality and its relationality. Ibn Khaldun's engagement with the philosophical and theological traditions of his time allowed him to offer a unique perspective on the nature of reality, which forms the basis of his political and educational theory.

In essence, in Ibn Khaldun's theory, we see that the multiplex conception of reality and the concept of unity in existence allow for the interplay between is and ought statements, or description and prescription. The concept of unity in existence highlights that God's customary way (*sunnat Allah*) of creating specific events sequentially or making certain things the cause of other things applies to both the natural and social worlds. Both realms are different levels of the same originated temporal reality (*ʿālam al-ḥawādith*). Certain laws apply to all originated beings, which were established by God and are universal and consistent, if not ontologically necessary. In nature, things are the way they are supposed to be because nature is governed by God's power and will. As a result, we observe things continuing their lives properly, and nature operates like a well-oiled machine. However, in the social world, what is is not necessarily what ought to be, as God does not intervene in the social world, and humans are given partial will to regulate it. There are general laws that govern the social world and politics. Nonetheless, the agents of the social world, i.e., civilizations, have a degree of autonomy in shaping their own destiny. If they abide by these laws, they can live *healthily* and for a long time. Otherwise, they will erode and decay.

Ibn Khaldun's ontological perspective suggests that the laws that govern our world, natural or social, are not only descriptions of how things are but also prescriptions for how we should live our lives. Due to this ontological perspective, there is no separation between is and ought or description and prescription. The divine principles operate in

the social world, too, and Ibn Khaldun's new science of society aims to uncover them. The descriptive account of historical events reveals these divine principles, which can then be used to prescribe how we should regulate the social world. Further discussion of how this happens will be presented in the second part of this thesis. Overall, divine principles rooted in divine will shape the course of events, providing a sense of order and purpose to our existence. By following these laws, we can achieve a state of "health" in the social world.

Unlike Lagerlund, who said that "Ibn Khaldun's science of society, though presupposing creation, has a materialistic basis", we conclude that Ibn Khaldun's ontology is multiplex encompassing material and non-material realms (Lagerlund, 2020: 770). His views on reality and being constitute the nucleus or the origin (مَصْدَر) of the hard core of his science of society, that precedes and informs the heuristic aspect of his political and educational theory. This ontological foundation also provides the groundwork for the other constituents of the hard core, namely epistemology and methodology, which will be covered in the subsequent two chapters.

CHAPTER TWO

FROM ONTOLOGICAL HIERARCHIES TO MULTIPLEX EPISTEMOLOGY

This chapter delves into Ibn Khaldun's theory of knowledge, in other words, his epistemology, building upon his ontology. Our goal is two-fold. Firstly, we aim to establish the multi-layered structure of Ibn Khaldun's epistemology by demonstrating that reductionist or monist approaches cannot fully capture its sophistication, especially in the context of his political and educational theories. Secondly, we explore how Ibn Khaldun's multi-layered epistemology enables an interplay between explanation and regulation, as well as the empirical and the ethical. Unlike reductionist or monist approaches, which fall short in explaining Ibn Khaldun's ideas, we argue that his epistemology involves a nuanced interplay between is and ought statements, as well as the realist-critical and ethical accounts. By rejecting the limitations of *-ism*s and highlighting Ibn Khaldun's multiplex scholarship, I aim to demonstrate how his multi-layered epistemology allows for both explaining and regulating social and political phenomena.

The theories of knowledge in Anglo-American scholarship are typically based on binaries, such as sense, reason, or intuition. Conversely, the epistemology of Muslim scholarship, while exhibiting nuances, is a multi-layered and encompassing framework that draws upon various ways of knowing to obtain knowledge of the multi-faceted reality. Rather than being a complete epistemological departure from the religious worldview of his time, Ibn Khaldun's work should be understood in the context of his Islamic worldview. Notably, Ibn Khaldun's theory of knowledge resonates with those of earlier scholars, such as al-Ghazālī. However, the focus of this chapter is not to excavate the sources of Ibn Khaldun's views in tradition, but rather to revisit his views in the context of his own texts.

2.1. From Multiplex Human Ontology to Multiplex Epistemology

The ontology of human existence, as presented in the preceding chapter, serves as the basis for Ibn Khaldun's theory of knowledge. According to Ibn Khaldun, human beings exist on two levels: the physical and the metaphysical. The physical level pertains to the observable and tangible aspects of human existence, such as the body and its functions. In contrast, the metaphysical level pertains to the intangible and non-observable aspects of human existence, such as the mind and the soul. Different types of knowledge are acquired through different levels of human existence. For example, sense perception is primarily associated with the physical level, while reason and intuition are more linked to the metaphysical level.

According to Ibn Khaldun, human beings occupy a position between animals and angels, sharing characteristics with each. Like animals, humans possess bodily perception through five senses: seeing, hearing, smell, touch, and taste. This sensory perception, *idrāk*, enables humans and animals to be aware of and perceive things beyond themselves.

In addition to bodily perception through the five senses, Ibn Khaldun propounds that humans possess a unique way of acquiring knowledge: the ability to think (*al-fikr*). This ability is a result of the cognitive powers present in the brain's cavities. Through this power, humans can obtain forms of the *sensibilia* (*suwar al-maḥsūsāt*) and mentally abstract other forms (*suwar ukhrā*) from them. Thinking involves the engagement with forms beyond sense perception, as well as mental analysis and synthesis. Ibn Khaldun contends that this kind of thinking is what the Quranic verse "*jaʿala lakum al-samʿ wa al-abṣār wa al-afʾidah*" refers to, with *afʾidah* meaning "heart." Thinking as an essential aspect of human cognition enables humans to engage in abstract thought and to conceive of ideas that go beyond sensory experience. Thinking as the second level of human cognition has levels.

2.1.1. Levels of Thinking (*Marātib al-Fikr*)

Ibn Khaldun maintains that the human intellect operates on several levels or degrees. The first is the discerning intellect (*al-ʿaql al-tamyīzī*) which is responsible for comprehending the natural or arbitrary order of things that exist in the outside world. It consists primarily of perceptions, and it enables individuals to obtain things that are

useful for their livelihood and repel those that are harmful. The second level of thinking is the experimental intellect (*al-ʿaql al-tajrubī*), providing individuals with ideas and behaviors needed to deal with others and lead them. It conveys apperception (*taṣdīqāt*), which is acquired through gradual experience. The third and the highest level of thinking is the speculative intellect (*al-ʿaql al-naẓarī*), which provides individuals with knowledge or hypothetical knowledge of objects that are beyond sense perception (*warāʾ al-ḥiss*). This intellect combines perception and apperception (*taṣawwur wa taṣdīq*) in a specific order, according to special conditions. The speculative intellect provides knowledge of the same kind in the form of perception or apperception. It then combines with something else and provides further knowledge of the same kind.

Upon acquiring knowledge through various means, the final outcome is the perception of existence (*taṣawwur al-wujūd*), including its different types, variations, reasons, and causes. This attainment of knowledge brings about the ultimate realization of human potential, leading to the state of perfection and the embodiment of pure intellect and perceptive soul (*nafs mudrikah*). Ibn Khaldun refers to this as the essence of human reality (*al-ḥaqīqa al-insāniyyah*).

According to Ibn Khaldun, the experimental intellect is the ability of humans to think and act in an orderly manner within a social organization. Humans are social beings and cannot survive alone, so they must interact with others to meet their needs. These interactions may lead to mutual affection or hostility, but they are not haphaẓard like they are in animals. God has enabled humans to organize their activities according to philosophical norms, leading them from detrimental to beneficial actions. Humans acquire this knowledge through experience and derived from it, and they learn what is necessary to be done and not to be done through their dealings with others. People can obtain this knowledge more easily by following the experiences of their fathers, teachers, and elders, but those who have no knowledge or tradition in this respect need to study and learn. The experimental intellect is obtained after the discerning intellect that leads to action, followed by the speculative intellect.

2.1.2. Human Soul as the Ultimate Knower

According to Ibn Khaldun, a human being is comprised of two essential parts: one is physical (body) and the other is spiritual (soul). Each of these parts or ontological levels has perceptions particular to it. The perceiver in both cases is one, which is the spiritual part, which is the soul (*al-rūh*). At times, it perceives spiritual perceptions, and at other times, it perceives physical perceptions. However, it perceives the spiritual perceptions by itself without any intermediary, whereas the physical perceptions are perceived with the intermediary of bodily organs, such as the brain and the senses.

Ibn Khaldun asserts that the human soul is the ultimate knower, with senses and the ability to think being its tools. It has the ability to know the realities of the creation and the attributes of its Creator. According to him, when God brought the soul into existence, He created it with a desire to perfect itself through knowledge. To achieve this, God gave the soul two faces: one side of the soul faces the material world, and the other side of the soul turns towards the Tablet (*lawḥ*) where the images of the creation are reflected. On this tablet, the truths of past, present, and future until the Day of Resurrection are recorded.

The first dimension involves using the senses to perceive the material world and the imagination (*khayāl*) and mind (*fikr*) to abstract and order the forms received. However, Ibn Khaldun believed that relying on these means can sometimes lead to inaccuracies and errors in perception, as they are only tools the soul uses to grasp what it can from its own essence. On the other hand, the second aspect involves relying on the soul itself to reflect the forms of the creation that originate within it and return to it. Ibn Khaldun argued that relying on oneself and reaching what belongs to the soul through the soul itself is safer and clearer than relying on something other than itself, such as the senses, the imagination, or thinking (IK, S, p. 62). He believed that the understanding one can attain through the second choice, the way of the spiritual world, is clearer than the one attained through the first choice, the way of the material world. Therefore, according to Ibn Khaldun, the human soul is the ultimate knower because it can perceive the spiritual world directly and accurately without relying on the limitations of the material world.

Just as our physical senses can perceive material beings because they are of the same material nature, the soul can perceive the spiritual realm because it is of the same

spiritual nature. The soul is thus the ultimate knower and can attain true knowledge through its connection with the spiritual realm.

Ibn Khaldun argues that a veil exists between the human soul and the *lawḥ* (IK, S, 60). This veil prevents and hinders the reflection of the images of the creation in the soul. The human condition, the corporeal state, and worldly attachments are the veil between the Tablet and the soul. If the veil is lifted through purification and deliverance from impurities, then knowledge is acquired in its most perfect aspect.

According to Ibn Khaldun, the type of knowledge the soul acquires depends on the type of purification it undergoes. If the purification of the soul is natural, known as *taṣfiyah fiṭriyyah*, the veil is naturally removed, and the type of knowledge acquired is known as *waḥy* or revelation, as in the example of prophets (IK, S, p. 54). In this state, the soul is freed from the limitations of corporeal perception and gains access to divine knowledge.

On the other hand, if the purification of the soul is deliberate and through labor and effort, known as *taṣfiyah ṣināʿiyyah*, the type of knowledge acquired by the soul through unveiling is called *maʿrifah* or *kashf*, as in the example of saints and scholars (IK, S, 54). In this state, the soul is purified through deliberate efforts, such as spiritual practices and disciplines, leading to the removal of the veil and the acquisition of intuitive knowledge.

2.1.3. Three Types of Human Souls

According to Ibn Khaldun, human souls can be classified into three types based on their ability to perceive and understand the world around them. The first type is too weak to arrive at spiritual perception, and thus, relies on the perceptions of the senses and imagination to gain knowledge. This type of soul can only perceive the primary intelligibles and is limited in extent. This is the type of perception that scholars are grounded in.

The second type of soul has an innate preparedness for spiritual perception and moves towards spiritual intellection and intuitive perception, which does not require the organs of the body. This type of perception goes beyond the primary intelligibles and

covers the ground of inward observations. It is unlimited in its beginning and end and is the perception of saints, men of mystical learning, and divine knowledge.

The third type of soul is by nature suited to exchange humanity altogether, both corporeal and spiritual, for the angelicality of the highest stage. These souls can become angels in a flash, glimpse the highest group within their own stage, and listen to essential speech and divine address during that moment. These souls belong to the prophets, and God implanted in them the natural ability to slough off humanity in the moment of revelation. They move towards the angelic stage, sloughing off humanity at will, and learn all that may be learned in the highest group of angels. They bring back what they have learned to the level of the powers of human perception, as this is the way in which it can be transmitted to human beings. This is the type of perception that is received through revelation, which appears to happen very quickly and simultaneously, and is called *waḥy*.

2.1.4. The Extent of Human Faculties of Knowing

Ibn Khaldun claims that "everything in the world requires appropriate causes prior to their coming into being" (IK, ME, 2, 413). Causes continue to follow upon causes in an ascending order until they reach the Causer of causes (*musabbib al-asbāb*), God. However, the range of perceptions that the human intellect can comprehend is limited, and only comprehensive knowledge can encompass them all. Ibn Khaldun emphasizes the importance of abandoning speculation about causes beyond natural and obvious ones and focusing on the oneness of God (*tawḥīd*). The ascending sequence of causes transcends the realm of human perception and becomes imperceptible. As Ibn Khaldun notes, some of these causes may not be immediately perceptible (IK, ME, 3, 36).

Ibn Khaldun emphasizes that humans are unique among animals due to their ability to perceive and understand (IK, ME, 2, 411). He distinguishes between two types of perception: (i) intellectual perception and (ii) perception of the internal states. According to Ibn Khaldun, intellectual perception is primarily associated with our cognitive faculties—our ability to perceive, comprehend, and analyze knowledge. This form of perception enables us to operate within different degrees of certainty in our understanding of the world. We may have absolute certainty (*yaqīn*), a lesser degree of certainty or presumption (*ẓan*), even more uncertainty or doubt (*shakk*), or a baseless assumption (*wahm*). These categories suggest that our knowledge is not always

absolute; it varies in degree of certainty and reliability. Sometimes, the highest level of certainty humans can reach concerning something is *ẓan*. Secondly, perception of the internal states concerns the awareness of our experiences of different psychological states, including joy, sadness, contraction, expansion, contentment, anger, patience, gratitude, and similar emotions.

For Ibn Khaldun, it is through these perceptions (*idrākāt*), wills (*irādāt*), and states (*aḥwāl*) that the rational and governing soul, which directs the body, grows. These qualities are what distinguish human beings.

2.1.4.1. Innate Logic (*Manṭiq Ṭabīʿī*) versus Formal Logic (*Manṭiq Sinaʿī*)

The truth cannot manifest through artificial procedures, for Ibn Khaldun. The truth is only clear when it is naturally and innately evident to human beings. Ibn Khaldun distinguishes between two types of logic: "innate logic" (*manṭiq ṭabīʿī*) and "formal logic" (*manṭiq ṣināʿī*) (IK, ME, 2, 421). Innate logic refers to the natural ability of humans to think and reason, which is an inherent part of their cognitive nature. It is an intuitive and inborn capacity that allows individuals to comprehend and perceive truth without relying solely on formalized methods or technical rules.

On the other hand, formal logic is a discipline that provides a methodical framework for exercising and refining cognitive abilities. It aims to guide and assist in distinguishing between accurate and erroneous reasoning. Formal logic acts as an artificial tool that helps individuals avoid the pitfalls of errors and inconsistencies in thinking. It aligns with the natural operation of the intellect, ensuring that human thinking is free from faults.

Ibn Khaldun highlights that many great thinkers throughout history have achieved remarkable accomplishments in various fields without extensively relying on formal logic. He suggests that individuals with sincere intentions, seeking divine mercy, can think correctly by utilizing their innate intellectual capabilities. These individuals can arrive at conclusions that are in accordance with reality and align with truth.

However, Ibn Khaldun also acknowledges the importance of acquiring knowledge of words and their meanings as conveyed through writing and speech. Language plays a crucial role in understanding concepts and judgments. Through language, abstract

meanings are formed and arranged, facilitating inference and logical reasoning. Nevertheless, he cautions against becoming excessively entangled in linguistic discussions and doubts, urging learners to focus on the inner realm of natural thinking and intuitive understanding.

While formal logic provides a valuable framework, Ibn Khaldun warns against rigidly adhering to its rules and regulations. He suggests that truth is not exclusively revealed through artificial procedures but is naturally evident. He acknowledges that the pursuit of knowledge can be hindered by overreliance on formal logic, which may obscure the desired objective and impede the seeker's progress. Instead, he encourages individuals to tap into their innate intellectual capabilities and seek divine mercy and guidance to gain deeper insights and access the truth.

In summary, Ibn Khaldun asserts that by combining natural or innate thought, intuition, and divine guidance with the tools provided by formal logic, individuals can attain a more comprehensive and holistic understanding of truth. Ultimately, knowledge is considered a gift from God, and seeking His mercy and illumination is paramount in pursuing truth.

2.1.4.2. Ibn Khaldun's Criticism of *Falāsifah*

Ibn Khaldun criticized the epistemology of the *falāsifah* by challenging their claim on several grounds. First, Ibn Khaldun disagrees with the *falāsifah* in that the knowledge of both the sensible and supersensible reality is only attainable through speculation and deduction, without the assistance of revelation. Ibn Khaldun argues that this approach is narrow-minded and arbitrary and that the nature of reality is much more complex and varied than the philosophers' assumptions.

Secondly, Ibn Khaldun also points out that their reasoning about the external world is unjustified since they assume that physical reality must conform to the logical pattern of their arguments. However, physical entities belong to the order of particulars, and their conformity (*muṭābaqah*) with general propositions (*kulliyāt)* is not necessary but dependent on empirical evidence.

Moreover, Ibn Khaldun asserts that metaphysical entities lie outside the scope of our experience, and our only means of characterizing them is by analogy. The

philosophers' use of metaphysics is erroneous since the premises of demonstration must ultimately have a concrete basis. Therefore, Ibn Khaldun concludes that if prolonged meditation or research only yields probability or conjecture, we should be content with the original probability or conjecture with which we started.

One enduring question that has intrigued Western and contemporary Khaldunian scholars is the apparent contradiction in Ibn Khaldun's work between his rationalistic approach and mystical inclinations. Some scholars have interpreted these apparent contradictions as real inconsistencies in his theory of knowledge and have even attempted to categorize him as an early proponent of materialistic dialectism or positivism.

If Ibn Khaldun's commitment to the scientific study of civilizations were representative of a broader approach to all knowledge issues, his theoretical construct would pose a conundrum. Specifically, if his employment of a positive methodology in his historical analysis indicated a generalized positivist epistemology, reconciling his beliefs with his Sufi-oriented knowledge theory would become challenging, considering the inherent discord between the two.

However, there is no substantial evidence supporting the notion of Ibn Khaldun's reductionist positivism. Instead, the body of his work indicates a hierarchical knowledge theory, where diverse ways of knowing, including the empirical, rational, intuitive, and prophetic, are accommodated. Each modality has its place, contributing to a comprehensive, multiplex understanding of reality. In Ibn Khaldun's philosophy, these ways of knowing are compatible and interlinked, providing a multiplex framework of knowledge acquisition that transcends conventional dichotomies.

2.1.4.3. Prophethood and Divine Revelation

Ibn Khaldun's understanding of prophethood and divine revelation is deeply embedded in his broader metaphysical and epistemological framework, influenced by his Islamic faith. Although humans are bestowed upon these various ways of knowing, not everything is at their epistemological reach. As previously discussed, Ibn Khaldun acknowledges the importance of reason and empirical observation in gaining knowledge. However, he also argues that human intellectual capacities are limited and cannot fully comprehend all levels of existence.

For Ibn Khaldun, prophets are unique individuals who are chosen by God to receive divine revelations and then communicate these messages to their communities. These revelations are seen as the absolute truth and serve as an ultimate source of knowledge and guidance for human beings. Prophets are also gifted with the ability to perform miracles as a way of validating the authenticity of their divine revelations. Divine revelation, therefore, serves as a necessary supplement to human knowledge. It provides insights into spiritual and metaphysical realities beyond human perception and intellectual comprehension.

Furthermore, Ibn Khaldun emphasizes that the knowledge gained through divine revelation has a higher epistemic status than other knowledge sources. While human knowledge is prone to errors and uncertainties, divine revelation is seen as infallible and absolute, as it originates from the all-knowing God. Similarly, Ibn Khaldun does not see a conflict between divine revelation and human reason. Instead, he believes that both coexist harmoniously within a comprehensive epistemological framework. Reason and empirical observation can provide valuable insights into the natural world, while divine revelation provides guidance on normative and ethical matters that pertain to the regulation of human relationships across different domains of activity, as well as metaphysical and spiritual matters. When employed together, one can have a holistic and authentic understanding of the universe that conforms to the actual reality.

2.1.4.4. The Ontological Justification of Necessity of the Divine Revelation

Ibn Khaldun questions that a kind of understanding or perception may exist that goes beyond our human comprehension. He points out that our understanding is created and limited, whereas the creation of God is greater than that of humans. Therefore, any definitive understanding of the universe and existence could be beyond our grasp, as God's knowledge encompasses all. Hence, he advises that we should not rely solely on our own understanding but follow what is prescribed by the *Shariʿah* in terms of belief and actions, as it has a more profound understanding of our well-being and what benefits us. It operates on a level that transcends our human understanding and a realm broader than our cognitive reach.

Importantly, Ibn Khaldun does not see this as undermining the value or the reliability of reason. Instead, he regards reason as a reliable instrument that can yield certain knowledge. However, he cautions against expecting to grasp divine realities and metaphysical matters related to monotheism, the afterlife, prophecy, divine attributes, and anything beyond the scope of reason, with our reason alone. He likens such an expectation to a man who, having seen a balance used for weighing gold, desires to weigh mountains with it. Such a task is impossible, not because the balance is flawed or inaccurate in its judgments, but because it is limited in its scope. Just as the balance cannot exceed its range, reason is limited and cannot hope to encompass God and His attributes, for it is but a particle among the particles of existence.

In Ibn Khaldun's philosophical framework, the concept of *tawḥīd* (the oneness of God) is intricately linked with the human cognitive limitations to grasp all causes exhaustively. As Ibn Khaldun expressed, "the inability to perceive is perception" (*al-ʿajz ʿan al-idrāk idrākun*) (IK, ME, 3, 39). This notion of *tawḥīd* essentially acknowledges the human incapacity to fully perceive the mechanisms and effects of causality, thereby surrendering this understanding to the Creator, who encompasses all. In this sense, *tawḥīd* is an affirmation of the singularity of the real actor behind all events, to whom all causes ascend and return, according to his omnipotence.

Ibn Khaldun argues that the one who prioritizes reason over revelation in such matters has fundamentally misunderstood the role and limitations of reason. He cautions us to be alert to this mistake, the deficiency of understanding, and the diminishment of sound judgment that results from it. Thus, Ibn Khaldun's perspective beautifully reconciles the role of reason and faith by affirming the reliability and necessity of both while acknowledging their respective domains and limitations.

2.1.4.5. Spiritual Unveiling: *Kashf*

Ibn Khaldun maintains that human beings possess two types of knowledge: (1) knowledge acquired through rational thinking, deduction, and senses, and (2) knowledge received through spiritual experiences and states of being. According to Ibn Khaldun, people who follow the path of *taṣawwuf* engage in a specific way of knowing, known as *kashf*. *Kashf* refers to intuitive knowledge not rationally acquired but received as a divine gift through spiritual experiences and inner transformation. It involves unveiling hidden truths and the direct perception of divine realities that are

not accessible through ordinary sensory perception or rational thinking. Simply put, *kashf* is to know *bi al-dhāt,* the soul's knowing, without any intermediaries through spiritual unveiling, lifting the veil between the human soul and the Tablet, as discussed previously.

For a Sufi, engaging in spiritual striving and worship leads to the emergence of various states and qualities within the self, a self-operation which is called as "technologies of the soul" by Wael Hallaq and "technologies of the self" by Michel Foucault (Foucault, 1988; Hallaq, 2019). These states may be related to specific acts of worship or become inherent qualities. The Sufi seeker progresses from one state to another until they reach the stage of attaining unity with Allah and acquiring true knowledge, which is the ultimate goal of happiness and spiritual fulfillment.

Ibn Khaldun suggests that during the journey of spiritual striving, the Sufis often experience moments of unveiling (*kashf*), where the veils of the senses are lifted, and they gain access to realms and realities beyond ordinary perception. The soul, detached from the external senses, becomes receptive to divine inspirations and insights. This unveiling occurs when the Sufi retreats from the sensory world, engages in remembrance of Allah (*dhikr*), and nourishes the soul through spiritual practices. These experiences enable the Sufis to perceive hidden truths, witness spiritual realms, and even foresee future events. They can exercise their will and spiritual faculties to interact with and affect the lower aspects of existence.

This struggle (*mujāhadah*), seclusion (*khalwah*), and remembrance (*dhikr*) often lead to the unveiling of the sensory veils and the ability to perceive worlds of God's command, which a person of sensory perception cannot comprehend. The soul (*rūḥ*) is part of these worlds. The reason for this unveiling is that when the soul withdraws from the external sensory world to the inner world, the conditions of the senses weaken, and the states of the soul strengthen, gaining dominion and reviving its growth. The act of *dhikr* supports this, as it nourishes the soul's growth. The soul continues to grow until it becomes a witnessing entity before mere knowledge. When he veil of sensory perception is lifted, the existence of the self is actualized and completed. This is the epitome of perception (*ʿayn al-idrāk*).

However, Ibn Khaldun highlights that the true Sufi masters do not consider these unveilings their ultimate goal (IK, S, 72). They do not speak about the reality of these experiences unless they are specifically commanded to do so. They view these unveilings as tests or trials and seek refuge in Allah when they attack them. The companions of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ also engaged in similar spiritual striving and experienced many of these unveilings, although their experiences were less emphasized. Ibn Khaldun states that their focus was primarily on devotion, sincerity, and adherence to the principles of Islam.

2.1.4.6. Dreams as a Source of Knowledge for the Metaphysical World

Ibn Khaldun recognizes multiple levels of reality, corresponding to different ways of acquiring knowledge. This conception creates a framework wherein he situates the "unseen" (*al-ghayb*) and "the sensory" or "empirical" (al-*shahāda*) as two distinctive realms in the ontological order of things, with each realm possessing a distinctive epistemic order. In the sensory realm, knowledge is gained through the physical senses and reason, grounded in empirical observation and logical deduction. This corresponds to disciplines like natural sciences, social sciences, and certain aspects of jurisprudence. On the other hand, the unseen realm includes realities not accessible through sensory perception or rational analysis but through spiritual or intuitive forms of cognition, such as dreams, visions, or mystical experiences. The knowledge gained in this realm is not inferior or superior to the knowledge gained through the sensory realm; instead, it is a different type of knowledge that provides insights into different aspects of reality. The methodological criterion determining their value is their conformity (*muṭābaqah*) to reality.

In the context of his discussion on dreams, Ibn Khaldun uses the concept of the rational soul's (*al-rūḥ al-ʿaqlī*) ascension through levels of reality, moving from the realm of the sensory (*shahāda*) to the realm of the unseen (*ghayb*). He discusses how the soul, disengaging from sensory distractions, can perceive certain realities of the unseen realm during sleep. This is an essential part of his multiplex epistemology: that dreams can be a legitimate source of knowledge about the unseen world beyond what is accessible through sensory perception and rational analysis.

Ibn Khaldun discusses why dreams can provide insight into the unseen (*ghayb*). He explains that the spiritual soul (*al-rūḥ al-qalbī*) –a subtle vapor that emanates from the

physical heart and spreads throughout the body via the circulatory system– completes the functions of animal powers and their perceptions. When the senses become overwhelmed and tired, and the surface of the body is cooled by the night air, this heart's spirit retreats from the rest of the body back to its heart center. This is essentially the state of sleep, where the external senses are temporarily shut down.

According to Ibn Khaldun, this spiritual soul (*al-rūḥ al-qalbī*) serves as the vehicle for the rational soul of humans, which inherently perceives everything in the world of divine command. Its very essence is the essence of perception. However, its awareness of the unseen realities is often obstructed by its engagement with the body, its powers, and its senses. If these obstructions were removed, the rational soul would return to its true essence – the essence of perception– and comprehend all perceivable realities.

In sleep, the rational soul partially disengages from these sensory distractions, allowing for a glimpse of its inherent realm in proportion to the level of its disengagement. As the distractions of the external senses are significantly reduced in sleep, the soul becomes more receptive to the realities of its world. When it perceives these realities, it brings them back to the body because as long as it resides in the body, it can only operate through bodily perceptions, which mainly occur in the brain and manifest as imagination.

Thus, the imagination extracts imaginary forms from perceived forms and stores them for later use in observation and inference. Similarly, the soul derives intellectual, psychic forms from these, gradually abstracting from the sensory to the intelligible, with the imagination serving as an intermediary. Hence, when the soul perceives something from its inherent realm, it conveys it to the imagination, which represents it in an appropriate form. This is then passed on to common sense, where it appears to the sleeper as if it were a sensory perception. Thus, the perceived reality descends from the rational soul to the sensory level, with the imagination acting as an intermediary.

The bodily perceptions for knowledge are primarily mediated by the brain, and the faculty responsible for this is the imagination. The imagination extracts imaginary images from the sensed perceptions and stores them in memory for later use during reflection and reasoning. Similarly, the soul abstracts other psychological and mental images from the senses, elevating the process of abstraction from the sensory to the

rational and imaginative realms. Therefore, when the soul perceives something from its own realm, it projects it onto the imagination, which forms a suitable image that is then transmitted to the common sensory faculty. The dreaming individual then perceives this image as if it were a sensory perception, as the perceiver descends from the intellectual realm of the rational soul to the sensory realm. The imagination plays a crucial role in this process.

According to Ibn Khaldun, this is the essence of dreaming, where the perception of the soul is transformed into imagery experienced by the dreamer as if it were a sensory perception. One may think that dreaming is similar to spiritual perception. Nevertheless, this is not the case. Dreams are not like spiritual perceptions. This is because spiritual perception (*al-idrāk al-nafsānī*) is not bound by time or order but is comprehended instantaneously at once. Spiritual perception, or what is also often referred to as intuitive or direct knowledge, operates outside these confines. It pertains to the immediate comprehension of spiritual realities or truths not subject to time, space, or causality. In other words, spiritual perception is an immediate or intuitive understanding that happens here and now and is not mediated by discursive reasoning, sensory experiences, or the passage of time. On the other hand, dreams have a temporal dimension because they are produced by the brain faculties, extracted by the imagination from memory, and transmitted to the common sensory faculty, as previously mentioned. All bodily actions are temporal, and their perception involves a sense of order, with events being perceived as preceding or succeeding one another. Thus, for Ibn Khaldun, sensory and unseen realms of reality and their corresponding means of knowledge are not separate but related. For instance, in the process of dreaming, the soul moves through the sensory realm to access the unseen, and the knowledge it acquires is then translated back into sensory forms through the imagination upon waking.

Until now, we have seen that Ibn Khaldun takes into account different faculties and sources of knowledge, such as senses, reason, revelation, *kashf* and dreaming, with human soul being the ultimate agent of knowing.

The above discussion has demonstrated that Ibn Khaldun's ontological and thus epistemological frameworks are multiplex as he accepts diverse ways of knowing and the multiple layers of reality that they reveal.

2.2. Classification of Sciences and *ʿIlm al-ʿUmrān*

Modern science and knowledge may not necessarily be conceived with reference to God, but in the case of Ibn Khaldun, scientific pursuits were assimilated within religious objectives. Ibn Khaldun frequently cited the Qurʾān to support the notion that science cultivates awe in God's creation. This integration of science and religion did not adhere to a warfare model. Rather, the two were inextricably fused, with science being integral to Ibn Khaldun's religious scholarship. While not always motivated by religious or utilitarian concerns, religious and theological considerations helped shape his understanding of science and its epistemological underpinnings.

Ibn Khaldun classifies sciences into two categories: natural (*ṭabīʿī*) and transmitted (*naqlī*). Natural sciences are the fields of knowledge humans can comprehend and develop through their intellect and cognitive faculties without relying on externally transmitted information. For example, philosophical and logical inquiries fall into this category. Transmitted sciences, on the other hand, are the fields of knowledge that have been established by a lawgiver (*al-wāḍiʿ al-sharʿī*) and are learned and passed down through generations. They are based on revelation or traditions, such as the religious law (*Shariʿah*), Quranic exegesis (*tafsīr*), *ḥadīth* studies, Arabic linguistics, and theology (*kalām*).

The rational sciences, inherent to humans by their capacity for thought, are not confined to a particular religious community but are accessible to people of all faiths. They have been present in humanity since the civilization's inception. These sciences are commonly referred to as philosophy and wisdom, and they encompass four fields. The first one is logic. This discipline protects the mind from error when seeking unknown objectives from known facts. Its purpose is to discern right from wrong in our observations of existent things and their attributes to establish the truth about beings through either affirmation or negation to the fullest extent of our thought. The second one is natural sciences. These involve the observation of sensibles, such as elemental bodies and the things composed of them, including minerals, plants, animals, celestial bodies, natural movements, the soul from which these movements originate, and other similar things. The third one is metaphysics. This involves examining matters that are beyond nature, namely, spiritual beings. The fourth one is

mathematics. It deals with quantities and includes four subfields, collectively referred to as mathematical sciences.

So, according to Ibn Khaldun, these intellectual sciences are universal and not tied to any particular religious creed. They constitute the common intellectual heritage of humanity, accessible to all regardless of their faith tradition. They reflect our capacity to reason and understand the world in which we live, extending from logic to the natural sciences, to metaphysics, and mathematics.

The source of all these transmitted sciences is the *Sharīʿah*, derived from the Qurʾān and Sunnah, which have been ordained for us by God and His Messenger. Additionally, it encompasses the sciences that facilitate our understanding of these divine decrees. This leads to the study of Arabic, the language of the Islamic civilization and the language in which the Qurʾān was revealed. The types of these transmitted sciences are numerous, Ibn Khaldun says, as each responsible person must understand the laws of Allah imposed upon them and their kind. These laws are derived from the Qurʾān and Sunnah by textual evidence, consensus, or association. Thus, it is necessary to examine the Qurʾān first by studying its words, which is the discipline of *tafsīr*, then by attributing its transmission and narration to the Prophet, who brought it from Allah, and considering the different narrations of readers in reading it, which is the discipline of *qirāʿat*.

It is also important to attribute the *Sunnah* to its originator and discuss the narrators who transmitted it, understanding their conditions and integrity so one can trust their reports and know what is obligatory to act upon accordingly. This falls under the sciences of *ḥadīth*. Then, to derive these rulings from their sources, a legal perspective that provides knowledge on how to do this extrapolation is needed, which is *uṣūl al-fiqh*. After this, the outcome is achieved by knowing and understanding the rulings of Allah concerning the actions of the responsible (*mukallaf*) individuals, which is *fiqh*.

The obligations (*takālīf*) of human beings may concern the body (*badanī*) or the heart (*qalbī*). The obligations that concern the human heart pertain to faith, what one is responsible to believe in or not to believe. These are the doctrines of faith (*aqāʾid al-īmāniyyah*) concerning the *dhāt* and attributes of God, matters of resurrection, reward,

punishment, and destiny. The discipline of *kalām* studies the proofs for these matters of faith based on rational evidence.

The study of the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth* through which human beings learn about their rights and responsibilities should be preceded by the study of linguistic sciences, which are dependent on them and come in various forms, including the science of language (*ʿilm al-lugha*), grammar (*ʿilm al-naḥw*), rhetoric (*ʿilm al-balāgha*), and literature (*ʿilm al-adab*).

The study of *Sharīʿah*, according to Ibn Khaldun, falls into two categories: one specialized for jurists (*fuqahāʾ*) and the issuers of religious legal opinions (*muftīs*), encompassing general rulings in acts of worship, customs, and transactions. The other category is for those who engage in spiritual struggle (*mujāhadah*), discussing states of consciousness, feelings that arise in this path, and how to progress from one state to another. It also involves explaining the terminologies used in these discussions. Ibn Khaldun claims that Al-Ghazālī brought together these two aspects of *Sharīʿah* in his *Iḥyāʾ*.

According to Ibn Khaldun, all these transmitted sciences are specific to the Islamic community and its members. He says although every community has disciplines similar to these, they belong to a distant genus (*jins baʿīd*) because the disciplines in the Islamic civilization are the *Sharīʿah* sciences descended from Allah to his Prophet.

Ibn Khaldun's classification of sciences goes beyond a simplistic taxonomy, presenting a multiplex framework highlighting the symbiotic existence of empirical and ethical knowledge. Central to this perspective is the ontological assertion that human beings are sentient entities within a multiplex world with a purpose. The sciences, as classified by Ibn Khaldun, testify to this purpose, as every responsible individual is tasked with understanding the obligations laid upon them. Ibn Khaldun's multiplex epistemology forms the foundation of this classification, emphasizing the utilization of all epistemological faculties—sensory perception, reason, and divine revelation—to develop a comprehensive understanding of reality with its descriptive and prescriptive aspects.

In this framework, divine revelation plays a pivotal role in providing insights into aspects of reality that lie beyond the scope of unaided human reason. While sensory

perception and rational reasoning enable the comprehension of the empirical and descriptive structure of the world, divine revelation offers knowledge of the ethical and prescriptive dimensions of existence. It thus complements empirical knowledge and provides human beings with a meaning in which their understanding of reality becomes empirical and ethical simultaneously. This comprehensive understanding that grounds Ibn Khaldun's classification of sciences not only encapsulates the descriptive structure of the world, as furnished by empirical sciences but also the prescriptive ethical meaning is drawn from divine revelation.

Ibn Khaldun's classification of sciences offers a multiplex framework for appreciating the comprehensiveness of human knowledge. His perspective highlights the inherent unity within diverse forms of knowledge, revealing the profound interconnectedness or inherent harmony between the natural and transmitted sciences. He stresses the essential unity of seemingly disparate ways of knowing, ultimately illuminating the profound interconnectedness, or at least conformity, between the natural and transmitted sciences. His taxonomy encourages individuals to harness their epistemological assets—sensory perception, rational reasoning, and divine revelation—to foster a holistic understanding of reality. While the sensory and rational faculties allow us to comprehend the empirical, descriptive structure of the world, it is the divine revelation that grants us insights into aspects of reality beyond the reach of unaided reason. Divine revelation unveils the ethical, prescriptive dimensions of existence and equips us with knowledge that wouldn't be accessible otherwise.

In this context, the classification of sciences by Ibn Khaldun emphasizes the essential unity and interplay of different modes of knowledge acquisition. Through this holistic approach to knowledge, humans are transformed into responsible beings endowed with free will, becoming aware of their obligations. What once appeared as a brute, meaningless world assumes its ethical significance through divine revelation, operating in concert with sensory perception and rational reasoning. Consequently, a synthesis of descriptive and prescriptive elements emerges, leading to praxis—the practical application of knowledge to pursue a purposeful and meaningful existence.

From a methodological perspective, Ibn Khaldun's analysis of various sciences is beyond being merely empirical. In elaborating on various sciences, he goes beyond cataloging and describing existing sciences of his time and delves into providing his

own views and critiques. For instance, he was critical of applying Aristotelian logic to theological matters. He argued that logical tools developed for use in empirical and rational domains might not be suitable for tackling metaphysical questions, which are typically beyond the realm of sensory perception and rational understanding. In this sense, his approach is prescriptive, guiding the reader to think about these disciplines.

More importantly, Ibn Khaldun's narrative on the sciences goes beyond the binary of empirical vs. ethical. Ibn Khaldun's analysis of the disciplines extends to a sociological perspective, considering the benefits and harms they bring to civilization. In his evaluation of the different sciences, he considered their methodological foundations, theoretical content, and social implications. He observed how different fields of knowledge contribute to societies' overall well-being and progress. This approach adds a normative dimension to his analysis.

An example of this is his elaboration of astrology. He proposes that it is necessary to prohibit astrology for all members of society due to its harmful effects on religion and the state (*duwal*). However, he notes that the existence of astrology is natural for humans based on their perceptions and knowledge. He further elaborates that good and evil are two inherent aspects of the world that cannot be separated, but individuals are responsible for seeking the causes of good and avoiding the causes of evil and harm. Thus, prohibiting astrology is the duty of those who recognize the harmful effects of astrology.

Consequently, in addition to understanding the empirical reality of the presence of the sciences in a community, he also evaluates their practical implications on society. This is an ethical approach, as it goes beyond mere descriptions and theoretical analysis and considers the consequences and moral implications of these disciplines on society and civilization as a whole.

2.3. Multiplex Truth

Ibn Khaldun's theory of truth is also multiplex. Offering a perspective of multiple realities, he suggests that the human experience encompasses different stages or realms, each characterized by its own unique perception of truth. According to Ibn Khaldun, these realms include the physical, dream, prophetic, and post-death realms.

In the physical realm, humans perceive truth through their senses and rational thinking. It is the realm of tangible experiences and outward actions. Individuals acquire knowledge through observation and logical reasoning within the confines of time, space, and physical conditions.

On the other hand, the dream realm involves the realm of imagination during sleep. In this realm, the senses are detached from their normal usage, and individuals experience a different kind of truth. Dreams are believed to contain messages and signs that can provide insight into one's worldly and spiritual affairs. According to Ibn Khaldun, dreams can serve as sources of guidance and can foreshadow future events.

The prophetic realm is reserved for a select group of individuals Allah chooses. In this realm, the Prophets receive divine revelations and directly communicate with Allah and the angels. They perceive a higher level of truth beyond the limitations of ordinary human experience. This realm includes encounters with heavenly entities, witnessing the afterlife, and the ability to perform miracles.

The post-death realm refers to the state of existence after physical death, including the period in the grave and the ultimate Day of Judgment. In this realm, individuals experience either bliss or torment based on their deeds in the earthly life. They have a distinct perception of truth, including witnessing their place in the grave, being questioned about their actions, and perceiving their position in Paradise or Hellfire.

Ibn Khaldun argues that each realm has its own set of realities and truths unique to that realm. These realms are not mutually exclusive but coexist and shape the overall human experience. The perceptions of truth in each realm differ in strength and clarity, with the prophetic and post-death realms offering more profound and direct encounters with divine realities.

2.4. Conclusion: Multiplex Epistemology

In conclusion, Ibn Khaldun's epistemology embodies a multiplex approach to knowledge, acknowledging diverse sources and modes of knowing. He recognizes the multiplicity of human faculties, including the senses, reason, divine revelation, and the ethical dimensions of knowing. Ibn Khaldun's epistemology acknowledges the multifaceted nature of human existence, encompassing the physical and metaphysical

dimensions. Different types of knowledge are acquired through different levels of human existence, with sense perception and reason associated with the physical level and revelation, *kashf*, and intuition linked to the metaphysical level.

Furthermore, Ibn Khaldun emphasizes the role of the human soul as the ultimate knower, with senses and reason serving as its tools. He argues that the soul has the ability to perceive both the material and spiritual realms directly and accurately, surpassing the limitations of the senses and rational thinking. Through spiritual unveiling (*kashf*), the soul can access hidden truths and gain intuitive knowledge that goes beyond ordinary perception.

Additionally, Ibn Khaldun acknowledges the importance of divine revelation in supplementing human knowledge. While reason and empirical observation are valuable sources of understanding, he recognizes their limitations in comprehending the mysteries of the universe. Divine revelation, being infallible and originating from the all-knowing God, provides insights into spiritual and metaphysical realities beyond human perception and intellectual comprehension. Ibn Khaldun's epistemology thus integrates reason and revelation, highlighting their coexistence and the necessity of both within a comprehensive framework.

Ibn Khaldun's classification of sciences into natural and transmitted categories forms the foundation of his multiplex framework, which recognizes the symbiotic relationship between empirical and ethical knowledge. The natural sciences, accessible to people of all faiths, encompass logic, natural sciences, metaphysics, and mathematics. These disciplines allow humans to comprehend the empirical structure of the world and engage in rational inquiry. On the other hand, the transmitted sciences, based on divine revelation and religious traditions, include disciplines such as *Sharīʿah*, *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth* studies, Arabic linguistics, and theology. These sciences provide insights into the ethical and prescriptive dimensions of existence, complementing empirical knowledge.

Ibn Khaldun's classification goes beyond a simplistic taxonomy, emphasizing the unity and interplay of different modes of knowledge acquisition. He asserts that all responsible individuals have an obligation to understand the laws and obligations imposed upon them, derived from the Qurʾān and the Sunnah. Thus, these transmitted

sciences are specific to the Islamic community and its members. However, he also acknowledges that every community has similar disciplines, although they belong to a distinct genus.

Furthermore, Ibn Khaldun's analysis of sciences extends beyond the empirical-ethical binary, incorporating a sociological perspective that considers the benefits and harms these disciplines bring to civilization. He evaluates their methodological foundations, theoretical content, and social implications. For example, in the case of astrology, he recognizes its natural appeal to human perceptions and knowledge. However, he advocates for its prohibition due to its detrimental effects on religion and the state. This demonstrates his ethical approach, where the consequences and moral implications of disciplines on society are considered.

In conclusion, our examination of Ibn Khaldun's work has clearly illustrated that his multiplex ontology is foundational to a holistic approach to knowledge, leading to a multiplex epistemology. This model of understanding accommodates a variety of sources and modes of knowing, bringing together empirical and ethical dimensions, sensory experience, and spiritual ways of knowing within a unified, cohesive framework. In the subsequent chapter, we will explore how this multi-layered epistemology forms the basis for a similarly multiplex methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

EMPIRICAL AND ETHICAL: A MULTIPLEX METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, we examine Ibn Khaldun's methodology, which has been a topic of significant confusion and ambiguity in the literature. The unfortunate aspect of the vast amount of research conducted on Ibn Khaldun is that many researchers have approached his work through modern scientific categories (i.e., binaries) and have reduced him to just one of these categories. While their interpretations of Ibn Khaldun's work may be partially correct from one perspective, they are also flawed in another. Similar to the classic example of the blind men and the elephant, they have focused on one aspect of Ibn Khaldun's thought while ignoring other dimensions. Similarly, Annalisa Verza also claimed that Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah* is a theory of depth and perspective, and it would be a mistake to pigeonhole him into any single category (Verza, 2020, 72).

This chapter holds significant importance as it directly ties in with the primary research question of this study: why is there no exclusion between the empirical and ethical aspects of Ibn Khaldun's political theory? This is, among other aspects, a methodological question. The empirical and ethical divide resonates with the recent debate in the field of political methodology. However, the contemporary debate on the ideal and non-ideal theory is far from homogenous, and there is minimal consensus on this debate. Laura Valentini's seminal article "Ideal vs Non-Ideal Theory: A Conceptual Map" provides a comprehensive analysis of this debate, differentiating between three main interpretations of this distinction: full compliance vs. partial compliance theory, utopian vs. realistic theory, and end-state vs. transitional theory (Valentini, 2012: 1).

While these three interpretations largely stem from the methodological paradigm established by John Rawls, the second interpretation—whether political theory should

describe or prescribe—has a much longer history in debates surrounding the nature of political theory. This chapter will focus on this second interpretation of the ideal/non-ideal distinction in the context of the empirical and ethical divide and explore how useful this binary is for understanding Ibn Khaldun's socio-political thinking in the *Muqaddimah*.

In essence, the distinction between ideal and non-ideal theory is a debate about the nature of political theory. On the one hand, non-ideal theories employ an empirical methodology, which is criticized for being too realistic and fact-constrained. On the other hand, idealist theories are criticized for being insensitive to the facts that characterize the actual reality. The non-ideal approach to political theory is characterized by an empirical and descriptive approach that seeks to provide a realistic analysis of actual circumstances (Lagerlöf, 2020, 5).

The ideal theory, conversely, is concerned with developing normative theories of the best possible political or social order based on idealized or hypothetical conditions. The non-ideal approach employs an empirical methodology that begins with investigating actual circumstances and then constructs theories or models to describe these observations. These theories or models generalize from empirical information, seeking to provide a more accurate and complete picture of the reality of politics. On the other hand, ideal theory aims to establish principles or norms that would guide political action toward an ideal society or political system. Ideal theories tend to be insufficiently sensitive to the facts that characterize real-world politics.

These two divergent approaches (i.e., ideal and non-ideal approaches) have always existed side by side, and the history of political theory has witnessed a constant oscillation between them. From normative political theory to logical empiricism and behavioralism, from behavioralism back to the ideal political theory of John Rawls. This demonstrates that neither the descriptive-empirical nor the prescriptive-ethical approaches are dispensable for political theorizing. This is because the nature of the political or social realm is imperfect and thus requires both explanation and regulation by human beings. However, not all political theories have to simultaneously take up these two tasks. This is why the history of political thought can crudely be classified into descriptive and prescriptive theories.

However, it is important to highlight that the distinction between description and prescription is not as David Hume thought. Rather, there is an intricate relationship between how we describe the imperfect reality and its possible prescriptions. This can be compared to the field of medicine, where a doctor must have a thorough understanding of the nature and operation of the human body in reality before prescribing a medicine for its illnesses. It is as simple as this. Excessive consumption of saturated fat leads to congestion in blood vessels, which is one of the reasons for heart problems. Therefore, one ought not to consume excessive amounts of it. This is a simple analogy of how to derive ought from is. Indeed, a sound ideal political theory relies on or takes for granted the factual aspect of politics, as it is essential to understand the reality of political systems and their complexities before proposing ideal solutions. At the same time, a non-ideal political theory also has naturally normative implications, even if the writer claims otherwise, as in the case of positivist theories. This is because even the most value-neutral or objective analysis of political systems is still based on underlying normative assumptions and values. Therefore, all political theories have normative implications, whether explicit or implicit. Both non-ideal theory without an ethical aspect and ideal theory without factuality are defective. Julius Lagerlöf rightly observes this problem:

> What this "empirical" or "non-ideal" approach seems to lack is an ethical epistemology. If our method is purely descriptive in that it describes and models empirical reality, then where do our ethical goals come from? For Aristotle, there may be an inherent telos in all things that can be discovered by empirical investigation, but this is not necessarily a popular position in contemporary philosophy, even among non-idealists. Barring the discovery of a telos, there is nothing in a description of society that lets us know what to do or what to work toward. Political theory is sometimes described as "applied ethics" but how can ethics be a purely descriptive enterprise? If we accept that doing politics and improving society needs information about what to do, i.e., ethical goals, then non-ideal theorists need to explain how one can derive an "ought" from an "is" (Lagerlöf, 2020: 6)

In a similar vein, Johann Lauer, in his article "Methodology and political science: the discipline needs three fundamentally different methodological traditions," makes the argument that "political science, like all other social sciences, can draw on three

fundamental different methodological traditions" (Lauer, 2020, 1). These include a descriptive tradition to generate descriptive knowledge to describe political phenomena, an explanatory-prognostic tradition to generate explanatory and prognostic knowledge to explain and predict political events, and a practical tradition for generating scientifically legitimate practical knowledge for political standardization and regulation (Lauer, 2020, 1) In this article, as its title suggests explicitly, he argues for a methodological pluralism that encompasses the descriptive and the prescriptive traditions.

3.1. Ibn Khaldun Describing His Own Work: Substantiating the 'Norms' of Society

One hint we can get from Ibn Khaldun's words themselves. He says that his methodology in the *Muqaddimah* stands apart from traditional normative disciplines such as rhetoric, *al-siyāsah al-madaniyyah*, *uṣūl al-fiqh*, *fiqh*, *ḥikma*, Mubazan's and Nushirawan's sayings, Aristo's Circle of Politics, Ibn Muqaffa's treatises, and Tartushi's *Sirāj al-Mulūk*. However, despite these differences, Ibn Khaldun acknowledges the existence of shared issues and topics between his new science of society and these disciplines. This recognition suggests the presence of a thread of prescriptive wisdom within his political analysis, further highlighting the multiplex nature of his methodology. Intriguingly, all of these disciplines or works he mentioned are normative. While these disciplines contain normative elements, and Ibn Khaldun says that they lack clear proofs and justifications for those value judgments, Ibn Khaldun says that this is what his task in the *Muqaddimah*: substantiating (*istidlāl*) the 'norms' of society. This task of substantiating permeates empirical, rational, and religious sources and their coming together as a unified framework in Ibn Khaldun's mind.

Ibn Khaldun's emphasis on empirical methods stems from the ontological nature of political phenomena, which necessitates engagement with tangible realities and historical data. Indeed, Ibn Khaldun's emphasis on empirical methods in his analysis of political phenomena is not driven by methodological bias but rather by the inherent nature of these phenomena. Political phenomena manifest in the tangible world through the actions and behaviors of rulers, societies, and individuals. As such,

studying and understanding these phenomena requires direct engagement with empirical data and observations.

Ibn Khaldun recognizes history's significance as a valuable data source for past events and experiences. By examining historical patterns and trends, he seeks to identify recurring dynamics and extract general principles to shed light on the present and future. This empirical approach allows him to uncover the underlying causes and mechanisms behind political phenomena and discern the factors that contribute to their rise and decline.

3.2. Judging Theories: A Conceptual Map

As we begin elaborating on Ibn Khaldun's methodology, it is important to establish some conceptual clarifications. Social theories are often categorized and distinguished using various qualifications, such as empirical, rational, normative, descriptive, prescriptive, ethical, ideal, non-ideal, realist, constructivist, and others. These qualifications refer to various aspects of a theory: methodologies, research goals, and the content of the theory. While these qualifications may be used simultaneously to characterize a theory, it is important to recognize which aspect of a theory a qualification refers to.

ASPECTS	QUALIFICATION
Ontological	materialist, constructivist, realist, or naturalist, etc.
Epistemological-Methodological	empirical, rational, positivist, interpretivist, or phenomenological, etc.
Goal	descriptive or prescriptive (ideal, non-ideal)
Language	positive or normative

By organizing the qualifications according to their corresponding aspects, this table provides a clearer overview of how social theories can be characterized. The ontological aspect of a social theory refers to the assumptions it makes about the nature of reality. The qualifications included in this aspect are materialist, constructivist, and realist. A materialist theory assumes that social phenomena can be explained through material forces and structures, such as economic conditions or class relations. On the other hand, a constructivist theory assumes that social phenomena are constructed

through social processes and are therefore dependent on our perception and understanding of them. Finally, a realist theory assumes that social phenomena exist independently of our perception or understanding of them. The epistemological/methodological aspect of a social theory refers to the methods it uses to generate knowledge about the social world. The qualifications included in this aspect are empirical, rational, positivist, and interpretivist. An empirical theory uses observation and experimentation to generate evidence, while a rational theory uses logical reasoning to deduce conclusions. A positivist theory assumes that social phenomena can be studied using the same methods as natural phenomena, while an interpretivist theory assumes that social phenomena are too complex and subjective to be studied in this way. The goal of a social theory refers to its ultimate aim or purpose. The qualifications included in this aspect are descriptive, prescriptive, ideal, and non-ideal. A descriptive theory aims to describe or explain a particular phenomenon or behavior without necessarily making any judgments about what ought to be happening. A prescriptive theory, on the other hand, provides recommendations or instructions for how something should be done. An ideal theory describes an ideal state of affairs, while a non-ideal theory acknowledges the limitations of the real world and aims to provide guidance for achieving incremental improvements. The content aspect of a social theory refers to its subject matter or content. The qualifications included in this aspect are ethical, value-neutral, and normative. An ethical theory focuses on the moral or ethical principles that underlie social phenomena, while a value-neutral theory aims to remain neutral or objective in its analysis. A normative theory is concerned with prescribing how things ought to be, based on moral or ethical principles.

All of these qualifications are interrelated. For example, the aim of a theory being descriptive will shape its methodological choices, and the quality of its content will also be descriptive. These concepts are not mutually exclusive, and they overlap and influence each other. In conclusion, these conceptual clarifications and classifications are essential for us to be conscious of what we mean when we use these qualifications in characterizing social theories. By being mindful of these distinctions, we can better understand the nuances and complexities of Ibn Khaldun’s methodology and appreciate its contributions to social theory.

3.3. Research Goal: Description or Prescription?

In exploring Ibn Khaldun's methodology, it is crucial to analyze whether his political theory leans more toward description or prescription. Most literature claims that Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah* is purely descriptive. One way to approach this analysis is through linguistic examination.

3.3.1. Linguistic Analysis through Positive and Normative Statements

As previously mentioned, empirical inquiry leads us to constative statements, which align with the *ikhbārī* statements in Islamic thought. These statements are descriptive, aiming to depict what exists or occurs, and can be characterized as true or false based on their correspondence with reality.

In science, constative statements play a significant role in explaining phenomena. According to Nagel's categorization, there are four types of scientific explanations: deductive, probabilistic, teleological (functional), and genetic (historical). While these types differ in their approaches to explaining phenomena, they all share the function of reporting and describing reality. Constative statements aim to capture and convey knowledge about the world as it is perceived and understood, whether through logical deduction, probabilistic inference, functional analysis, or historical contextualization.

On the other hand, an ethical paradigm within theories often gives rise to normative statements, which express judgments about the desirability of certain actions or situations. These statements contain value judgments and typically include words such as "have to," "ought to," "must," or "should." While they can sometimes take the form of constative statements, their meaning is performative, going beyond describing a state of affairs to convey an action or intention.

The statement "Injustice brings about the ruin of civilization" perfectly illustrates the symbiotic coexistence of descriptive and prescriptive aspects in Ibn Khaldun's framework. On one level, this assertion is empirical, factual, and descriptive as it informs us about a specific state of affairs, pointing out a causal relationship between injustice and the collapse of civilizations. It results from Ibn Khaldun's thorough observation and analysis of historical and societal patterns.

Yet, simultaneously, it carries a normative or prescriptive undertone. The statement implies an ethical recommendation for sustaining civilizations, which is establishing justice. This dual aspect of Ibn Khaldun's observation underscores his distinctive methodology, which beautifully amalgamates empirical observation with ethical prescription. This intermingling of description and prescription exemplifies how Ibn Khaldun's empirical observations were embedded within a broader ethical framework, offering insights into what is and guidance toward what ought to be.

Another example is Ibn Khaldun's concept of the "circle of politics" in the *Muqaddimah*. The statement "Justice brings about unity, and through it, the world consists. The world is a garden, its fence is the state..." is linguistically constructed as a constative statement. However, despite its positive nature, it carries normative implications. It suggests that establishing justice is crucial for the well-being of social life and emphasizes the role of a governing body responsible for upholding justice. In this account, the line between "is" and "ought" becomes blurred, as the statement explains the normal functioning of things while also guiding us towards certain ethical values and actions.

More interestingly, the distinction between positive and normative statements can become blurred when considering Ibn Khaldun's work in different historical contexts. His account takes on a more prescriptive tone when his descriptive statements no longer correspond to reality. For example, the descriptive statements of good governance can imply normative when the reality is changed. As the political structures he once delineated, such as the caliphate, have faded away, his discussions on religious politics acquire normative implications in the mind of the contemporary reader, presenting a normative framework for evaluating and potentially reshaping contemporary political systems. Thus, Ibn Khaldun's work cannot be categorized as solely empirical or ethical due to the blurred distinction between positive and normative statements. His descriptive observations acquire normative significance as political structures evolve and historical contexts shift. The empirical foundation of his observations, even within his own time, presents opportunities for evaluating and reshaping political systems to address contemporary challenges.

Thus, Ibn Khaldun's approach is both descriptive and prescriptive. It incorporates constative statements to describe the empirical reality of political phenomena while also conveying normative implications that guide ethical values and actions. This fusion of description and prescription reflects the complexity of understanding and analyzing the socio-political realm, where the factual and the ethical dimensions are inherently intertwined.

3.4. The Methods Employed in the *Muqaddimah*

This statement highlights a common misconception about Ibn Khaldun–one that positions him as an exceptional thinker, distinctly more rational than his Islamic contemporaries. This perception, rooted in Orientalist perspectives, underscores an implicit bias that suggests a lack of rationality among "ordinary" Islamic scholars, with Ibn Khaldun as the standout exception.

In challenging this narrative, we argue that Ibn Khaldun's approach to reasoning does not fundamentally differ from that of his Islamic contemporaries. Ibn Khaldun was a product of his time and shared a common intellectual tradition with other Islamic thinkers. His reasoning was deeply rooted in the principles of Islamic philosophy and scholarship, and his work, while distinctive and influential, should not be considered an anomaly within the context of Islamic intellectual history.

The uniqueness of Ibn Khaldun's work does not rest in his rationality per se, but rather in his distinct application of these principles to a novel ontic realm he identified as *'al-ʿumrān*. This unique application enabled him to synthesize various fields of knowledge innovatively. His work does not represent an anomaly within the Islamic intellectual tradition but extends its rich legacy.

His "new science of society" is characterized by its interdisciplinary nature. On the outermost layer, it has a historical focus, but as we delve deeper into its intricacies, we encounter various social, political, economic, and educational theories intertwined. This multilayered methodology reveals the complexity and depth of Ibn Khaldun's thinking. A defining feature of Ibn Khaldun's methodology is its grounding in the principles of scientific inquiry. He stressed the significance of universality and law-like propositions. For him, the essence of scientific methodology is the establishment

of generalizations rooted in fundamental causes from which universal statements can be derived. Without such universal statements, a proposition would not qualify as law-like and, consequently, would not be deemed scientific.

The mind must extract general rules from experience to arrive at these universal statements, delineating the universe of considered hypotheses. The ability and timing to draw this crucial distinction are critical to the success of scientific work. Ibn Khaldun recognized this and acknowledged the limitations one sets on the realm of causal relevance, which are vitally significant to metaphysics. He was not willing to confine the realm of causal relevance to the physical world alone.

In this sense, Ibn Khaldun's methodology is holistic and comprehensive, recognizing the interconnectedness of various factors contributing to historical change. It emphasizes the need to go beyond mere description of events and to seek out the underlying causes and laws that govern them. Through his method, Ibn Khaldun seeks to uncover the universal principles that shape historical events, providing a deeper understanding of the patterns and cycles of human history. While Ibn Khaldun's approach often takes the form of positive accounts describing the realities of historical phenomena, it is important to note that these accounts carry normative implications. The recognition of universal norms and principles implies a normative framework that guides his analysis. Through his methodology, Ibn Khaldun seeks to understand not only what has happened in the past but also to derive lessons and guidance for the present and future. He recognizes that historical knowledge can inform and shape human actions, providing insights into how societies can thrive or decline based on adherence to certain principles.

3.4.1. The Methodology of *Burhān*

The methodology of *burhān* in Islamic metaphysics and philosophy refers to the use of logical demonstration or proof to establish the truth of a proposition. The term *burhān* is derived from the Arabic word "*barāhīn*," which means proofs or evidences. The method involves using premises already known or accepted to prove a conclusion that follows necessarily from those premises. *Burhān* is considered a central method in Islamic metaphysics and philosophy, and is used extensively by scholars to establish

the truth of various propositions related to theology, ethics, and other areas of knowledge.

Burhān uses three main tools: *istiqrāʾ*, *qiyās*, and *tamthīl*. *Istiqrāʾ* is inductive reasoning that involves drawing general conclusions from particular instances. *Qiyās*, on the other hand, is analogical reasoning that involves drawing parallels between two situations or things and using the similarities to draw a conclusion about one of them. *Tamthīl* is the process of using metaphors or analogies to explain complex or abstract concepts in a way that is more easily understood. Together, these three tools form the basis of *burhān*, which Islamic scholars have used extensively in metaphysics and philosophy.

3.4.2. Artificial Proof (*Burhān Sināʿī*) versus Innate Proof (*Burhān Ṭabīʿī*)

An intriguing account of Ibn Khaldun on evidence pertains to his distinction between *burhān sināʿī* (artificial proof) and *burhān ṭabīʿī* (natural or innate proof). *Burhān sināʿī* refers to the evidence derived through the formal discipline of logic, which adheres to established rules and methodologies. It involves employing systematic approaches to reasoning, employing techniques such as syllogisms, deductive reasoning, and logical rules to support arguments and claims.

In contrast, *burhān ṭabīʿī* represents a different kind of proof that arises from innate or natural sources of the innate human perception. It is rooted in the intuitive and inherent cognitive abilities of human beings. *Burhān ṭabīʿī* allows individuals to perceive truth and arrive at conclusions that align with reality through their natural thought processes, intuition, and intellectual capabilities.

While *burhān sināʿī* relies on external tools and methodologies, *burhān ṭabīʿī* goes beyond formalized thinking and methodologies. It recognizes that people are naturally cognitive beings with the ability to reason and think. It highlights the importance of using one's inherent intellectual abilities, intuition, and deeper understanding to discern the truth.

Ibn Khaldun's distinction between *burhān sināʿī* and *burhān ṭabīʿī* recognizes the value of both artificial and innate proofs in the pursuit of knowledge and

understanding. While *burhān sināʿī* provides a technical, formal, systematic, and disciplined approach to reasoning, *burhān ṭabīʿī* acknowledges the role of innate human abilities and the significance of intuitive insights in comprehending and perceiving truth.

Furthermore, *burhān sināʿī* according to Ibn Khaldun, is to know through the veil, while *burhan ṭabīʿī* is to know without a veil. To understand this metaphorical account, we need to refer to our earlier discussion in the previous chapter on epistemology. We discussed that Ibn Khaldun argues that there is a veil between the human soul and the Tablet. This veil prevents and hinders the reflection of the images of the creation in the soul. The human condition, the corporeal state, and worldly attachments are the veil between the Tablet and the soul. If the veil is lifted through purification and deliverance from impurities, then knowledge is acquired in its most perfect aspect. When we know through our senses and reason using *burhān sināʿī* and *manṭiq sināʿī* we know behind the veil. However, the unveiling is to know through the human soul, which is the true knower agent.

The purification of the soul, essential for lifting the veil, can be achieved through religious practices. Engaging in practices such as *dhikr* (remembrance of God), prayer, and fasting helps cleanse the soul and free it from material attachments (IK, ME, 2, 411). This detachment allows the soul to access the divine truths recorded on the Tablet, leading to an understanding of reality in its most perfect aspect.

The concept of *burhān sināʿī*, as described by Ibn Khaldun, involves acquiring knowledge through the veil. It engages the senses and rational faculties (*manṭiq sināʿī*) to understand the realities that lie behind this obstructing veil. However, this knowledge is somewhat constrained as it relies on the veiled perception of the truths. Contrastingly, *burhān ṭabīʿī* represents a different approach to acquiring knowledge, one that bypasses the veil completely. It refers to the innate knowledge that the human soul, the true knower, can access once it is purified and detached from its worldly distractions. This knowledge is direct, unobstructed, and more profound, as it is not influenced by the constraints of the physical world.

3.4.3. *Naẓar, Taʿlīl, Taḥqīq*: Methods of History as a Science

Ibn Khaldun's approach to history went beyond mere narration of past events. He believed that history had an internal aspect that required a rigorous methodology to understand the underlying patterns and causality behind historical events. To establish history as a proper science, Ibn Khaldun introduced several methods, including *naẓar*, *taʿlīl*, and *taḥqīq*.

Naẓar, the method of theorizing, involves conceptualization and analysis to uncover general patterns in history and society. Historians can identify repeated patterns and formulate general laws that govern historical phenomena by examining particular events. According to Ibn Khaldun, theorizing and discovering universal patterns is a crucial prerequisite for any discipline to be considered a science. Through naẓar, historians gain insights into historical trends and events, enabling a deeper understanding of the mechanisms at work.

Taʿlīl, on the other hand, focuses on providing causal explanations for specific events or patterns in history and society. It is a method that seeks to understand the underlying causes and factors contributing to historical developments. Ibn Khaldun emphasized the significance of comprehending causality in history, as it allows societies to gain control over their direction and progress. By identifying the causal relationships between events, historians can offer more accurate and comprehensive explanations of historical phenomena.

Taḥqīq, the method of verification, plays a critical role in reaching the truth of the subject under study. It involves a rigorous examination of reports and inherited knowledge, emphasizing the need for critical analysis rather than blind acceptance of authority. Through *taḥqīq*, historians can verify the accuracy of information and sources, ensuring more reliable historical accounts. Ibn Khaldun recognized the importance of critically evaluating evidence to establish the credibility and authenticity of historical narratives.

He recognized that social and historical analysis does not always lead to definitive conclusions with absolute certainty. He thus employed the phrase "*min al-ghālib,*

ghāliban," which expresses a higher degree of probability rather than absolute certainty. By employing these methodologies, Ibn Khaldun aimed to elevate the study of history to a scientific discipline, combining theoretical analysis, causal explanation, and critical verification. These methods provide historians with the tools to uncover universal patterns, understand causality, and produce reliable historical accounts, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of human societies and their development over time.

3.4.4. The Notion of *Muṭābaqah*: A Methodological Principle

Ibn Khaldun's methodology centers on the concept of *muṭābaqah*, which refers to the correspondence or conformity of our knowledge or theories to external reality. This concept highlights the importance of grounding our understanding and theories in the tangible and observable realities of the world. It asserts the necessity of our theories to correspond accurately to external phenomena. This concept demonstrates the empirical dimension of Ibn Khaldun's methodology.

For Ibn Khaldun, the pursuit of knowledge is not a mere theoretical exercise but involves an active engagement with the world. He argues that our theories and knowledge must reflect the external reality. This emphasis on *muṭābaqah* also places a high value on the practical relevance of knowledge, ensuring that it not only explains but also applicable to the world effectively. In this sense, the concept of *muṭābaqah* can be seen as a guiding principle in Ibn Khaldun's methodology.

3.4.4.1. Religious and Rational Norms through Constatives and Performatives

This linguistic classification in Arabic grammar highlights the distinction between *ikhbār* (constatives) and *inshāʾ* (performatives). Constative statements conform or do not conform to reality, while performative statements create a new reality through language. In the case of *ikhbārī* statements, it is the words that conform to the things, whereas in *inshāʾī* statements, it is the things that conform to the words, creating a new reality. Performatives, which are the atomic particles of normativity, have the power to create and shape social norms and institutions.

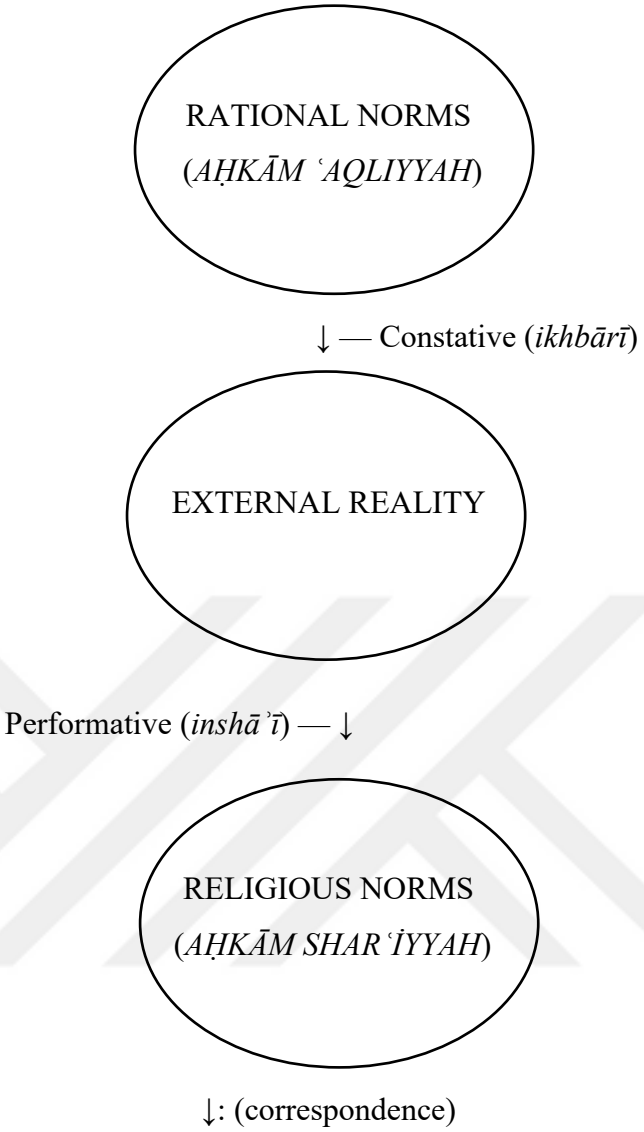


Figure 5: Religious and Rational Norms and their Correspondance to External Reality through Performative and Constative Statements

Although these are two distinct types of statements in linguistics, they have important implications for social studies. Constatives or assertive statements conform to reality (C>R), while reality conforms to performatives (> P), which can be expressed as C>R>P. Ibn Khaldun elaborates on religious (*aḥkām sharʿiyyah*) and rational norms (*aḥkām ʿaqliyyah*) and relates them to the constative-performative linguistic distinction. He maintains that external reality conforms to religious norms (*aḥkām sharʿiyyah*). Rational norms (*aḥkām ʿaqliyyah*), on the other hand, are expected to conform to external reality. They are formed through observation, reasoning, and empirical inquiry. They represent logical or reasoned norms that can be tested against reality to see if they hold true.

Ibn Khaldun recognized that intellectual inquiry and the search for knowledge involve delving into the realm of ideas and extracting meanings from sensory experiences. Scholars are accustomed to examining intellectual and conceptual matters, making general judgments that apply universally, regardless of specific individuals, generations, nations, or social groups. They apply these general judgments to external phenomena. Furthermore, they compare similar phenomena and draw analogies based on their accustomed method of analogical reasoning.

However, these judgments and perspectives remain in the realm of the mind and do not become fully aligned with external reality until after thorough research and examination. Complete alignment with reality is not achieved all at once but rather occurs gradually, as different aspects of external phenomena correspond to the intellectual judgments. This is similar to how legal judgments in Islamic jurisprudence require alignment with textual evidence from the Qurʾān and Sunnah, which necessitates comparing external phenomena to the established legal rulings.

In the realm of politics, Ibn Khaldun emphasized the need for careful consideration of external conditions and the circumstances that surround political affairs. Politics is often veiled and complex, and it may contain elements that resist being compared to analogies or examples, contradicting the general principles that scholars attempt to apply to it. The interrelation and comparison of different political situations should not be based on hasty assumptions or generalizations. If scholars overlook these complexities when examining politics, they are prone to making frequent errors and cannot be relied upon.

This challenge also applies to individuals skilled in governance and administration, as they may possess a level of intelligence and insight similar to that of scholars. They delve into the depths of their minds, just as scholars do, extracting meanings, making analogies, and drawing comparisons. However, they, too, can fall into error due to their limited understanding and lack of familiarity with the complexities of intellectual reasoning. On the other hand, the average person with sound natural disposition and moderate intellect may lack the capacity for extensive intellectual reasoning. Their judgments remain limited to the specific matters they are familiar with, without

engaging in broad analogical reasoning. Their thinking is primarily focused on tangible and sensory matters and does not extend beyond them, similar to a swimmer who does not stray far from the shore.

Therefore, a person's ability to engage in sound political judgment relies on their ability to consider external realities and the conditions that accompany them. This requires a straight and clear perspective when dealing with others, enabling them to ensure their well-being, prevent harm, and effectively manage affairs.

3.4.5. The Role of Revealed Knowledge in Political Thinking

Indeed, Ibn Khaldun was well-grounded in the "traditional" sciences, primarily rooted in religious and legal scholarship. He drew heavily from the Islamic legal tradition, particularly the Mālikī school of thought, and these influences are visible in his work. Yet, his originality allowed him to use this foundational knowledge creatively and innovatively. Ibn Khaldun's novel perspective and approach culminated in forming an entirely new investigative paradigm within his science of human society. His insights allowed him to bridge his formal education in religious, legal, and philosophical knowledge with his extensive political and administrative experiences.

This combination afforded him a unique vantage point, enabling him to discern the inner dynamics of history and incorporate them into a comprehensive scientific project. His work was not confined to historical research alone; it also incorporated philosophical, sociological, and economic facets, effectively integrating what were typically considered separate domains of knowledge in his time.

Revealed knowledge can influence political thinking in several ways. Firstly, it may provide specific instructions or commandments directly addressing political and social issues. These instructions can range from guidance on governance and justice to social welfare and equality principles.

Secondly, revealed knowledge often encompasses broader moral and ethical principles that shape political thinking. It offers insights into concepts such as justice, compassion, equality, and human dignity, which can inform political ideologies and policies. Religious teachings may emphasize the importance of social justice, the

protection of human rights, and the promotion of common welfare, influencing political actors to prioritize these values in their decision-making.

Additionally, revealed knowledge can provide a sense of legitimacy and authority to political institutions and leaders. It may establish the idea of divine sovereignty, where political power is seen as derived from a higher authority, reinforcing the responsibility of leaders to govern in accordance with moral principles and the greater good of society.

Thus, Ibn Khaldun's genius lay in his ability to integrate traditional sciences rooted in Islamic tradition with his own lived experiences and insights. This, in turn, paved the way for a multidisciplinary and groundbreaking approach to scientific inquiry. His work encapsulates his unique methodology, wherein religious norms, rational thought, and empirical observation are seamlessly blended to create a dynamic, insightful, and holistic understanding of human society.

3.4.5.1. God Knows Best the Interests of Humans, Worldly and OtherWorldly

The comprehensive understanding of governance in Ibn Khaldun's view is deeply embedded in the principles of *Sharīʿah*, the Islamic religious law. However, it is vital to recognize that *Sharīʿah*, as perceived by Ibn Khaldun, is not merely a compendium of moral directives. Rather, it provides a holistic guide for life, offering practical solutions for a wide range of issues encountered by individuals and societies.

The foundational ground of religious laws (*aḥkām al-sharʿiyyah*) is *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*, or the higher objectives of Islamic law. These objectives highlight the practical essence of *sharīʿah*, whose primary aim is to foster human welfare (*maṣlaḥa*) and avert harm. The *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* seeks to safeguard and cultivate core human values, including faith (*dīn*), life (*nafs*), intellect (*ʿaql*), lineage (*nasl*), and property (*māl*). The principle of maṣlaḥa supports the belief that God, as the possessor of absolute knowledge about human nature and the universe, is best positioned to govern human affairs. Consequently, Islamic laws (*aḥkām al-sharʿiyyah*), being divine in origin, are viewed as ideally equipped to cater to a multitude of societal needs, with their primary goal being to advance the welfare (*maṣālih*) of individuals and

communities. From Ibn Khaldun's sociopolitical perspective, *Sharīʿah* laws are pivotal in enhancing societal well-being. They encourage moral virtues, deter immoral conduct, and provide a robust framework for social, economic, and political organization. By aiming to establish justice, order, and fairness, these laws foster an environment conducive to spiritual, intellectual, and material progress. Thus, the *Sharīʿah* extends beyond its spiritual function to serve as a comprehensive system that addresses spiritual and temporal needs, underlining its pragmatism and applicability in all aspects of life. The underlying belief here is that God, with complete knowledge of human nature and the universe, knows what is best for human beings, both in this world and the hereafter.

3.4.6. How to derive 'ought' from 'is'

Ibn Khaldun's framework, as revealed in his seminal work, the *Muqaddimah*, offers a fascinating perspective on bridging the gap between 'is' (descriptive or positive analysis) and 'ought' (normative or prescriptive analysis), a longstanding concern in both philosophy and social sciences.

In Ibn Khaldun's analysis, the 'is' represents empirical observations based on historical experiences and societal realities. By carefully examining the rise and fall of civilizations, he derives a set of descriptive principles about the functioning of societies and the dynamics of power. These include the concepts of *ʿaṣabiyyah* (group solidarity), the cyclical nature of dynastic rule, and the consequences of economic factors on social stability. However, Ibn Khaldun's exploration does not stop at mere observations. His descriptive principles inherently contain normative implications – the 'ought.' They reveal what societies are like and what they ought to be for sustainable growth and survival. For example, he observes that societies held together by strong ʿaṣabiyyah' are more stable and robust. This descriptive observation also carries an implicit prescriptive message: societies ought to cultivate and maintain strong bonds of solidarity to ensure their long-term survival and prosperity.

Ibn Khaldun's account in the *Muqaddimah* encompasses both the positive or constative and the normative or performative statements. The positive or performative statements in the *Muqaddimah*, such as "Injustice brings about the ruin of civilization" or the Circle of Politics, also have normative significance. The statement "Injustice

brings about the ruin of civilization" perfectly illustrates the symbiotic coexistence of descriptive and prescriptive aspects in Ibn Khaldun's framework, similar to the linguistic concept of *al-khabar bi maʿnā al-inshāʾ* in Arabic, where the constative has performative implications. On one level, this assertion is empirical, factual, and descriptive as it informs us about a specific state of affairs, pointing out a causal relationship between injustice and the collapse of civilizations. It is a result of Ibn Khaldun's thorough observation and analysis of historical and societal patterns.

Yet, simultaneously, it carries a normative or prescriptive undertone. The statement implies an ethical recommendation for sustaining civilizations, which is the establishment of justice. This dual aspect of Ibn Khaldun's observation underscores his distinctive methodology, which beautifully amalgamates empirical observation with ethical prescription. This intermingling of description and prescription exemplifies how Ibn Khaldun's empirical observations were embedded within a broader ethical framework, offering insights into what is, as well as guidance towards what ought to be.

Another example of this is Ibn Khaldun's concept of the "circle of politics" in the Muqaddimah. The statement "Justice brings about unity, and through it, the world consists. The world is a garden, its fence is the state..." is linguistically constructed as a constative statement. However, despite its positive nature, it carries normative implications. It suggests that establishing justice is crucial for the well-being of social life and emphasizes the role of a governing body responsible for upholding justice. In this account, the line between "is" and "ought" becomes blurred, as the statement explains the normal functioning of things while also guiding us towards certain ethical values and actions. More interestingly, the distinction between positive and normative statements can become blurred when considering Ibn Khaldun's work in different historical contexts. When his descriptive statements no longer correspond to reality, his account takes on a more prescriptive tone. The descriptive statements of good governance, for example, can imply normative when the reality is changed. As the political structures he once delineated, such as the caliphate, have faded away, his discussions on religious politics acquire normative implications in the mind of the contemporary reader, presenting a normative framework for evaluating and potentially reshaping contemporary political systems. Thus, Ibn Khaldun's work cannot be

categorized as solely empirical or ethical due to the blurred distinction between positive and normative statements. As political structures evolve and historical contexts shift, his descriptive observations acquire normative significance. The empirical foundation of his observations, even within his own time, presents opportunities for evaluating and reshaping political systems to address contemporary challenges.

The derivation of 'ought' from 'is' in Ibn Khaldun's framework is also influenced by his deep commitment to Islamic principles. He perceives divine laws and religious norms as perfect guidance for individuals and societies. They are deemed as the ultimate 'oughts' that humans should strive to implement in their lives. For instance, justice, which is emphasized in Islamic teachings, is seen as an essential component of successful governance. Hence, rulers ought to administer justice to maintain social order and stability.

At first glance, Ibn Khaldun's political analysis appears to be an objective account of the realities of his time. However, upon closer examination, a deeper layer of prescriptive wisdom emerges within the descriptive fabric of his writing. If an ideal form of government truly exists within a certain context, then the description of this form can be considered factual, concrete, and non-prescriptive. However, in a different context where this ideal form does not exist, this same factual description transitions into a prescriptive or normative one, as it no longer mirrors the existing reality but rather presents an aspirational model for governance. Ibn Khaldun penned his *Muqaddimah* during an era when there were a political decline and turmoil. Seeking to understand the causes of this decline, he employed a descriptive and empirical approach. Yet, even within his own historical context, his empirical observations could arguably take on a normative significance.

Fast forward to the present day, a time and context markedly different from Ibn Khaldun's, his descriptive accounts now take on a more explicit prescriptive role. As the political structures he once delineated, such as the caliphate, have faded away, his discussions on religious politics acquire normative implications in the mind of the contemporary reader, presenting an ideal framework for evaluating and potentially reshaping contemporary political systems.

3.5. Conclusion: Multiplex Methodology

This chapter has shed light on Ibn Khaldun's methodology, building upon his ontology and epistemology. We have demonstrated that Ibn Khaldun's methodology is multiplex, incorporating empirical, rational, and ethical ways of knowing. Ibn Khaldun's emphasis on both innate and formal logic reflects his recognition of the multiple layers and dimensions of human cognition. He acknowledges that while innate logic provides an intuitive understanding of truths, formal logic enhances and refines this understanding through systematic methodologies and logical reasoning.

Furthermore, we have highlighted that Ibn Khaldun's positive account of historical and social phenomena carries normative implications. His observations and analyses not only describe the state of affairs but also offer insights and recommendations for shaping a more ideal society. This fusion of description and prescription characterizes the nature of Ibn Khaldun's methodology.

In the subsequent second part of this thesis, we will delve into the examination of the auxiliary hypotheses within Ibn Khaldun's political and educational theory. Through this analysis, we aim to highlight the symbiotic coexistence of the empirical and the ethical dimensions in his work.

PART II
Beyond the Dichotomy Between Empirical and Ethical: Ibn Khaldun's Political and Educational Theories

CHAPTER FOUR

POLITICS BEYOND THE EMPIRICAL AND ETHICAL DIVIDE

مكارم الأخلاق ومحاسن الشيم بما لا يستغني عنه ملك ولا سوقة...
...the highest standard of morality and excellence of character (which) are indispensable qualities for both the rulers and the ruled.

—Ibn Khaldun, (ME, 2, 139)

In this chapter, we delve deeper into Ibn Khaldun's political theory to unveil the often-overlooked integration of ethical, normative, and prescriptive dimensions within his widely recognized secular, positive, and descriptive analysis. While existing literature misrepresents Ibn Khaldun as purely religious or secular, positive or descriptive, we aim to demonstrate the unity and symbiotic coexistence of these dimensions in his political thought and contribute to a genuine understanding of his work.

Furthermore, this chapter will highlight how, within Ibn Khaldun's perspective, ethics is not a domain of activity determined by economics, politics, or other material forces of life. Instead, it operates as the central domain that shapes these spheres. Ibn Khaldun positions ethics as the core determinant in his worldview, a force that shapes the trajectories of economics, politics, and other material aspects of life. This approach contrasts sharply with many contemporary theories, such as Marxist, positivist, critical, and liberal theories, where ethics is often considered a peripheral concern, more influenced and shaped by these other forces rather than directing them. This emphasis on the primacy of ethics within Khaldun's worldview finds its roots in his multiplex philosophical underpinnings, as elaborated in the previous part. These philosophical foundations provide the framework for understanding the interplay between ethics, economics, politics, and other material forces. By recognizing the central role of ethics, Ibn Khaldun's analysis becomes more than a descriptive account of political phenomena; it becomes a normative and prescriptive framework that guides the actions of rulers and societies.

Political discourse and analysis, at its core, fall into two main categories: descriptive theories that seek to understand the status quo and prescriptive theories that propose normative guidelines for societal structuring. Unlike many contemporary social theories that either lack a normative dimension or reduce practical reason to an instrument for satisfying desires, in Ibn Khaldun's political analysis, positive and normative, empirical and ethical, exist symbiotically. It generalizes observable reality (empirical or positive theory) while expressing a distinct preference for certain ideals and a vision for societal transformation (ethical or normative theory).

Ethics has a decisive power, but this power changes in accordance with the five phases in the life of the polity. Morality has absolute power, and yet, slowly, it decreases in shaping the behavior of people. Ibn Khaldun analyzes the causes of change. This is what makes him stand out from the idealist thinkers as he takes into account the power of morality and the influence of economic conditions on morality. He is neither Marx nor Weber. Through a multiplex approach, he integrates the insights of the idealist and materialist approaches between morality, economics, and politics.

In his profound exploration of societal and political phenomena, differentiated his new science of society from rhetoric, *al-siyāsah al-madaniyyah, uṣūl al-fiqh*, *fiqh*, *hikma*, Mubazan's and Nushirawan's sayings, Circle of Politics, Ibn Muqaffa's treatises, and Tartushī's *Sirāj al-Mulūk*—fields or books that inherently contain normative elements. He emphasized that his approach in the *Muqaddimah* is distinct, as it utilizes an argumentative and empirical account of discussion while they do not present clear proofs and justifications and substantiate their statements with arguments. Nevertheless, Ibn Khaldun does hint at the presence of similar elements between his new science of society and these disciplines. While his work is categorically different from all, it shares many similar issues and topics, which attest to an undercurrent of prescriptive wisdom within his political analysis. This may be called the sociology of ethics.

As I will demonstrate below, Ibn Khaldun's detailed analysis of politics extends beyond a simple snapshot of the political landscape of his era. Grounded in the realities of his contemporary world, his descriptions of politics were factual representations of the political dynamics of his time. While they accurately depicted the existing realities,

they also shed light on the inherent strengths and weaknesses of each form of governance, subtly advising rulers on what to adopt and what to avoid, explicitly or by implication.

At first glance, Ibn Khaldun's political analysis appears to be an objective account of the realities of his time. However, upon closer examination, a deeper layer of prescriptive wisdom emerges within the descriptive fabric of his writing. If an ideal form of government truly exists within a certain context, then the description of this form can be considered factual, concrete, and non-prescriptive. However, in a different context where this ideal form does not exist, this same factual description transitions into a prescriptive or normative one, as it no longer mirrors the existing reality but rather presents an aspirational model for governance. Ibn Khaldun penned his *Muqaddimah* during an era when there was a political decline and turmoil. Seeking to understand the causes of this decline, he employed a descriptive and empirical approach. Yet, even within his own historical context, his empirical observations could arguably take on a normative significance.

Fast forward to the present day, a time and context markedly different from Ibn Khaldun's, his descriptive accounts now take on a more explicit prescriptive role. As the political structures he once delineated, such as the caliphate, have faded away, his discussions on religious politics acquire normative implications in the mind of the contemporary reader, presenting an ideal framework for evaluating and potentially reshaping contemporary political systems.

4.1. Justifying the Political: Pre-political State

Human nature theorizing is the basis of political theorizing. Many thinkers do not adopt a consistent view of human nature, nor is their view necessarily an explicit one (Forbes and Smith, 1983, 2). But even when an explicit theory of human nature is not present, this does not mean that no conception of human nature underpins or is prior to analysis (Forbes and Smith, 1983, 1). The concept of human nature contributes to political theorizing in three key ways: it justifies the existence of the state and our obligation to obey governmental rules, it provides a foundation for the establishment of specific governmental institutions, and it validates specific policies and broad policy stances. In his work, "Political Realism, Freud, and Human Nature in International

Relations," Schuett explores the correlation between human nature and politics (Schuett, 2010). He outlines six common criticisms against theories of human nature as a basis of political theorizing. The criticisms range from the arguments that these theories are unscientific and metaphysical speculations to the belief that they are too deterministic and fail to account for human malleability.

Ibn Khaldun argues that the very nature of human beings necessitates a form of social organization and governance. *Al-insān madaniyyun bi al-ṭabʿ*. The human beings are social/political by nature. This foundational axiom states that humans are naturally inclined to live in communities. It is a divine design that human beings are created in a way that they need food for survival and must defend themselves against the environment. If God wanted, He could have created humans so that they are either needless or could meet all their needs by themselves. In this scenario, they would not have to live in communities. But this is not the case. Humans have been created with an inherent inability to fulfill their basic needs independently. This innate insufficiency in human beings is counterbalanced by the divine gifts of the ability to think and create, namely the mind and the hand, through which social organization and political rule emerge. If there is cooperation, the individual human being gets sustenance for food, and weapons for defense; ultimately, mutual co-operation appears.

This is God's wise plan that only through social organization should humankind subsist and the human species be preserved. Consequently, social organization is necessary for the human species. Without it, the existence of human beings would be incomplete, and God's desire to settle the world with human beings as His representatives would remain unrealized. According to Ibn Khaldun, this is the meaning of *ʿumrān*, the subject matter of his new science.

4.1.1. Politics: Curbing Animalistic Desires

Human social organization and cooperation, while essential, are not sufficient for the continuity and optimal existence of humankind. Despite their inclination towards cooperation due to their innate insufficiencies, human beings still possess animalistic tendencies that can lead to enmity and injustice. In this situation, a figure of authority becomes necessary in order to establish order and justice. Ibn Khaldun refers to this

authoritative figure as the *wāzīʿ*, whose role is to exercise a restraining influence over individuals, curbing their tendency to act on their animalistic desires.

Ibn Khaldun offers criticism against the philosophers' claim that prophecy is also a natural condition for social and political life. The philosophers argue that human beings inherently require an authority figure to exercise a restraining influence, and this influence is manifested through religious laws revealed by a chosen individual with special qualities of divine guidance. According to them, this authority is accepted without dissent, and its existence is necessary for societal order. However, Ibn Khaldun finds this proposition illogical. He asserts that existence and human life can be achieved without the need for prophecy through group feeling (*ʿaṣabiyyah)*. He highlights that the majority of the world's population, who do not possess a divinely revealed book, have still established dynasties, monuments, and civilizations. This stands in contrast to a state of anarchy, where no restraining influence exists. Thus, Ibn Khaldun argues that the philosophers' assumption of the necessity of prophecy is unfounded, and its significance is derived from religious beliefs rather than logical reasoning. Ibn Khaldun's perspective can be seen as a methodological critique. He argues that the philosophers' claim regarding the necessity of prophecy does not correspond to the reality of human social and political life. He asserts that the existence of functioning societies, dynasties, and structures in the absence of divine revelation falsifies the philosophers' notion that prophecy is an essential condition for societal order. Ibn Khaldun's approach highlights the importance of examining the tangible realities and empirical observations when evaluating theoretical assertions about the nature of social and political phenomena.

4.1.2. Human Nature: Innate, Nurtured, and Acquired Traits

The concept of human nature has been subject to diverse interpretations throughout the history of thought. One prominent viewpoint championed by John Locke is the notion of *tabula rasa*, suggesting that individuals are born as blank slates and acquire their knowledge and traits solely through experiences and environmental factors. This perspective has significantly influenced behaviorism, a branch of modern psychology that emphasizes observable behaviors while downplaying the role of innate characteristics in human nature.

However, the rise of evolutionary psychology (EP) has presented a compelling challenge to the behaviorist view. EP argues that humans do possess innate predispositions and traits, suggesting a shared foundation of behaviors, motivations, and propensities among individuals.

In navigating these contrasting perspectives, Ibn Khaldun offers a multiplex framework that transcends the nature-nurture dichotomy. He proposes a model that recognizes the interplay of intrinsic traits, environmental influences, and personal development in shaping an individual's character and behavior. His framework accepts that both intrinsic traits and external influences play significant roles in shaping an individual's character and behavior.

According to Ibn Khaldun, human beings possess an original nature bestowed upon them by God. This original nature serves as a fundamental blueprint for human tendencies and capacities. For example, our inherent inclination toward socialization and our innate inability to independently fulfill all our needs, reflect this original nature.

However, Ibn Khaldun also emphasizes the influence of the environment and society in shaping human behavior and attributes, thus acknowledging the 'nurture' aspect. This environmental influence is manifested through what he terms as 'second nature.' This second nature is acquired through continuous exposure to certain behaviors, cultures, and social norms, and can significantly shape a person's character. In essence, Ibn Khaldun's perspective on human nature is fluid. While the original nature serves as a basis for human behavior, it is the combination of this innate nature and the influences of the environment and society (the second nature) that ultimately determines the character and actions of individuals.

In the context of nurtured traits, Ibn Khaldun suggests that the customs and habits acquired in early life greatly influence an individual's inclination towards either good or evil. Sedentary people, who are immersed in a lifestyle focused on worldly pleasures, luxury, and the fulfillment of desires, develop souls that are colored with blameworthy and evil qualities. The constant indulgence in these pleasures leads them

further away from the ways and means of goodness, resulting in a loss of the will and internal restraining power and an increase in negative traits (IK, ME, 1, 253-257).

On the other hand, Bedouins, despite also being engaged in worldly affairs, prioritize necessities rather than luxuries. Their customs and mutual dealings are more appropriate and aligned with a simpler way of life. As a result, their evil ways and blameworthy qualities are fewer in comparison to sedentary people. This suggests that Bedouins are closer to their natural state, which is receptive to both good and evil influences. Due to their relatively lesser exposure to negative customs and habits, Bedouins are seen as more receptive to being cured and guided toward goodness (IK, ME, 1, 253).

Moreover, the sedentary life, with its reliance on external protection and comfort, shapes a character prone to dependence and passivity. In contrast, the demanding conditions of the desert nurture qualities of self-reliance, fortitude, and resourcefulness among Bedouins (IK, ME, 1, 257). According to Ibn Khaldun, individuals naturally possess a certain level of fortitude, which can be broken down or strengthened based on the type of authority and laws they are subjected to. When laws are enforced through punishment, they strip individuals of their fortitude by generating feelings of humiliation and helplessness. Similarly, when laws are imposed from childhood and throughout education, they instill fear and docility, preventing individuals from relying on their own fortitude. This erosion of fortitude is particularly evident among sedentary people who are constantly subjected to laws and regulations in various aspects of their lives (IK, ME, 1, 258). In contrast, Bedouins, who live away from the reach of governmental and educational laws, maintain a higher level of fortitude. Their self-reliance, constant vigilance, and resistance to external authority contribute to their greater fortitude. The Bedouin lifestyle, characterized by independence and a lack of reliance on laws, allows for the preservation and development of natural fortitude (IK, ME, 1, 258).

Ibn Khaldun highlights the distinction between religious laws and governmental/educational laws. He argues that while religious laws, particularly those observed by the early Muslims under the guidance of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, did not diminish fortitude, governmental and educational laws do weaken it. This

distinction is attributed to the inherent nature of religious laws, which are willingly embraced based on personal belief, compared to externally imposed laws that require submission (IK, ME, 1, 259).

The argument emphasizes the significant role of nurturing and environmental influences in shaping individuals' traits and behaviors. The customs and habits acquired through upbringing and social interactions contribute to the development of their moral character. Sedentary life is portrayed as a stage of civilization where individuals are far removed from their natural inclination towards goodness. In contrast, Bedouins, with their simpler lifestyle and fewer blameworthy traits, are presented as embodying closer proximity to goodness (IK, ME, 1, 253).

Beyond the interplay of innate and nurtured traits, Ibn Khaldun introduced the concept of *malaka*, which can be understood as 'acquired traits.' *Malaka* represents the skills, knowledge, and habits individuals actively develop and refine throughout their lifetime. It embodies the continual process of learning and internalizing behaviors until they become second nature to the individual. These acquired traits are not static but dynamic and evolutionary, often shaped by conscious effort, repeated practice, and personal experiences.

In summary, Ibn Khaldun's approach offers a comprehensive perspective on human nature. According to his viewpoint, human nature is not solely determined by our innate tendencies or by our environment, but it is the amalgamation of these intrinsic traits, nurtured characteristics, and acquired attributes that collectively define who we are as individuals. This approach provides a nuanced understanding of human nature, recognizing the multifaceted influences that shape our behaviors and identities. Through this lens, human nature is seen as a dynamic construct, malleable and subject to change based on both internal dispositions and external influences, while also acknowledging the agency of the individual in shaping their own character through acquired traits. This resonates with what Wael Hallaq termed as 'technologies of the self', building on the term coined by Michel Foucault, highlighting the individual's active role in self-formation and character building (Hallaq, 2019).

4.1.3. Proximity to Good and Evil in Human Nature

Ibn Khaldun argues that human nature encompasses both the potential for good and evil. God has instilled within human beings the capacity for both positive and negative inclinations. This is evident in the Quranic verse that mentions leading humans along the two paths and inspiring the soul with both wickedness and fear of God.

Ibn Khaldun postulates that, with respect to the animalistic side, human nature encompasses evil desires and instincts. These desires, if left uncontrolled, can tempt individuals towards evil behaviors, selfishness, and harmful actions. The animalistic aspect of human nature is driven by immediate gratification and self-preservation.

> Know that Allah, may He be glorified, has instilled within human nature both good and evil, as He said, "And We guided him to the two paths" (al-Qurʾān 90:10), and He also said, "And inspired it [the soul] with its wickedness and its righteousness" (al-Qurʾān 91:8). Evil is closer to human nature when one neglects the cultivation of its moral self and does not refine it through adhering to religion. This is true for the majority of people, except for those whom Allah grants success. Among the traits of humans is their inclination towards injustice and aggression against one another. If one's eye reaches towards his brother's possessions, his hand will follow to take it unless restrained by a deterrent, as it has been said:
>
> Injustice is inherent in human souls, But if you find one with integrity,
> There may be reasons why he does not commit injustice (IK, ME, 1, 261).

On the other hand, with respect to the rational faculty, human beings are inclined more towards good (*khilāl al-khayr*) than towards evil (*khilāl al-sharr*). This natural disposition towards goodness, he suggests, is linked to our rational faculties. Unlike other animals, humans are equipped with the ability to think. The rational aspect of human nature leads individuals towards moral virtues, ethical behavior, and actions that are beneficial to themselves and others. Through their ability to think, human beings obtain the things that are useful for themselves and their livelihood and repel the things that are harmful (through the discerning and experimental intellect). The conflict between these two aspects of human nature creates a constant struggle within individuals. It is through the exercise of reason, self-control, and moral guidance that human beings can harness their rational faculties to overcome the temptations of their

animalistic desires. By aligning their actions with reason and moral values, individuals can elevate themselves towards goodness and act in ways that promote justice.

> In view of his natural disposition and his rational faculty of thinking, the human being is more inclined toward good qualities (*khilāl al-khayr*) than toward bad qualities (*khilāl al-sharr*) because the evil in him is the result of the animalistic faculties in him. Regarding their humanity, the human being is more inclined toward goodness and good qualities. Political authority (*mulk)* and governance (*siyāsah)* belong to human beings because it is something peculiar to them and is not found among animals. Thus, the good qualities in human beings are appropriate to governance and political authority since goodness is appropriate to political authority. (IK, ME, 1, 291).

4.1.4. *Al-Khayr* and *Al-Sharr* as Behavioral Qualities

In Ibn Khaldun's thought, *khayr* (good) and *sharr* (evil) are not only spiritual or metaphysical constructs but also behavioral qualities that profoundly influence individual actions and societal dynamics. The act of performing *khayr* (goodness), according to Ibn Khaldun, is any action undertaken with the intention of bringing joy or help to others without any expectation of material gain or gratitude. This altruistic behavior promotes unity, social cohesion, and stability, essential factors for a prosperous and robust polity. Conversely, *sharr*, or evil, represents actions driven by selfishness, corruption, and disregard for societal welfare. These behaviors, often resulting from excessive indulgence in materialistic pursuits, contribute to societal degradation and the eventual collapse of civilizations.

The human soul, if kept in its original pure state (*fiṭrah*), is naturally receptive to the influences of both khayr and sharr. While Ibn Khaldun suggests that by their initial nature, humans are inherently more inclined towards good than evil, he firmly asserts that an individual's behaviors are more significantly shaped by their habits and environmental circumstances than merely by their inherent disposition. Actions, customs, and practices, when habituated, can become a 'second nature,' holding an influence over a person's behavior comparable to their innate disposition. In observing human beings, this notion is often found to hold true, emphasizing that behavior is largely shaped by environmental factors and habitual actions rather than biological

predetermination. The soul's inclination toward one over the other is largely determined by its environmental influences and experiences. Supporting this, he refers to a *Ḥadīth* where Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, "Every newborn is born in a state of *fiṭrah*, then his parents make him a Jew, a Christian or a Magian." This statement implies that the soul, in its initial pure state, is predisposed to accept both virtues and vices to which it is exposed.

People who live in urban settings, due to their constant engagement with worldly pleasures and material gains, often find their souls stained with numerous vices and evils. These unfavorable influences tend to distance them from the path of goodness. On the other hand, rural dwellers, although they also engage with worldly matters, do so only to a necessary extent rather than indulging in excesses. Therefore, they are relatively closer to the original *fiṭrah* and less likely to develop bad traits. This difference makes it easier to rehabilitate —returning to their original first nature, which is *fiṭrah*— rural inhabitants than their urban counterparts.

Thus, in Ibn Khaldun's philosophical discourse, *khayr* and *sharr* hold substantial implications as behavioral traits shaping individuals' and societies' fate. The balance or imbalance between these forces is seen as a determining factor for societal prosperity or decline, highlighting the intricate interplay between ethical conduct and societal implications in Ibn Khaldun's political theory.

4.1.5. Governance as a Good Trait (*Khilāl al-Khayr*) in Human Nature

In the highly institutionalized model of the state that prevails in our modern world, it is sometimes overlooked that governance is an inherent trait of human nature, stemming from our rational faculties. As rational beings, humans have exhibited a natural inclination towards governance as a means to establish order, resolve conflicts, and promote justice. This innate drive arises from our ability to reason, analyze, and envision the consequences of our actions. It enables us to recognize the benefits of cooperation, establish rules and institutions, and ensure the fair distribution of resources and opportunities.

One of the positive qualities that arises from the rational faculty of human beings is the capacity to engage in politics as a means of exerting a restraining influence over

individuals in order to establish justice between them. Without such restraining power, human beings would have an eye on the possession of their brother, and their hand would follow to take it. This is due to the animal side of human beings, which inclines towards injustice, aggression, and hostility. This restraining power can also be internal (*wāziʿ min nafsihi*), as in the example of the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. However, most people neglect the cultivation of their moral self and do not refine it by adhering to religion, except for those to whom Allah grants success. Therefore, an external restraint becomes necessary to ensure justice and maintain social order.

As an external restraint, political authority's primary role is to safeguard individuals from the harmful consequences of their animalistic desires and tendencies. It serves as a check against the negative aspects of human nature, such as injustice, aggression, and hostility. By regulating people's behavior, relationships, and interactions, political authority plays a crucial role in establishing and maintaining social order. Indeed, external restraint, represented by political authority, establishes and ensures justice within a society. This is nicely reflected in the Circle of Politics (or Justice) of Ibn Khaldun:

The world is a garden, its fence is the state.
The state is the authority, upheld by the Sunnah.
The Sunnah is politics/regulation, administered by the government.
The government is an order, promoted by the soldiers.
The soldiers are assistants, provided for by wealth.
Wealth is sustenance, gathered by the subjects.
The subjects are servants, sheltered by justice.
Justice brings about unity, and through it, the world persists...

العالَمُ بستان، سياجه الدولة،
الدولة سلطان، تَحْيا به السُنّة،
السُنّة سياسة، يَسُوسُها المُلك،
المُلك نظام، يَعْضُدُه الجند،
الجند أعوان، يكفلهم المال،
المال رزق، تجمعه الرعية،
الرعية عبيد، يَكْنُفُهُم العدل،
العدل مألوف، وبه قِوام العالَم...
(IK, ME, 1, 82)

Therefore, governance is not merely a display of authority but a manifestation of the 'good' within human nature by establishing justice among people. By upholding justice, political authority ensures that individuals are protected from each other's potential for harm and that their interactions are regulated in a fair and equitable manner. In this way, governance becomes an essential requirement for maintaining social order and enabling human existence on earth. Without governance and the establishment of justice, human society would be susceptible to chaos, conflict, and the violation of individual rights. Thus, governance plays a crucial role in making human existence possible and promoting the well-being of society as a whole.

4.1.6. *Wāziʿ Min Anfusihim*: Internal Restraining Power in Adherence to Legal Rulings

Ibn Khaldun conceptualizes the notion of *wāziʿ* as a potent force or authority that regulates human actions (IK, ME, 1, 92). Given the inherent animalistic tendencies within humans, such as excessive desire and anger, there is a propensity for individuals to infringe upon others' rights. In the absence of a restraining force, as seen in the hypothetical scenario of a state of nature, individuals could potentially infringe upon others' rights, seek to seize what belongs to others, and thus destabilize societal harmony. Hence, for the continuation of the social life, such an arbitrator with a restaining power is necessary. This arbitrator implies a force or a set of constraints that curbs the natural inclination of individuals towards behavior that may be deemed undesirable or disruptive to the societal fabric. The concept of *siyāsah* (politics) in Ibn Khaldun's framework is rooted in this need for a restraining power that mitigates the potential for disruptive behavior.

This *wāziʿ*, or restraining power, according to Ibn Khaldun, can either manifest externally, as exerted by a political ruler, who assumes the role of an arbitrator to uphold justice among individuals. Alternatively, it may originate internally within individuals, referred to as *siyāsat al-qalb* in the discourse of *tasawwuf*. This denotes an individual's ability to voluntarily curb their selfish behaviors, thereby maintaining social harmony.

A *wāziʿ* that is externally enforced, typically through the medium of political or legal rulings, embodies the conventional conception of political authority. In the context of cities and urban life, government and state institutions serve as this restraining power, preventing individuals from infringing upon each other's rights. In contrast, among nomadic tribes, this restraining power often comes from elders and respected figures in the community, who command respect and reverence and can, therefore, exert control. This form of authority operates on the principle of imposing a set of laws or norms that the subjects must obey, and compliance is often secured through fear of punitive repercussions. While this type of external enforcement can ensure a degree of orderliness and lawfulness, it poses significant challenges. For one, it can lead to a passive acceptance of the law, devoid of personal conviction or understanding. Over time, this passivity can stifle the vitality and proactive engagement of citizens, undermining the dynamism and resilience of the society.

On the contrary, the concept of *wāziʿ min anfusihim* introduces an alternative perspective on exercising authority. Translating to "restraining power from within themselves," this term suggests a form of self-regulation or internal restraint that originates within the individuals themselves. When the adherence to legal rulings results from an intrinsic motivation or personal conviction, the law is no longer an external imposition but an internal commitment. This transition from externally enforced compliance to voluntary adherence significantly alters the dynamics of societal behavior and individual character.

Adherence to legal rulings borne out of peoples' inherent conviction engenders a stronger and healthier social fabric. Individuals guided by this internal restraint exhibit an active and willing acceptance of the law, reflecting their profound understanding and endorsement of its principles. Such an active and willing adherence not only bolsters the *baʾs* or prowess within an individual's character but also cements their allegiance and loyalty to the governing authority.

An ideal manifestation of this second type of politics, whereby individuals voluntarily restrain their excessive desires and anger, thus refraining from violating others' rights, was exemplified during the era of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. His companions, acting on the dictates of *Sharʿī* law, did so not out of compulsion but due to an internal

restraining power. They were not merely passive adherents but actively upheld the laws, encapsulating the essence of *wāziʿ min anfusihim*.

The second type of restraining power, namely the idea of *wāziʿ min anfusihim,* implies the adoption of legal rulings that resonate with the people's innate sense of justice and morality, fostering an environment conducive to their voluntary compliance. This active and voluntary obedience ultimately leads to a more robust and resilient society, fortified by individuals whose obedience to the law stems not from fear of authority but from a deeply rooted conviction in its principles.

4.2. *ʿAṣabiyyah*: An Ethical Concept

The concept of *ʿaṣabiyyah* holds a significant place in Ibn Khaldun's sociopolitical theory, and it is often considered the key factor in explaining sociopolitical change. Some secondary literature has attempted to classify *ʿaṣabiyyah* into two types: *al-iltiḥām bi al-nasab* (kinship-based) and *al-iltiḥām bi al-sabab* (non-kinship-based), attributing different meanings to the term. However, in this study, I prefer to differentiate between *ʿaṣabiyyah* and other types of concepts which has a similar function to that of *ʿaṣabiyyah*, which involves a sense of collective identity and shared purpose. I prefer to use the term *ʿaṣabiyyah* in the first and original meaning.

According to Ibn Khaldun, *ʿaṣabiyyah* is primarily based on blood relationships or something equivalent to it. It is a natural inclination of human beings to have affection for their relatives. This is evident in the sense of shame that individuals feel when their relatives are treated unjustly or attacked, leading them to desire to support and assist them. The strength of *ʿaṣabiyyah* varies depending on the closeness of the blood relationship. The closer the relationship, the stronger the affection that is generated within an individual's soul. This affection extends like circles, starting from one's immediate family and expanding to encompass larger groups with whom one shares a common descent, whether real or imaginary (Kayapinar, 2011).

The concept of *ʿaṣabiyyah*, as defined by Ibn Khaldun, encompasses various characteristics and implications. It is a psycho-ontological process that transforms individuals into political beings and unites them for collective action. It is a dynamic force that enables a person or group in power to compel others to follow and obey

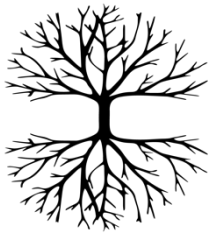
political authority. *ʿAṣabiyyah* can arise from blood relationships, clientship, and alliances, leading to close associations similar to those based on common descent. It is the source of nobility and prestige, and its ultimate goal is to attain political authority (*mulk*).

ʿAṣabiyyah plays a crucial role in collective actions, especially political ones, and is necessary for the formation of states. It fosters solidarity, cohesion, trust, self-esteem, and a sense of belonging among individuals within a group. It leads people to desire higher political positions and motivates them to act politically and even sacrifice their lives for the collective cause. *ʿAṣabiyyah* can encompass tribes and sub-tribes based on common descent, but it also includes special relationships that create closer contact. When multiple *ʿaṣabiyyas* exist, the strongest one prevails and subordinates the weaker ones, leading to political unity. However, when *ʿaṣabiyyah* weakens or dissipates, divisions and conflicts arise, hindering political stability.

In summary, *ʿaṣabiyyah* is a dynamic and multifaceted concept that encompasses social, political, and ethical dimensions. It is the driving force behind collective actions and political transformations, providing solidarity, cohesion, and a sense of purpose within a group. Understanding *ʿaṣabiyyah* helps to grasp the complexities of political structures, historical changes, and the relationship between individuals and the state.

As previously discussed, *ʿaṣabiyyah* refers to the psychological bonds individuals have with their social groups and their ontological transformation into political beings. This is a common psycho-ontological definition of the concept. Here, I would like to draw attention to another aspect of the often of *ʿaṣabiyyah*, which pertains to its ethical fabric. According to Ibn Khaldun, the essence of *ʿaṣabiyyah* is nobility (*sharaf*) (IK, ME, 2, 13). And nobility is achieved only through good manners (*khilāl al-khayr*) (IK, ME, 2, 13). In other words, the root of nobility is *ʿaṣabiyyah,* and its branches are good manners (IK, ME, 1, 291).

Good Manners
(*Khilāl al-Khayr*)



Group Feeling
(*ʿAṣabiyyah*)

Thus, *ʿaṣabiyyah* is not solely dependent on blood ties or shared ancestry but is also influenced by the presence of praiseworthy qualities and virtuous behavior among its members. In this sense, *ʿaṣabiyyah* encompasses not only the psychological and ontological dimensions but also the ethical dimension of human actions and interactions. It emphasizes the importance of individual character and behavior in shaping the fabric of society. In summary, *ʿaṣabiyyah* as an ethical concept emphasizes the significance of good manners and virtuous behavior in the development of nobility within a social group. In essence, through his concept of *ʿaṣabiyyah*, Ibn Khaldun emphasizes the inseparable connection between moral conduct, nobility, and the bonds individuals form within their social groups.

4.3. Politics Without Ethics is Like A Person Without Limbs: *Khilāl al-Khayr* as the Corollary of *ʿAṣabiyyah*

ʿAṣabiyyah, according to Ibn Khaldun, provides the foundational strength and cohesion needed for any political entity to exist. It serves as a binding force, uniting individuals and fostering a sense of shared identity and purpose. However, *ʿaṣabiyyah* alone does not ensure the successful enactment of authority.

ʿAṣabiyyah, by itself, is not enough, neither for ordinary people nor for people who holds political authority (IK, ME, 1, 291-293). Even people who holds political authority needs *khilāl al-khayr* even more. Due to the essentiality of the concept of *ʿaṣabiyyah* in the emergence and formation or socio-political organizations, the concept of good manners (*khilāl al-khayr*) is often overlooked. Authority, viewed as the pinnacle of all glory and the end of all ranks, requires more than just the group solidarity provided by ʿaṣabiyyah. For those in positions of power and governance, the

adoption of khilāl al-khayr becomes even more essential. Ibn Khaldun even makes the analogy of *ʿaṣabiyyah* without *khilāl al-khayr* is like a person lacking limbs or appearing naked among people. *ʿAṣabiyyah* provides the cohesive force binding a group, but without *khilāl al-khayr*, this bond remains hollow.

> Glory has its foundation upon which it is built, and its reality is realized through it: which is *ʿaṣabiyyah* (group solidarity) and *ʿashīrah* (tribal ties). It also has a main branch that completes and perfects its existence, and that is khilāl (good manners). If political authority is the ultimate goal of ʿaṣabiyyah, then it is also the ultimate goal of good manners, as its branches and complements. Without the existence of good manners, as branches of *ʿaṣabiyyah*, political authority is like a person lacking limbs or appearing naked among people. And when *ʿaṣabiyyah* exists without the embodiment of good manners, it signifies a deficiency in the households and the lineages. So, what do you think of the people of political authority, the ultimate goal of all glory and the last part of all lineage? (IK, ME, 1, 291)

When we talk about the "normal" in the context of Ibn Khaldun's political theory, we are referring to a condition or state of affairs that is both commonly observed (empirical/descriptive) and considered to be standard or ideal (ethical/normative). In this sense, good manners (*khilāl al-khayr*) are "normal" within the framework of the Khaldunian political theory. The concept of good manners is "normal" in an empirical or descriptive sense because it is observed to be a common and recurring feature of successful and stable societies. Groups with strong bonds of *ʿaṣabiyyah* and embody praiseworthy qualities are often those that are able to establish lasting and effective political structures.

At the same time, good manners (*khilāl al-khayr*) are also "normal" in an ethical or normative sense. That is, they are not just observed to be present but are also seen as a necessary and desirable characteristic. According to Ibn Khaldun, groups ought to strive to cultivate these good manners among their members, as they contribute to the group's overall nobility and help sustain its political authority (*mulk*). Therefore, the concept of good manners (*khilāl al-khayr*) is "normal" in the sense that it is both a natural and expected feature of socio-political groups (descriptive/empirical) and a standard that these groups should aspire to and work towards achieving (prescriptive/ethical). In this sense, the concept of *khilāl al-khayr* exemplifies both the

empirical and ethical dimensions of Ibn Khaldun's political theory by emphasizing the significance of good manners and ethical conduct in the exercise of political authority, both in descriptive and prescriptive terms.

From an empirical or descriptive perspective, Ibn Khaldun acknowledges that the presence of good manners and ethical behavior within a political system has tangible effects on its stability, effectiveness, and longevity. He observes that leaders who embody these qualities are more likely to gain the trust and support of their subjects, and foster social cohesion. This empirical observation stresses the significance of good manners as a contributing factor to the success and stability of political authority.

On the other hand, the prescriptive or ethical aspect of khilāl al-khayr provides a normative framework for political behavior. It sets the standards of conduct for individuals, particularly those in positions of power, suggesting that they should strive for moral righteousness and good manners. This ethical dimension serves as a guiding principle, a norm to aspire to, and forms a basis for evaluating the actions and decisions of the rulers.

Therefore, *khilāl al-khayr* serves as a powerful example of how Ibn Khaldun's political theory encompasses both the empirical and ethical dimensions. It recognizes the inherent connection between the observable realities of political systems and the ethical principles that should guide their functioning.

4.4. ʿ*Aṣabiyyah* and *Khilāl al-Khayr*: Essential Prerequisites for Vicegerency

One of the definitions of politics (*al-siyāsah*) and political authority (*al-mulk*) Ibn Khaldun makes in the *Muqaddimah* is as follows: "Politics is to safeguard and ensure the well-being of all beings on earth, human and non-human, or in other words a divine trusteeship of creation (*kafālah li al-khalq*)" (IK, ME, 1, 291). In addition to the divine trusteeship, politics is a vicegerency for God among His subjects, tasked with the duty of implementing God's commands in the administration of society (*khilāfah li Allah fī al-ʿibad li-tanfīdhi aḥkāmihi fīhim*).

> Furthermore, politics and governance are guarantees for human beings and a vicegerency of Allah among His servants to execute His commands for them. God's commands for His creation and servants are based on goodness (*al-khayr*) and the consideration of interests (*maṣālih*), as witnessed in divine revelations. Nonetheless, human regulations, in contrast, are driven by ignorance and the influence of Satan, in opposition to the power and predestination of God. He is the sole doer of good and evil, and He has decreed their occurrence as there is no doer other than Him. Therefore, whoever possesses *ʿaṣabiyyah* that guarantees power and embodies the noble manners and praiseworthy qualities suitable for implementing Allah's commands among His creation they are prepared for vicegerency among people and entrusted with the guardianship of creation. This evidence is more reliable and solid than the previous one as it demonstrates that the existence of good manners (*khilāl al-khayr*) serves as evidence of the presence of political authority for those who hold the *ʿaṣabiyyah*. (IK, ME, 2, 292)

From the above excerpt, we understand that politics is not merely an instrument of control but a divine vicegerency acting on behalf of God, operationalized through the execution of His commands.

4.5. The Moral Foundations of Political Authority

More importantly, the connection between goodness (*al-khayr*) and politics in Ibn Khaldun's perspective offers a profound understanding of political governance in its ethical context. In his view, divine ordinances or God's commands are grounded in the principle of promoting *al-khayr* (goodness) and the consideration of *maṣāliḥ* (public welfare or collective benefit). Thus, whoever possesses *ʿaṣabiyyah* that guarantees power for them and embodies the good manners (*khilāl al-khayr*) and praiseworthy qualities which aligns with implementing Allah's commands which are based on goodness (*al-khayr*), they are prepared for vicegerency among people and entrusted with the guardianship of creation, *bi al-quwwa* or *bi al-fiʿl*. When these two elements, *ʿaṣabiyyah* and *khilāl al-khayr*, are present in an individual or group, Ibn Khaldun suggests that they are prepared for a role of immense responsibility—that of the vicegerent (*khilāfa*), the representative of God on earth, tasked with the guardianship of creation. This is more than just a political role; it is a deeply ethical position that requires the possessor to adhere to and uphold the values of justice, compassion, and the welfare of society (*maṣālih*).

Ibn Khaldun argues that true politics and governance, as ordained by God, should be a reflection of these divine principles. The task of those in authority is not merely to rule, but to act as the custodians of these values, striving to create a society that is rooted in goodness as promoted by the divine revelation.

Here I would like to delve into the term "*maṣāliḥ*" a bit further. It is derived from the Arabic root "ṣ-l-ḥ" which means to become good, right, or proper. It is the opposite of fasād, which means corruption or evil. While the term *maṣāliḥ* is often translated as "interests" in English, it indeed encompasses a broader, more nuanced concept in Arabic. More accurately, "*maṣāliḥ*" refers to the collective benefits, welfare, or common good of a community or society.

This notion of *maṣāliḥ* is particularly significant in Islamic law (*Sharīʿah*) and ethics, where it is used to refer to the objectives or higher purposes of the law, known as *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*. These objectives include the protection and promotion of life, religion, intellect, lineage, and property. The concept of *maṣāliḥ* plays a crucial role in legal and ethical reasoning in Islam, as it helps balance the letter of the law with the spirit of the law, ensuring that the application of the law promotes justice, mercy, and the common good.

In the context of political theory and governance, the concept of *maṣāliḥ* emphasizes the responsibility of political leaders to consider and prioritize the common good in their decision-making processes. It highlights the ethical dimension of political leadership, promoting the idea that politics is not just about power and control, but also about serving the welfare of the people.

This ethical dimension surpasses conventional notions of power and authority associated with politics. It elevates the purpose of governance to encompass moral considerations, transcending self-interest and power struggles. Political decisions, therefore, should not be guided by self-interest or the pursuit of power alone, but should take into account the welfare of the society as a whole. This link between al-khayr and politics highlights the importance of ethical leadership and governance.

Ibn Khaldun lists thirty good and praiseworthy manners (*khilāl al-khayr*) which he also calls as the ethics of governance (*khuluq al-siyāsah)* as follows (IK, ME, 1, 292):

1. Generosity (*al-karam*)
2. Forgiveness of mistakes (*al-ʿafw ʿan al-zallāt*)
3. Tolerance towards the less capable (*al-iḥtimāl min ghayr al-qādir*)
4. Hospitality to guests (*al-qirā li al-ḍuyūf*)
5. Taking care of everyone (*ḥaml al-kull*)
6. Supporting those who have nothing (*kasb al-muʿdim*)
7. Patience in adversity (*al-ṣabr ʿalā al-makārih*)
8. Fulfilling promises (*al-wafāʾ bi-al-ʿahd*)
9. Spending money in defense of honor (*badhl al-amwāl fī ṣunʿ al-aʿrāḍ*)
10. Revering the law (*taʿẓīm al-sharīʿah*)
11. Respecting scholars who carry the *Sharīʿah* (*ijlāl al-ʿulamāʾ al-ḥāmilin lahā*)
12. Standing by what scholars determine as action or abandonment (*al-wuqūf ʿind ma yuḥaddidūnah lahum min fiʿl aw tark*) (rule of law)
13. Having a good opinion of scholars (*husn al-ẓann bihim*)
14. Believing religious people (*iʿtiqād ahl al-dīn*)
15. Seeking blessing through them (*al-tabarruk bihim*)
16. Desiring their prayers (*raghbat al-duʿāʾ minhum*)
17. Modesty before elders and *shaykh*s (*al-ḥayāʾ min al-akābir wa al-mashāyikh*)
18. Honoring and respecting them (*tawaqqurihim wa ijlāluhum*)
19. Turning to the truth and to those who call to the truth (*al-inqiyād ʾilā al-ḥaqq maʿa al-dāʿī ilayh*)
20. Being fair to the weak among themselves (*inṣāf al-mustaḍʿafīn min anfusihim*)
21. Self-sacrifice in their circumstances (*al-tabadhdhul fī aḥwālihim*)
22. Following the truth (*al-inqiyāḍ li al-ḥaqq*)
23. Humility to the poor (*al-tawāḍuʿ li al-miskīn*)
24. Listening to the complaints of those seeking help (*istimāʿ shakwā al-mustaghīthīn*)
25. Being pious through prescriptions of divine law and acts of worship (*al-tadayyun bi al-sharāʾiʿ wa al-ibādāt*)
26. Conducting those acts of worship and their causes (*al-qiyām ʿalayhā wa ʿalā asbābuhā*)
27. Avoiding deceit, trickery, and breaking promises (*al-tajāfīʿan al-ghadr wa al-makr wa al-khidāʿah wa naqḍ al-ʿahd*).
28. Being generous towards scholars, the pious, nobles, merchants, and the poor.
29. Assigning people to their rightful places/status.
30. Treating people with fairness a fundamental principle of justice.

(IK, ME, 1, 292)

Generosity plays a crucial role in maintaining political authority. Ibn Khaldun argues that the first thing political leaders abandon when they are on the verge of losing their

authority is their generosity towards their subjects. This shift indicates that their rule is in decline, and their authority may soon be taken away from them by Allah. This suggests that the leader's generosity and their treatment of people are a barometer of the health of their rule.

4.5.1. Generosity and Justice: The Apex of the Ethics of Politics (*Khilāl al-Kamāl*)

The last three manners on the list are referred to by Ibn Khaldun as manners of excellency (*khilāl al-kamāl*), even beyond good manners (*khilāl al-khayr*) (IK, ME, 1, 291-292). In essence, they are about generosity and justice. The character qualities and acts of generosity and justice stand at the apex of political ethics, as elucidated by Ibn Khaldun.

Generosity and justice form the moral foundation of political leadership in Ibn Khaldun's political theory. In Ibn Khaldun's conception, generosity is not merely a matter of bestowing material wealth. It extends to honoring and respecting various members of society, such as scholars, the pious, nobles, merchants, and those in disadvantaged positions like people with low incomes and strangers. At the same time, justice pertains to the fair treatment of all members of society and the fair allocation of societal resources and roles. It involves ensuring that everyone is accorded their rightful place and treated fairly and that their needs and rights are acknowledged and respected. This fosters a sense of equity and harmony and contributes to the legitimacy and stability of the political authority.

4.5.2. Morality as a Decisive Factor in the Rise and Fall of Civilizations

Both the emergence and the sustainability of political authority (*al-mulk*) is inherently linked to the ethical disposition of those who wield power through *ʿaṣabiyyah*. For Ibn Khaldun, ethical values are not merely peripheral or supplementary to the exercise of political authority but, in fact, are decisive in its very existence. The moral fiber of the ruling class becomes a primary determinant of their political success and longevity. Ibn Khaldun asserts that:

> We have learned that these ethics of politics (*khuluq al-siyāsah*) have been realized in them, and with these, they have become worthy of being leaders of those under their care or in general. This is a goodness (*khayr*) that Allah

> has guided them to, suitable for their *ʿaṣabiyyah* and their dominance. This is not found arbitrarily in them. Political authority (*al-mulk*) is the most appropriate position and the best of the goodnesses (*khayrāt*) for their *ʿaṣabiyyah*. We have thus learned that Allah has given them permission for political authority and governance and has guided them to it. The contrary also holds true. (IK, ME, 1, 292)

Ibn Khaldun's political theory, as presented in the passage, offers profound insights into the ethical dimensions of political leadership. The notion of political authority (*al-mulk*) is closely linked with the concept of good manners and qualities (*khilāl al-khayr*), both being essential attributes of what Ibn Khaldun terms *khuluq al-siyāsah*, the ethics of political leadership (IK, ME, 1, 291-292).

According to Ibn Khaldun, individuals who exemplify these ethical manners are inherently fit for governance. This suitability is enhanced by their *ʿaṣabiyyah* and their dominant position within society. These individuals do not ascend to leadership arbitrarily or by chance. Instead, their rise to power is due to their ethical conduct and ʿaṣabiyyah, which is a purposeful process guided by divine providence, indicating that political authority is not only about power and dominance but is also fundamentally an ethical pursuit.

Moreover, according to what is suggested in the passage, just as God guides those qualified for leadership towards positions of authority, He also withdraws authority from those lacking in these praiseworthy qualities. In essence, the acquisition and preservation of political authority are intrinsically tied to the cultivation and embodiment of good manners and virtues, highlighting the inseparable connection between ethics and politics.

> If God allows the extinction of political authority (*al-mulk*) from a nation, He allows them to commit reprehensible actions and to assume the vices and their paths. Thus, they lose their political virtues (*faḍāʾil al-siyāsiyyah*) completely and continue to decrease until the political authority leaves their hands and is replaced by others. This serves as a lamentation for them in the loss of what God had given them in terms of political authority and the goodness He had placed in their hands. "And when We intend to destroy a city, We command its affluent but they defiantly disobey therein; so the word comes into effect upon it, and We destroy it with [complete] destruction." (al-Qurʾān 17:16) Learn that and

> follow it in the previous nations, you will find much of what we have said and outlined. And God creates what He wills and chooses. (IK, ME, 1, 293)

In this passage, Ibn Khaldun discusses the divine withdrawal of political authority from a nation as a result of its moral and ethical decline. He suggests that when a nation strays from the path of righteousness and embarks on reprehensible actions and vices, it stands to lose its political virtues, which are essential for maintaining political authority. He also asserts that this decline continues until the authority is transferred from their hands to others', serving as a divine lamentation for their loss. This process, he argues, has been demonstrated in previous nations and is part of God's divine will and choice.

This perspective emphasizes the moral and ethical dimensions of political authority in Ibn Khaldun's thought. It reinforces the idea that good governance and political stability are intimately tied to the ethical conduct of the ruling group, and that the decline of such conduct lead to the loss of authority.

The juxtaposition of Ibn Khaldun's and Machiavelli's political theories indeed offers a contrasting view of political ethics. Ibn Khaldun's emphasis on the importance of ethics in politics, provides a stark contrast to the Machiavellian political theory, which is often seen as disregarding ethics in favor of pragmatic political effectiveness. Machiavelli, in his influential work *The Prince*, argued that the end justifies the means in politics (Machiavelli, 1988). A Machiavellian leader might use any means—moral or immoral—to achieve political stability or the benefit of the state. In this framework, the morality of an action is determined solely by its outcomes. This is often interpreted as a call for a consequentialist or realist approach to politics, where ethical considerations are overridden by the necessities of maintaining power and securing the state's interests.

Ibn Khaldun, on the other hand, views the attainment and retention of political authority as fundamentally connected to the cultivation and embodiment of good manners and qualities (*khilāl al-khayr*), which he also terms as the ethics of political leadership (*khuluq al-siyāsah*). For him, political success is inseparable from moral character, ethical principles, and good conduct. Ibn Khaldun emphasizes that an

individual, even if he has the *ʿaṣabiyyah* through which he obtains a dominant position among his people, cannot come to power if he lacks good manners and praiseworthy qualities. This demonstrates the decisiveness of upholding moral and ethical standards in holding the political authority.

4.5.3. Religion as the Form of the Politics and Society

In Ibn Khaldun's political theory, religion provides the moral and ethical foundation upon which political authority is built and sustained. Religion, he contends, provides the ethical infrastructure and moral impetus necessary for the development of internal restraint, or *al-wāziʿ min anfusihim*, within individuals. Ibn Khaldun claims that without the emergence of an internal restraining power within individuals, an external restraining power, in other words, political authority, cannot exist. This is why he wrote two subsequent subchapters in the *Muqaddimah* titled "The Arabs can only acquire political authority through religion, be it through prophecy, spiritual leadership, or a significant impact of religion" and "The Arabs are the furthest nation from the politics of sovereign rule (*siyāsat al-mulk*)."

> The reason for this is that because of their savagery, the Arabs are theleast willing of nations to subordinate themselves to each other, as they are rude, proud, ambitious, and eager to be the leader. Their individual aspirations rarelycoincide. But when there is religion (among them) through prophecy or sainthood, then they have some restraining influence in themselves. The qualities ofhaughtiness and jealousy leave them. It is, then, easy for them to subordinatethemselves and to unite (as a social organization). This is achieved by the commonreligion they now have. It causes rudeness and pride to disappear and exercises arestraining influence on their mutual envy and jealousy. (IK, ME, 1, 306)

Ibn Khaldun elucidates how Islam, as a comprehensive system of beliefs and practices, endowed the Arabs with an internal restraining power, *wāziʿ min anfusihim*. This internal restraint, as Ibn Khaldun emphasizes, is pivotal to the inception and sustenance of political authority, functioning as an 'external restraining power' by establishing social order. Prior to the emergence of Islam, the Arabs were characterized by a lack of arbitration and a tendency to engage in conflicts and appropriation of others' possessions. They lacked a sense of justice and did not exercise any power of arbitration or restraint over each other. However, with the

introduction of Islam, the Arab people underwent a profound change. The teachings of Islam, through the technologies of the self, cultivated good manners and moral selves within the individuals. The internal restraint of religion led them to exert a restraining influence and defend people (IK, ME, 1, 306).

Religion plays a crucial role in the emergence of political leadership, which is an ethical duty. Religion cultivates the internal restraint necessary for the emergence of political authority, and this authority, in turn, is legitimized and strengthened by adhering to religious principles. The religious law, encompassed by the *Sharīʿah*, provided explicit and implicit guidance on what is beneficial for civilization. The caliphs, who succeeded one another, followed the religious law and its ordinances in their governance. This adherence to religious principles contributed to the growth and strength of the royal authority and government of the Arabs. Through the influence of religion, the Arab people established a just and strong political authority. Islam acted as a unifying force, restructuring their society and providing a moral and ethical foundation for their governance. The transformative power of religion played a significant role in the development of the Arab leadership and their ability to govern effectively (IK, ME, 1, 306).

4.5.4. The Ethical and Pragmatic Role of the *Sharīʿah* for Optimal Governance

According to Ibn Khaldun, the ideal form of governance aligns with the principles of *Sharīʿah*, the religious law of Islam. However, it is essential to understand that *Sharīʿah*, in his view, is not merely a collection of moral mandates. Rather, it serves as a comprehensive framework for life, offering practical solutions to a broad spectrum of issues that concern both individuals and societies.

Religious laws (*aḥkām al-sharʿiyyah*) are founded upon the *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* or the higher objectives of Islamic law. These objectives emphasize the pragmatic nature of Sharīʿah, with its main intent being the promotion of human welfare (*maṣlaḥa*) and the prevention of harm. The *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* aims to protect and foster core human values such as faith (*dīn*), life (*nafs*), intellect (*ʿaql*), lineage (*nasl*), and property (*māl*).

The concept of *maṣlaḥa* underpins the perspective that God, possessing complete knowledge of human nature and the universe, is best suited to regulate human affairs.

Consequently, Islamic laws (*aḥkām al-sharʿiyyah*), being of divine origin, are perceived as perfectly positioned to address a myriad of societal needs, with their primary aim being to facilitate the welfare (*maṣālih*) of individuals and communities.

In the sociopolitical perspective of Ibn Khaldun, *Sharīʿah* laws are instrumental in enhancing societal well-being. They nurture moral virtues, discourage immoral behavior, and simultaneously provide a robust framework for social, economic, and political organization. By instituting justice, order, and equity, these laws create an environment conducive to spiritual, intellectual, and material growth. Thus, the *Sharīʿah* transcends its spiritual role to serve as a comprehensive system catering to both spiritual and temporal needs, underscoring its pragmatism and relevance across all facets of life.

4.5.5. Politics is Good *Per Se* Regardless of the Regime Type

Within the framework of Ibn Khaldun's political theory, an intriguing proposition arises: politics is inherently good regardless of its qualities. Politics, in essence, serves as the fundamental precondition for human social organization by defying individualistic inclinations and facilitating the pursuit of the collective good. Human nature often leans towards self-interest, hindering the realization of a harmonious and cooperative society. It is precisely in this context that the significance of politics and governance becomes paramount in addressing this challenge. Through the exercise of authority and prestige (*al-jāh*), the governing body compels individuals to act in ways that promote the common welfare. This is the least common denominator of political bodies and the minimum definition of all political bodies (IK, ME, 5, 328-333).

Some political bodies achieve justice in society through the implementation of religious and rational rulings. This type of political authority (caliphate or the second type of rational politics implemented in muslim societies), according to Ibn Khaldun, is what divine providence intends. However, there are also political regimes that prioritize the desires and personal interests of the ruling authority, diverging from the pursuit of the people's well-being. Despite their shortcomings, Ibn Khaldun argues that even these governance systems are part of divine providence, although not per se but accidentally. Ibn Khaldun justifies this claim by the nature of the material world, where the presence of minor evils may be necessary for the attainment of greater

goodness. It is through this perspective that Ibn Khaldun demonstrates a preference for imperfect governance over anarchy.

Thus, the existence of governance, irrespective of its quality, carries intrinsic value. It provides the very framework necessary for human social organization to flourish, encouraging cooperation and coordination among individuals. Even if the governing authority falls short of fully prioritizing the communal welfare or lacks the comprehensive nature of religious and rational rulings, its presence is indispensable for societal functioning.

Therefore, according to Ibn Khaldun's political theory, politics emerges as an inherently good phenomenon as it facilitates human social organization and the continuation of human life on earth. Its existence in itself is considered a form of goodness (*al-khayr*). The degree of this goodness, however, can vary depending on the type of governance implemented. When the governing authority implements religious and rational rulings that prioritize the common welfare and justice, this type of governance represents an absolute form of goodness. It aligns with the divine providence and reflects the intended purpose of politics in promoting the well-being of society.

On the other hand, when the ruler prioritizes their own interests and implements rulings based on personal preferences, this type of governance represents a partial form of goodness. It deviates from the ideal implementation of politics and falls short of achieving the comprehensive benefits associated with religious and rational rulings. While it may still serve some purpose and maintain social order, it is considered a lesser form of goodness compared to governance that adheres to principles of justice and the common welfare.

In this way, Ibn Khaldun recognizes that the quality of governance influences the extent to which politics fulfills its inherent goodness. By upholding religious and rational rulings, governance can achieve the highest level of goodness, ensuring justice and the well-being of society. Because it is only God that knows the interests and benefits of humans best, both worldly and otherworldly.

4.5.6. Unity of Hearts: The Ethical Pillar of Strong Polities

Dynasties of wide power and large royal authority have their origin in religion based either on prophecy or on truthful propaganda. In Ibn Khaldun's framework, it is the intellect and the moral that propels societal and political advancement.

أن الدول العامة الاستيلاء العظيمة الملك أصلها الدين اما من نبوة أو دعوة حق

وذلك لأن الملك إنما يحصل بالتغلب والتغلب إنما يكون بالعصبية واتفاق الأهواء على المطالبة وجمع القلوب وتأليفها إنما يكون بمعونة من الله في إقامة دينه قال تعالى »لو أنفقت ما في الأرض جميعا ما ألفت بين قلوبهم ٨: ٦٣ «وسره أن القلوب إذا تداعت إلى أهواء الباطل والميل إلى الدنيا حصل التنافس وفشا الخلاف وإذا انصرفت إلى الحق ورفضت الدنيا والباطل وأقبلت على الله اتحدت وجهتها فذهب التنافس وقل الخلاف وحسن التعاون والتعاضد واتسع نطاق الكلمة لذلك فعظمت الدولة كما نبين لك بعد إن شاء الله سبحانه وتعالى وبه التوفيق لا رب سواه.

(IK, MA, 1, 313)

> And that is because political authority is achieved through dominance, and dominance is achieved through unity of desires and the gathering of hearts. And the gathering of hearts can only be accomplished with the help of God in establishing His religion. Allah says in the Qurʾān, 'If you had spent whatever is on the earth entirely, you could not have brought their hearts together.' The secret behind this is that when hearts incline towards false desires and worldly attachments, competition and disagreements arise. But when they turn towards the truth, reject the world and falsehood, and turn towards Allah, their direction becomes united, competition diminishes, and cooperation and mutual support flourish. As a result, the influence of the state expands, and its power increases, as we will explain later by the permission of Allah. It is by His guidance and assistance that this is achieved, for there is no deity except Allah, the Most Sublime and Exalted." (IK, ME, 1, 319)

In the pursuit of understanding the origins of political authority and the establishment of powerful political organizations, the unity of desires and the gathering of hearts emerge as pivotal factors. Political authority is attained through dominance, and dominance, in turn, is achieved through the unity of desires and the gathering of hearts (IK, ME, 1, 319). It is through the divine intervention and assistance of God in the establishment of His religion that hearts can be united. The underlying secret lies in the inclinations of the hearts. When hearts are drawn towards false desires and worldly attachments, competition and disagreements arise, fracturing unity. However, when

individuals redirect their focus towards the truth, rejecting the allure of the world and falsehood, and turning towards Allah, their collective direction becomes unified. As a result, competition diminishes, and a spirit of cooperation and mutual support flourishes among them.

This unity and cooperation have far-reaching consequences for the state and its power. The influence of the state expands, and its authority strengthens as hearts and minds unite. It is important to recognize that this achievement is made possible only through the guidance and assistance of Allah. He is the sole deity, the Most Sublime and Exalted, guiding humanity towards unity and enabling the establishment of dynasties marked by power and authority.

The inclination of hearts towards truth or false desires has a profound impact on society. When individuals prioritize the truth, reject worldly attachments, and turn towards a higher power, unity and cooperation thrive, while competition and disagreements diminish. Ibn Khaldun emphasizes the role of religious call in shaping political governance. By infusing a religious coloring into the ruling authority, hearts unite and shared objectives are pursued, resulting in increased strength and cohesion. Governments influenced by religious fervor can overcome numerical disadvantages and triumph over rival factions. However, if the religious influence wanes or changes, the power of the government weakens, rendering it susceptible to groups with equal or greater strength.

In regions characterized by diverse tribes and groups, the establishment of a strong and stable dynasty is often challenging due to the existence of varying opinions and desires among these groups. Each group possesses a sense of strength and power, which can lead to opposition and rebellion against the ruling authority, even if there is a semblance of group cohesion. This principle highlights the inherent difficulty in maintaining control and unity in lands with multiple factions. It underscores the significance of managing diverse interests and finding ways to reconcile conflicting opinions in order to establish a stable governance structure. To achieve unity and overcome these challenges is through the unifying power of religion, which play a crucial role in uniting the hearts and fostering a sense of shared purpose and cooperation.

4.6. The Nature of Political Authority

Ibn Khaldun emphasizes that the pursuit of power and the subsequent indulgence in luxury and tranquility are inherent to the nature of political authority. In Ibn Khaldun's analysis, the royal authority claims all glory for itself and indulges in luxury, preferring tranquility and quiet once its power is established. This is inherent to the nature of royal authority, which relies on group cohesion and the dominance of one superior group feeling. The leader, who possesses innate qualities of haughtiness and pride, assumes full control and does not allow others to share in the exercise of power. This concentration of power and glory in the leader is necessary for the stability and functioning of the dynasty.

As the government prospers and inherits the wealth of its predecessors, the people become accustomed to a life of comfort, luxury, and beauty. They adopt the customs and enjoy the luxuries of their predecessors, and each successive generation seeks to surpass the previous one. The realm ruled by the dynasty expands, and the people's share in these luxuries increases. However, the limits of this luxury and prosperity are determined by the power of the government and the customs of its predecessors.

Once the political authority is obtained, the focus shifts from tireless efforts to enjoy the fruits of power. The leaders prefer rest, quiet, and tranquility, engaging in activities that bring them pleasure and indulging in the trappings of wealth and status. This preference for ease and comfort becomes ingrained in the culture of the dynasty and is passed down through generations until divine intervention brings about a change.

Ibn Khaldun discusses the nature of political ruling and the different forms it can take. He states that true political authority belongs to those who dominate their subjects, collect taxes, send out military expeditions, protect frontier regions, and have no superior power over them. This form of authority is considered the real meaning of political authority.

Human beings require social organization and cooperation to fulfill their needs and live harmoniously. As a result, they need a ruler who can maintain order and restrain individuals from causing harm to one another.

Ibn Khaldun further explores the qualities of good rulership, emphasizing the importance of mildness and kindness towards subjects. He argues that rulers who impose excessive demands and punishment create fear and resentment among their subjects, leading to the decay of the dynasty. Conversely, rulers who are mild and overlook the faults of their subjects gain their trust and loyalty, ensuring stability and order in the state.

On the other hand, Machiavelli's vision of politics, as outlined in his work "The Prince," focuses on the acquisition and maintenance of power (Machiavelli, 1988). Machiavelli emphasizes the use of cunning and strategic manipulation to achieve political goals. He suggests that leaders should prioritize their own interests over moral or ethical considerations and be willing to employ deceit, coercion, and manipulation to achieve their objectives. Machiavellian leaders prioritize personal power and success, often disregarding the well-being of others or broader societal concerns.

While Machiavelli's approach to politics focuses on the acquisition and exercise of power for personal gain, Ibn Khaldun's perspective highlights the importance of a ruler's relationship with their subjects and the role of ethics in governance (Machiavelli, 1988). Ibn Khaldun emphasizes the need for rulers to consider the welfare of their subjects and act in accordance with religious and moral principles. Ibn Khaldun emphasizes the importance of ethics and ethical conduct in political life, viewing ethics as a palpable reality that influences the existence and evolution of political entities. In his perspective, shifts in human conduct directly impact political realities, highlighting the inherent connection between ethics and politics.

In Ibn Khaldun's view, the existence of a ruler is based on the ethical need for maintaining order and protecting people from harm. If the ruler deviates from these ethical principles, it is the responsibility of the people to strive for a just and moral governance system that upholds the well-being and rights of all individuals. If a ruler becomes amoral and fails to uphold ethical principles, it can lead to oppression and injustice. In such cases, Ibn Khaldun suggests that the people themselves, guided by the principles of *Sharīʿah*, should hold the ruler accountable and work towards establishing a just and righteous government.

Ibn Khaldun highlights the detrimental effects of certain natural tendencies of royal authority, namely the pursuit of glory, luxury, and tranquility. These tendencies contribute to the decline and senility of a dynasty. The pursuit of glory initially leads to competition and a strong group feeling. However, when one person claims all glory for themselves, others become dispirited and lose their energy, resulting in a weakened group feeling. This decline in group cohesion weakens the dynasty over time.

Luxury, as another aspect of royal authority, brings about changes in the lifestyle and expenses of the ruling class. As luxuries increase, expenses exceed income, leading to financial difficulties. The rulers impose penalties and strip people of their property, further weakening their economic standing. This financial strain affects the military defense of the dynasty, as allowances increase while the size of the militia decreases. Eventually, neighboring groups or tribes seize the opportunity to attack, leading to the downfall of the dynasty.

Tranquility and rest, inherent in royal authority, lead to a loss of energy, strength, and military prowess. The subsequent generations grow up in comfort and luxury, losing touch with the harsh conditions and virtues that initially brought them to power. They become estranged from desert life and depend on external militias for defense. This erosion of qualities and reliance on others contribute to the senility and decline of the dynasty.

While the ruler may sometimes seek assistance from groups accustomed to toughness, it only serves as a temporary remedy. Ultimately, the fate of the dynasty is determined by divine intervention. This argument illustrates the negative consequences of the natural inclinations of political authority, providing insights into the causes of dynastic decline and the importance of maintaining strength, discipline, and resilience in governance.

Indulging in luxury corrupts character and leads to the adoption of negative traits. It erodes the virtuous qualities necessary for effective leadership, resulting in regression and ruin for the dynasty. Additionally, as successive generations grow up in comfort and luxury, they lose the essential qualities required for ruling, weakening the dynasty's military defense. The embrace of sedentary culture further distances them

from the strength and resilience associated with desert life, causing them to abandon virtues like bravery and rely on external forces for defense (IK, ME, 1, 339-340).

The role of the ruler in establishing justice and exerting a restraining influence over humans is crucial, but it should be balanced to avoid harm. Excessive harshness can be detrimental to royal authority and often leads to its destruction. The subjects' interest in the ruler lies in their relationship with him, not in his personal qualities. Good rulership is characterized by mildness and a lenient approach. When a ruler uses force and focuses on punishing and exposing faults, it instills fear and mistrust among the subjects, leading to corruption and a decay of loyalty. On the other hand, a mild ruler who overlooks the faults of his subjects earns their trust, love, and willingness to defend him. Kindness, defense of the subjects, and genuine interest in their well-being are essential aspects of good rulership (IK, ME, 1, 382-385).

On the other hand, excessively alert and shrewd rulers often lack the virtue of mildness. Their keenness may lead them to impose tasks beyond the capabilities of their subjects, resulting in their ruin. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ advised rulers to consider the pace of the weakest among them, recognizing the importance of not being overly shrewd. This story serves as a reminder that extreme cleverness and cunningness can lead to tyrannical and oppressive rule, compelling people to act against their nature. The ideal ruler strikes a balance between wisdom and care, avoiding the extremes of cleverness and rigidity. Ultimately, God is the best ruler, as He creates and governs as He wills (IK, ME, 2, 380-382).

In conclusion, the ruler's character should not lean towards excessive cleverness or shrewdness. Just as with all human qualities, extremes are undesirable, and moderation is commendable. The middle road, avoiding both foolishness and extreme cunningness, is praiseworthy. It is said that a person who is excessively clever possesses qualities akin to devils. Therefore, it is important to maintain a balanced approach in leadership and governance, recognizing that God has the ultimate authority and control over all things (IK, ME, 1, 382-385).

4.6.1. The Life Span of a Political Organization: *al-Aṭwār al-Khamsah*

Political organizations, similar to living entities, undergo a life cycle. This framework describes the stages of birth, growth, maturity, decline, and eventual demise that characterize the lifespan of a political organization or state. Each stage is influenced by various factors, including leadership, internal dynamics, external pressures, and societal changes. Understanding the life cycle of political organizations is crucial for comprehending their rise and fall, as well as the challenges they face at different stages (IK, ME, 1, 343-344).

Dynasties, like individuals, tend to exhibit a typical life span that rarely extends beyond three generations (IK, ME, 1, 343). Each generation, corresponding to an average life span of an individual, around forty years, presents unique traits and characteristics. The first generation carries desert qualities, including toughness, savagery, and an inherent strength of group feeling. These individuals command respect and submission thanks to their bravado and acquisitiveness. The second generation, influenced by the ease of royal authority, transitions from a desert attitude to a sedentary culture. Luxury supplants privation, and collective glory gives way to individualistic magnificence. Consequently, the vigor of the group feeling weakens, and obedience replaces pride. However, some virtues of the first generation endure because the second generation experienced their predecessors' conditions firsthand. The third generation completely loses touch with the harsh desert life of their ancestors. They indulge in luxury and depend heavily on the dynasty for protection, akin to women and children. Their strength of group feeling dissipates, and they become incapable of self-defense or asserting their rights. The ruler, consequently, must seek external support to uphold the dynasty. Consequently, by the fourth generation, the dynasty tends to deteriorate, similar to an aging individual. Like an individual's life cycle, a dynasty passes through phases of growth, maturity, and eventual decline. The life span of a dynasty, thus, aligns with the average human life span, providing a framework for estimating ancestral lineage over a given period. Just as an individual's life cannot be hurried or delayed, so the demise of a dynasty, once it reaches senility, cannot be postponed or accelerated. This process is a part of the divine order, a testament to God's command over the night and the day. The parallels

between the life span of individuals and dynasties offer valuable insights into understanding societal and political developments over time (IK, ME, 1, 343-346).

While this life cycle serves as a general framework, it does not imply determinism. Political organizations can prolong their existence if they fulfill necessary conditions. Ethical leadership, religion, and effective governance are some of the factors that can contribute to the longevity and stability of a dynasty. By adhering to ethical principles, upholding religious values, and implementing effective governance practices, political organizations can navigate challenges, foster unity, and adapt to changing circumstances. These factors play a crucial role in sustaining the vitality and success of a dynasty beyond the typical life span. Therefore, while the life cycle of dynasties offers insights into their natural progression, the agency of political actors and external circumstances can significantly impact their longevity and influence their ultimate fate.

Luxury can initially provide a political organization with increased strength and advantages (IK, ME, 1, 347). When a community attains royal authority and embraces luxury, it experiences a population surge, resulting in a larger number of individuals and a rise in clients and followers. The subsequent generations, nurtured in a climate of affluence and extravagance, further contribute to the expansion and power of the political organization.

However, as the political organization progresses and reaches a state of senility, its followers and clients, who relied on the organization's authority and support, lack the capability to independently fortify and stabilize it. Without the solid foundations of authority, the branches of the organization weaken and gradually diminish, losing their former strength.

4.7. The Role of Governing Elite in Cultural and Institutional Change

A significant perspective emerges regarding the relationship between the governing elite and cultural change within societies. Ibn Khaldun argues that changes in institutions and customs are primarily driven by the customs and practices of the ruling dynasty. This notion reflects the idea that the governing elite plays a crucial role in shaping the cultural and social fabric of a society.

According to Ibn Khaldun, when politically ambitious individuals overthrow an existing ruling dynasty and assume power, they tend to adopt and incorporate many of the customs and traditions of their predecessors. Simultaneously, they also maintain the customs of their own race or group. This blending of customs creates a certain degree of discrepancy between the traditions of the new ruling dynasty and those of the previous regime.

Over time, as dynasties continue to succeed one another, the discrepancies in customs and institutions accumulate and intensify. Each new ruling dynasty brings its own customs, practices, and cultural influences, resulting in a gradual divergence from the original set of customs and institutions. This continuous succession of different ruling elites contributes to the evolution and transformation of societies, giving rise to distinct customs and institutional frameworks.

This concept of cultural and institutional change through the succession of ruling elites can be paralleled with the concept of mimesis proposed by historian Arnold J. Toynbee. Toynbee argued that societies tend to imitate and assimilate the practices and ideas of successful civilizations, which subsequently influence their own cultural development.

Similarly, Ibn Khaldun's perspective emphasizes that cultural changes are not random but are influenced by the actions and choices of those in positions of power. The governing elite, through their adoption and adaptation of customs and institutions, shape the trajectory of societal development.

This understanding has broader implications for the study of history and social change. It highlights the significance of political leadership and the governing elite in driving cultural and institutional transformations.

4.8. Ethical Governance as the Foundation for a Good Economy

The relationship between ethics and economics in Ibn Khaldun's perspective is that ethical behavior and adherence to moral principles are essential for the sustainability and prosperity of economic activities. The moral and ethical integrity of those in power has a direct impact on the quality of the goods and services in the economy. The empirical state of affairs (the quality of the market wares) is directly influenced by the

normative-ethical standards held by those in power. Ethical conduct creates an environment of trust, fairness, and transparency, which are conducive to efficient and productive economic transactions. Conversely, unethical behavior undermines trust, distorts markets, and hinders economic growth.

> Whenever an established government avoids injustice, prejudice, weakness, and double-dealing, with determination keeping to the right path and never swerving from it, the wares on its market are as pure silver and fine gold. However, when it is influenced by selfish interests and rivalries, or swayed byvendors of tyranny and dishonesty, the wares of its market place become as drossand debased metals. The intelligent critic must judge for himself as he looks around, examining this, admiring that, and choosing this. (IK, ME, 1, 47)

4.9. Three Types of Political Rule: Natural, Rational, Religious

Ibn Khaldun's meticulous categorization of political systems —delineated as natural, rational, and religious— is rooted in empirical observation, yet it inherently carries prescriptive implications. The factual recounting of governance structures serves a dual purpose. They represent the diverse governance structures of his time, while also offering an evaluative framework. These categories, although empirically derived, yield to inherent prescriptive implications, subtly advising rulers towards effective governance models.

4.9.1. From Caliphate to *Mulk*

Ethics plays a pivotal role in shaping the nature of governance and the overall well-being of society. Ibn Khaldun says that "the entire world and all its conditions are a means to the hereafter, and whoever loses this means, loses the attainment (of the ultimate goal in the hereafter)" (IK, ME, 1, 386). In this context, the term *maṭiyyah* is used metaphorically to describe the world and life circumstances as an instrument or a means that should be utilized to reach the ultimate goal, which is success in the hereafter. Losing this "instrument" or not using it properly means failing to reach the desired spiritual goal in the afterlife.

Ibn Khaldun, like many other Islamic scholars, affirms the central importance of intention in Islam. The *ḥadīth* "*innamā al-aʿmāl bi al-niyyāt*" which translates to "actions are (judged) by intentions," is one of the most famous sayings of Prophet

Muhammad ﷺ. Ibn Khaldun echoes this principle in his discussion. Ibn Khaldun mentions four concepts that do not have an inherent moral value but are determined by the intentions of people: anger, desires, *ʿaṣabiyyah* (group feeling), and *mulk* (political power). He suggests that anger, desires, tribalism, and rulership are not inherently good or bad; rather, their moral value depends on the intentions and the context in which they are used. For example, anger is not inherently bad; when it is directed towards injustice and used to uphold truth, it is desirable. On the contrary, anger that stems from vile purposes is blameworthy.

Likewise, desires are not inherently bad either; they become problematic when they are uncontrolled or directed toward forbidden things. When they are channeled correctly, they are normal and even necessary for human life. Similarly, *ʿaṣabiyyah* is not inherently bad, but when it becomes a cause for unjust bias, prejudice, and arrogance, it becomes problematic. However, if it serves the truth and helps in realizing divine commands, it is desirable. And, *mulk* or rulership itself isn't inherently evil. It depends on how the ruler uses their power. If a ruler governs with justice, upholds the truth, and serves the people, their rule is praiseworthy. *Mulk* becomes reprehensible when used for personal gains and desires.

Ibn Khaldun views the function of leadership (in this case, the Caliphs) as not just about ruling or controlling but also about directing society towards virtuous and ethical behavior (IK, ME, 1, 386). Thus, the Caliphate is not just a political authority but also a moral and spiritual one. The Caliphs are expected to guide society towards the right path, ensuring that it lives up to the expectations of Islam.

Ibn Khaldun notes that the early Caliphs, such as Abu Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿ Uthman, and ʿAli (RA), renounced the excessive material benefits of political authority and distanced themselves from its trapp. According to Ibn Khaldun, they maintained the group feelings of the Arabs and used it to spread Islam and unite the Arabs. They were not interested in worldly luxuries and stayed true to their ascetic desert life.

Ibn Khaldun acknowledges that with the consolidation of power, the trappings of royal authority started to show themselves. However, he argues that this in itself was not inherently wrong or harmful. What matters is how this power is used. If it is used for

virtuous and ethical purposes, then there is nothing reprehensible about it. In his view, power can be used for good or bad and is not inherently corrupting.

Ibn Khaldun presents a deep and comprehensive historical perspective on the transformation of the Caliphate into a royal authority, specifically in the context of Muslim dynasties such as the Umayyads and the Abbasids (IK, ME, 1, 423-424). Ibn Khaldun articulates the idea that the early Caliphs were guided by the principles of Islam and self-restraint and prioritized the spiritual and moral over worldly affairs (IK, ME, 1, 423). Over time, however, this changed. The later Umayyads, according to the passage, lost their sense of deliberate planning and truth, which led to criticism and the eventual rise of the Abbasids (IK, ME, 1, 423).

The early Abbasids were praised for their integrity and use of authority to further the truths of Islam (IK, ME, 1, 423). But as power passed down through generations, decadence and worldliness crept in. The successors of the Abbasids, it is argued, became consumed with luxury, neglected their religious duties, and thus invited ruin and loss of power (IK, ME, 1, 424). Abu Ja'far al-Mansur's comments on the Umayyads echo these sentiments, accusing them of tyranny, indulgence, and, eventually, an unjust use of power, which led to their downfall (IK, ME, 1, 424-425).

In this section, Ibn Khaldun uses these historical events to illustrate a broader point about the transformation of religious authority into secular power. Initially, the Caliphate and royal authority were intertwined, with the Caliph being both a spiritual and political leader. Over time, as the caliphs became more worldly, the spiritual authority of the Caliphate diminished, and the royal authority became more pronounced. This transition is described as a loss of the 'traits of the caliphate' with only its name remaining, leaving only royal authority in place.

He ends the passage by noting that even after the disappearance of Arab group feeling and the annihilation of the Arab race, the form of government remained purely royal authority. This shows that the spiritual leadership of the Caliphate was eventually entirely subsumed by worldly political power.

At the end of this subchapter, Ibn Khaldun summarizes the transformation of caliphate into *mulk*:

> The caliphate at first existed without political authority (*mulk*). Then, the characteristic traits of the caliphate became mixed up and confused. Finally, when its group feeling had separated from the group feeling of the caliphate, royal authority came to exist alone. (IK, ME, 1, 428)

Here he employs a striking analogy between the continuous and gradual transformation of political systems over time and the gradual successive transition between day and night. Just as the world transitions from daylight to darkness and back again, political structures gradually change from one form of governance to another. This analogy serves as a vivid representation of the organic and cyclic nature of political development.

By employing the analogy of successive day and night, Ibn Khaldun stresses the inherent inevitability of change and the cyclic nature of political systems. He suggests that transitions in governance are not sudden or abrupt but occur gradually. They also follow a natural pattern similar to changing day and night. The analogy further highlights the simultaneous coexistence of old and new elements during transitional periods. Just as the twilight hours encompass both daylight and darkness, the transitional phases in governance involve a blend of established practices and emerging forms of governance. Through this analogy, Ibn Khaldun beautifully illustrates the interconnectedness of historical progress and the transformation of political systems. He demonstrates that the transformation of governance unfolds gradually, influenced by historical forces, societal dynamics, and the aspirations of ruling authorities.

This analogy also carries a sense of inevitability and naturalness to it, implying that the shift from religious to secular power, like the passage of day into night, might be an expected development in societies over time. The historical transformations narrated in the passage reflect cycles of ascension, zenith, decline, and transition, a pattern that has been observed in many civilizations throughout history.

In sum, Ibn Khaldun posits that the ethical character of a leader heavily determines the form of governance. For a polity to become politically powerful and beneficial, it must adhere to the ethical rules and guidelines that direct powers toward the overall good of the community, with a primary focus on justice, truth, and serving the divine commands.

4.9.1.1. Khaldunian Constitutional Theory

It is necessary for human beings, in their social organizations, to have a governing authority to which they refer and whose rulings are based either on divine legislation, which requires their obedience based on their belief in the rewards and punishments that it stipulates, or on a rational policy that compels them to adhere to it based on their expectations of the benefits they will receive from that ruler, who is aware of their interests. The former, namely *al-siyāsah al-sharʿiyyah*, brings about benefits in both this world and the hereafter, as the legislator knows the consequences of actions and considers the salvation of people in the afterlife. The latter brings benefits only in this world.

4.9.2. The Best Form of Rational Politics

Rational politics as one of the three major types of politics, namely natural, rational, and religious, in Ibn Khaldun's political analysis, is often compared to Machiavellian or Hobbesian governmentality, in which all means become legitimate for ends. This account is partially true. Because Ibn Khaldun classifies rational politics (*al-siyāsah al-ʿaqliyyah)* into two. The first type of rational politics concerns itself with the public interest in general and with the ruler's interest in connection with the administration of his realm, in particular. This was the policy of the Persians and was aligned with wisdom. However, Ibn Khaldun says God Almighty has made the Muslims needless of this during the era of the Caliphate, as the religious laws (*al-aḥkām al-sharʿiyyah*) encompass both public and private interests, and the laws of governance (*aḥkām al-mulk*) are included within them.

The second type of rational politics considers the interests of the ruler and how he can maintain his reign through coercion and prolongation. In this case, the public interests are secondary. This is the rational politics embraced by rulers in the world, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, although Muslim rulers adhere to it according to what Islamic

law dictates, to the best of their abilities. Thus, its laws are a combination of religious rulings (*aḥkām sharʿiyyah*), ethical values (*adab khulqiyyah*), and natural laws of society. This type of politics treads in the steps of Islamic law first, then the philosophers and their political etiquette, and the practices of past rulers.

4.9.2.1. Tahir's Letter: The Best Form of Rational Politics

This is the second form of rational politics, which pertains to the ruler's interests and the maintenance of their rule through the coercion and extension of their reign. Here, the welfare of the general public is of secondary importance. All rulers, regardless of their religious beliefs, employ this form of politics. Muslim rulers, however, strive to align this political approach with the demands of the Muslim religious law as much as possible. Thus, the political norms here blend religious laws (*aḥkām sharʿiyyah*), ethical rules (*adab khuluqiyyah*), natural laws in society, and elements necessarily followed due to group solidarity (*ʿaṣabiyyah*) and might (*shawkah*). This political model primarily aligns itself first with the religious law (*al-sharʿ*) and, secondly, the maxims (*adab*) of philosophers and the past rulers' conduct (*al-mulūk fi sayrihim*).

Here, Ibn Khaldun mentions the letter by Tahir bin Al-Husayn to his son. He presents it as a paramount example of one of the two aspects of rational politics. Ibn Khaldun regarded this letter as the epitome of excellence among the writings of its kind. This letter was also appreciated by Al-Maʾmūn (813–833 CE), the seventh Abbasid Caliph, he issued an extraordinary directive to distribute the letter penned by Tahir bin Al-Husayn to his son, Abdullah bin Tahir, amongst officials spanning various regions (IK, ME, 2, 140-156). The intention was to instill in them the wisdom found in this letter and encourage its application within their respective roles. The letter was applauded by Al-Maʾmūn for its thorough examination of various critical themes, including worldly affairs, religion, administration, opinion formation, politics, the well-being of the ruler and the subjects, upholding the government, obedience to the caliphs, and the maintenance of the caliphate.

In this letter, Tahir provided guidance to his son on all that he would need in his rule and authority, including matters of religious etiquette and moral conduct (*adab al-dīniyyah wa al-khuluqiyyah*) and political and religious governance (*al-siyāsah al-sharʿiyyah wa al-mulukiyyah*). Tahir urged his son to uphold the highest standards of

ethics and virtues (*makārim al-akhlāq wa maḥāsin al-shiyam*), for him, which are indispensible qualities for both rulers and the ruled (IK, ME, 2, 139). The content of the letter is as follows:

> In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
>
> And now: It is your duty to fear the one and only God, to be afraid of Him, to watch Him, to keep away from His wrath, and to guard your subjects night and day. With the help of the good health with which God has clothed you, apply yourself to thinking of your resurrection and the place where you will be going, as well as to the things that will be your concern and for which you will be held responsible. Also, apply yourself to working in that sense in such a way that on the Day of Resurrection, God will protect you and save you from His retribution and painful punishment.
>
> God has been benevolent to you. He has made it obligatory for you to show kindness to those of His servants whom He has made your subjects. He has made it your duty to be just to them, to see to it that His rights and punishments are observed in connection with them, to defend them and protect their families and women, to prevent bloodshed, to make their roads safe, and to enable them to live in peace. God will punish you in connection with the duties He has placed upon you (if you do not take care of them properly). He will make them your concern and hold you responsible for them and reward you for (the good deeds) you have done or (the evil deeds you have) not done.
>
> Keep your mind, brain, and eye free for that. Let nothing draw your attention from it. It is your principal and crucial task It is the first thing through which God will give you successful guidance. Let the first thing to which you apply yourself and on which you work, be unfailing fulfillment of the duty of the five daily prayers that God has imposed upon you. Let people come to you to pray together with you, and perform (the prayers at the proper times) with all their rites. (That is,) perform the ablutions before the prayers. Begin the prayers with the mention of God. Use the proper chant when you recite the Qur'an. Perform the requisite bows and prostrations and pronounce your profession of the faith properly. Let your intention in prayer be sincere in the presence of your Lord. Urge and instigate those who are with you arid under your control to (perform the prayers). Prayer, as God said in the Qur' an, "restrains from sin and evil."
>
> Then, let this be followed by adopting the ways of the Messenger of God, by constant application of his qualities, and by imitation of the pious ancient Muslims after him. If you have a task before you, let yourself be helped in doing it by asking God whether you should do it or not, by fearing Him, by applying what God has revealed in His Book with regard to things to be done and things not to be done, the things that are permitted and the things that are forbidden, and by taking as your guide the directions contained in the traditions of the Messenger of God. Act, then, as you owe it to God to act.
>
> Do not be swayed from justice according to your likes and dislikes, either on behalf of a person close to you or on behalf of one remote from you. Favor jurisprudence and the jurists, the religion (Islam) and theologians, the Book of God and those who live by it. For the best ornament of a man is judicial interpretation of the faith, search for it, admonition to others to follow it, and knowledge of how one can get close to God.

Religion (Islam) is the leader and guide to everything that is good. It commands the doing of good and prohibits the committing of sins and crimes. Through (religion), man's knowledge of God and respect for Him grows with God's help, and he will attain the highest rank in the other world. In addition, when people notice your (religious attitude) they will have respect for your rule and reverence for your government. They will be friendly to you and trust in your justice.

Be moderate in everything. There is nothing more clearly useful, safer, and in every way better, than (moderation). Planned moderation calls for right guidance. Right guidance leads to success. Success leads to happiness. The preservation of Islam and of the model ways (of the Prophet) is accomplished through moderation. Give preference to it in all your worldly affairs. Do not fall behind in your pursuit of the other world, of good deeds, of kind behavior, of the right path. One cannot do enough pious deeds, if they are to help one to find God's face and satisfaction and the company of God's saints in His noble abode. You should know that planned moderation in worldly matters gives strength and protects against sins. You have nothing that is better than (moderation) to guard your person and your rank and to try to improve your affairs. Therefore, use it and be guided by it. Then, your affairs will succeed. Your power will increase. Your private and public affairs will be in order. Have a good opinion of God, and your subjects will cause you no trouble. In all your affairs, try to get in touch with Him, and you will always enjoy His favor.

...On the contrary, consider it your most important task to take personal charge of the affairs of (your) officials and to protect your subjects by looking after their needs and providing for their requirements. This, more than anything else, helps to preserve the religion (of Islam) and gives life to the Sunnah (of the Prophet). In all these things, have pure intentions. Pay special attention to improving yourself as a person, one who realizes that he will be held responsible for his deeds, that he will be rewarded for his good deeds, and punished for his evil deeds. For God made the religion a refuge and a power. He lifts up those who follow it and honor it. Therefore, lead those whom you govern and rule along the path of religion and the way of right guidance. Apply the punishments that God has ordained for criminals, according to their station and according to what they deserve. Do not disregard it and do not make light of it. Do not postpone the punishment of those who must be punished. If you fall short in this respect, it will help spoil the good opinion (people have) of you. In this regard, let your actions be guided by the well-known traditions (*sunan*). Keep away from innovations and doubts. Your religion will then be healthy and your manliness unimpaired.

...Love good and righteous people. Be honestly helpful to noble men. Be friendly to the weak. Keep in touch with your blood relatives. Desire thus to see the face of God and to strengthen His cause, and wish (thus) for His reward and the other world. Keep away from evil desires and injustice. Pay them no notice and show your subjects that you are free of (them). Be just in governing your subjects. Treat them honestly and with the kindness through which you will reach the path of right guidance.

Control yourself and do not get angry. Prefer dignity and mildness. Beware of sharpness, levity, and deceitfulness in any (enterprise) you engage in. Beware of saying: "I am in authority. I may do what I want to do." This soon reveals a lack of sense on your part and little certainty of the one and only God. Let your intention with regard to (God) and your certainty of Him be sincere. You should know that royal authority belongs to God. He gives it to whomever He wants to give it and takes it away from whomever He wants to take it away. The change from (divine) favor to (divine) vengeance occurs nowhere faster

than with men in authority who do not acknowledge (divine) favors, and with people enjoying good positions in the government, who are ungrateful for the favors and benefactions of God and consider themselves superior beings because of the bounty that God has given them.

Do not be greedy. Let the treasures and ·riches you gather and hoard up be piety, the fear of God, justice, the improvement of your subjects, the cultivation of their country, the supervision of their affairs, the protection of the mass of them, and support of the unfortunates. You should know that property, once it is gathered and stored in treasuries, does not bear fruit, but if it is invested in the welfare of the subjects and used for giving them what is due to them and to prevent them f~om need, then it grows and thrives. The common people prosper. (The proper use of money) is an ornament to high officials, and it means a time of prosperity. It brings strength and protection. Therefore, let it be your way of gathering up treasures to spend money on building up Islam and the Muslims. Distribute to the officials of the Commander of the Faithful who preceded you that which is due them. Give your subjects their share. Pay attention to the things that might improve their situation and livelihood. If you do that, the (divine) favor will always be with you. You will make it obligatory for God to increase (His favors to you). In this way, you will also be better able to levy the land tax and to collect the property of your subjects and your provinces. Because everybody experiences justice and kindness from you, everybody will be more amenable to obeying you and more favorably disposed towards everything you want. Therefore, exert yourself in the way that I have outlined to you in this chapter. Be very much concerned in this respect. Of (all) your money, there will remain only what was honestly spent in behalf of God.

... Consult frequently with jurists. Accustom yourself to being mild and prudent. Learn from men of experience and intelligence who are understanding and wise. Do not permit extravagant or stingy people to give you advice. Do not listen to what they say, because the damage they can cause is greater than their usefulness. Nothing can ruin your projects on behalf of your subjects more quickly than avarice. You should realize that if you are greedy, you take much and give little. If you are this way, you will have little success, for your subjects will be willing to like you only if (you) keep away from their property and do not treat them unjustly. You will keep the sincere friendship of your friends by being generous to them and giving them fine gifts. Shun avarice. You should know that avarice is the first sin that man commits against His Lord and that the sinner is disgraced. Thus, God says in the Qur'an: "Those who are preserved from their own avarice are, indeed, generous." Therefore, be really generous. Give all the Muslims shares and portions in the booty you take. Be assured that generosity is one of the best things for a human being to practice. Make generosity one of your character qualities. [Be really generous.] Accept (generosity) as your constant practice.

... Sit down often with scholars and seek their advice and company. Let it be your desire to follow and establish the Sunnah (of the Prophet) and to prefer noble and lofty character qualities.

... Understand this letter of mine that I am addressing to you. Study it carefully and always act in accordance with it. Ask God for help in all your affairs. Ask Him whether or not you should do a thing. God is with goodness and with good people. Let your most important activity and greatest desire be what is pleasing to God and means order in his religion, might and steadfastness in His people, and justice and welfare in the Muslim group and the protected religions. I am asking God to give you help and success and right guidance and shelter. Farewell!

4.10. The Interplay of Structure and Human Agency

Similar to the determinisms found in other cyclical theories of society, such as those proposed by Arnold Toynbee and Oswald Spengler, Ibn Khaldun's cyclical theory is often mischaracterized as deterministic. While a superficial reading of his the *Muqaddimah* may suggest a deterministic model of society, a deeper analysis reveals the indeterminism in his model concerning the fate of polities. Although Ibn Khaldun acknowledged that the universal destiny of life on Earth is degeneration, which applies to both natural and social-political entities, within this cyclical pattern, the specific outcomes and trajectories of polities are not predetermined but shaped by various factors, including the choices and actions of individuals and the interplay between environmental, cultural, and socio-political dynamics. Therefore, while the broader outlines of societal rise and decline might be patterned, the specific pathways are not predetermined. Ibn Khaldun's cyclical theory allows for the possibility of change, renewal, and the potential to break free from the cycles of degeneration, offering a nuanced perspective that goes beyond deterministic interpretations.

The indeterminacy of the Khaldunian model of society is much due to his recognition of the role of human agency and the ability of individuals to affect the trajectories of their societies within the boundaries of these cycles. As we already discussed, the social-political life operates under the natural laws of society, according to Ibn Khaldun. These laws are predicated on structural factors such as geography, culture, and socio-economic and political contexts, which dictate people's behaviors, both the rulers and the ruled, and thereby steer the overall life of a polity. At this level of socio-political analysis, the structure—comprising geography, culture, and the socio-economic and political context of a polity—is integral in shaping people's character and, consequently, their behavior. However, Ibn Khaldun's theory extends beyond this seemingly deterministic model of society. While the structural elements of society invariably impact human behavior, especially on material or physical levels, Ibn Khaldun contends these influences can be counterbalanced through human agency.

The human agency through which polities can break free from the cycles of degeneration occurs at two major levels: governmental and individual. Ibn Khaldun

emphasizes the importance of applying *Sharīʿah*, the Islamic law, at both levels to prolong the life of a polity. On the governmental level, he mentions *al-siyāsah al-sharʿiyyah* (religious politics) or *al-siyāsah al-ʿaqliyyah* (rational politics) as implemented by Muslims incorporating the *Sharīʿah* are the best forms of government, that considers the interests of both the ruler and the ruled, encompassing both worldly and otherworldly aspects. The pursuit of this form of legality, being in harmony with God's will, naturally enhances the polity's stature and magnificence. This comes about by fostering justice within society and creating unity among the people. Ibn Khaldun articulates this idea by stating, "political authority is achieved through dominance, and dominance is achieved through unity of desires and the gathering of hearts. And the gathering of hearts can only be accomplished with the help of God in establishing His religion." (IK, ME, 1, 253-254). This sentiment finds resonance in the Quranic verse (8:63) that states, "If you had spent whatever is on the earth entirely, you could not have brought their hearts together." The essence of this statement, as Ibn Khaldun interprets, is that when human hearts are directed towards worldly desires and attachments, they inevitably drift into conflict and disagreement. However, when they turn towards the truth, renounce the material world and falsehoods, and direct themselves towards Allah, they achieve unity. In this state, competition recedes, making way for cooperation and mutual support. As a result, the influence of the state expands, and its power increases. This transformation, Ibn Khaldun emphasizes, can only be achieved with the guidance and assistance of Allah. Thus, adherence to the Sharīʿah serves as a mitigating factor against the decay of socio-political life. By aligning societal actions and governmental policies with the principles of Sharīʿah, a polity can resist the cyclic degeneration inherent in earthly existence and potentially prolong its vitality and strength.

On the individual level, the degeneration of a society is attributed to the erosion of human character, especially the loss of virtues such as diligence, bravery, and prowess. Ibn Khaldun believed this degradation is often exacerbated by urban lifestyles, which tend to nurture the pursuit of worldly desires and lead to the adoption of negative habits, subsequently shaping individuals' second natures in immoral and vicious ways. Nevertheless, Ibn Khaldun remained optimistic about the potential for individual transformation. He emphasized the importance of preserving these virtuous qualities within individuals as a crucial factor in maintaining societal order and strength. To

counteract the corrupting influence of urban living, he introduced the concept of taṣfiyah ṣanāʿiyyah —a self-purification process or, as Wael Hallaq terms it using a Foucaultian concept, "technologies of the self" (Foucault, 1988; Hallaq, 2019).

These self-regulatory practices, undertaken through individual effort, allow people to cultivate virtue within themselves and, by extension, within their societies. Even in the face of worldly temptations, this active self-purification provides a pathway for individuals to rise above the negative influences of their environment. Despite the seemingly inevitable negative influence of urban lifestyle on human character, Ibn Khaldun asserts that through *taṣfiyah ṣanāʿiyyah*, individuals can cultivate a virtuous self within an urban context, albeit uncommonly. This internal effort to resist the structural force of natural and cultural factors represents an active endeavor that exemplifies the interplay of structure and agency in Ibn Khaldun's philosophy.

4.11. Detrimental Impact of Autocratic Enforcement on Human Character

The concept of *baʾs* in the context of Ibn Khaldun's work refers to the intrinsic strength, power, courage, or prowess of an individual. It is a significant factor in an individual's ability to act, make decisions, and resist pressures. This strength or prowess is not solely physical; it encompasses the moral, emotional, and psychological resilience that enables an individual to stand against adverse conditions and exert their influence on their surroundings.

In a broader social context, *baʾs* represents the collective strength of a group, tribe, or nation and plays a significant role in determining the group's dominance, resilience, and survivability. Strong *baʾs* is often associated with high levels of social cohesion, while weak *baʾs* can lead to societal disintegration.

According to Ibn Khaldun, *baʾs* can be curbed or diminished by several factors. The most significant of these is the imposition of external forces, represented by the political authority or the ruler, who establishes and enforces laws and regulations (external *wāziʿ*). If the political authority is overly harsh or authoritarian, it suppresses the individual's *baʾs* (prowess). This is because it often involves enforcement and coercion from an external source. Consequently, it may lead to passive obedience rather than active participation, stifling the individual's sense of initiative and self-

reliance. In contrast, a ruler who governs with justice and benevolence allows the natural *baʾs* of the individuals and societies to flourish, resulting in a more active and psychologically powerful populace.

Ibn Khaldun highlights the companions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as exemplars of immense prowess. Their embodiment of *baʾs*, or prowess, might appear paradoxical given their adherence to religious rulings seemingly emanating from an external authority, namely, the Prophet. However, Ibn Khaldun unravels this apparent contradiction with the concept of *wāziʿ min anfusihim*, the motivational force from within. Indeed, the high degree of *baʾs* demonstrated by the Prophet's ﷺ companions was intrinsically tied to their deep-seated beliefs and firsthand exposure to the verses that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ informed them about. The companions did not passively abide by religious rules; instead, their acceptance was active, willing, and self-driven. Far from being a mere response to external imposition, their adherence to religious laws mirrored their profound faith and conviction in the Prophet's teachings. Consequently, this internal authority, *wāziʿ min anfusihim,* that led them to actively abide by the rules bolstered their *baʾs* rather than diminishing it.

Furthermore, the Prophet's teaching method did not involve coercive discipline or harsh punitive measures. His pedagogy favored mercy, compassion, and wisdom and focused on instilling deep faith, moral values, and personal responsibility. This method allowed the Companions to embrace religious laws with eagerness and commitment, thus strengthening their *baʾs* rather than suppressing them.

From these accounts, we understand that Ibn Khaldun's political theory contains a salient critique of autocratic rule, highlighting the stifling impact such governance has on an essential aspect of human character: *baʾs* (prowess). According to Ibn Khaldun, this trait is a critical prerequisite for a robust and functioning political entity.

In another part of his *Muqaddimah*, Ibn Khaldun expounds on the ruler's cognitive faculty. He asserts that it should neither be deficient nor excessive, both of which could lead to foolishness or deceitfulness. Instead, the ruler's cognitive faculty should ideally be situated at the golden mean, characterized by wisdom or prudence. The excess of this faculty, called cunningness, could cause the ruler to constantly scrutinize people's

mistakes, creating an environment of intolerance and harsh judgment. On the contrary, a ruler embodying the golden mean of wisdom is forgiving and tolerant, demonstrating a capacity to overlook people's mistakes.

4.12. The *Sharīʿah* as Universal Interest-Bearer Creates the Most Loyalty: How Legal Rulings' Source and Content Influence Civic Loyalty to Government

Indeed, the content and the source of legal rules are as consequential as the manner of their enforcement. The *Sharīʿah*, laws ordained by God who knows human interests best and in their entirety, naturally fosters voluntary acceptance among believers. These laws foster a *wāziʿ min anfusihim*, an intrinsic motivation in people to abide by these laws. A government's adherence to the *Sharīʿah*, a divine law regarded to serve the peoples' ultimate interests, engenders a strong bond of loyalty towards the governing authority. Knowing that through the enforcement of the *Sharīʿah,* the government, people actively and voluntarily comply with the legal-religious rulings, which does not undermine but strengthen the *baʾs* within individuals.

On the other hand, laws established by a ruler based on their own decision-making, notwithstanding how well-intentioned, may not be as encompassing of the myriad interests of the populace as the divine laws. The perception of these laws as a product of a human, who could potentially be fallible and biased, might not welcome the same level of voluntary acceptance as the *Sharīʿah*. Consequently, adherence to such laws may often result from external enforcement rather than voluntary motivation. This form of compliance and obedience to laws potentially leads to resentment, passive resistance, or even active rebellion.

4.13. Conclusion: Politics Beyond the Empirical and Ethical Divide

Empirical theories are concerned with generalizations about observable reality, focusing on describing and explaining phenomena based on evidence and observation. On the other hand, "ethical" theories express some degree of preference or distaste about reality in accordance with certain a priori standards of evaluation, and some ethical theories state the ideal goals toward which reality ought to be changed (Glaser, 1955, 275). The study of Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah* reveals a unique nature, embodying both descriptive and prescriptive elements. Firstly, Khaldun's work is

undoubtedly descriptive. He meticulously catalogs different forms of governance, namely natural, rational, and religious politics. His concept of *ʿaṣabiyyah*, which stands for group solidarity or social cohesion, underlines his understanding of human nature's intrinsic desire for community and the role this plays in state formation and maintenance. His theory regarding the life cycle of empires, rooted in his keen observations, outlines the rise, prosperity, and inevitable decline of civilizations, thereby offering an interpretive lens through which historical patterns can be understood. Similarly, his remarks on the harms of excessive harshness to royal authority are grounded in his study of historical dynasties, illustrating the detrimental effects of tyranny.

However, the descriptive nature of the *Muqaddimah* is subtly interwoven with prescriptive undertones. The delineation of governance types implicitly suggests certain advantages and drawbacks, subtly guiding rulers toward effective leadership styles. In particular, his emphasis on *ʿaṣabiyyah* highlights the necessity of fostering social cohesion for a state's survival and prosperity.

In essence, Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah* seamlessly marries the descriptive and prescriptive, offering a profound insight into historical trends while subtly guiding future trajectories. The universality of his observations, combined with their timeless relevance, allows them to serve both as accurate portrayals of societal patterns and as a normative framework for effective governance. Hence, the *Muqaddimah* stands as a testament to Khaldun's genius, navigating the fine line between empirical observation and prescriptive wisdom.

The raison *d'être of politics* is ethics, according to Ibn Khaldun. For Ibn Khaldun, the principles of *realpolitik* and *raison d'état*, though they prioritize state survival and the preservation of authority, do not necessitate an abandonment of ethical considerations. Instead, he sees the preservation of authority and ethical governance as deeply interconnected. The neglect of ethical norms, in his view, would undermine the *ʿaṣabiyyah* or social cohesion that is crucial for the stability and survival of a political community.

Ibn Khaldun's conception of *raison d'état* acknowledges the necessity for political leaders to occasionally make decisions that prioritize the survival of the state. However, he emphasizes that these decisions must be guided by a sense of justice and balanced by the adherence to ethical norms. Acting purely on self-interest or using coercive measures without considering their ethical implications can lead to the decay of *ʿaṣabiyyah*, and, in turn, precipitate the downfall of the polity.

Therefore, in Ibn Khaldun's political philosophy, *raison d'état* and *realpolitik* are not synonymous with amoral politics. Instead, they reflect a pragmatic understanding of the exigencies of political power, coupled with the recognition that ethics constitute the foundational basis of a healthy polity. For him, effective political leadership involves the delicate balance of ensuring state survival, maintaining authority, and upholding ethical governance.

Thus, Ibn Khaldun's version of *realpolitik* and *raison d'état* presents an interesting synthesis of realism and ethical considerations. His political thought underscores that while survival and authority are important aspects of politics, they should not be pursued at the expense of ethical norms. Instead, ethics and survival should inform and balance each other in a nuanced understanding of political life. It is a vision of politics where ethics is not just a peripheral concern but is integral to the health and longevity of the polity.

Ibn Khaldun offers an empirically grounded and positive account of political life. He delves into the nuances of governmentality at different socio-economic conditions of a polity, observing political organizations not merely as abstract entities but as living, dynamic systems. While Khaldun remains largely descriptive in his approach, we find the potential seeds of a deontological framework within his work. His detailed observations about the political functioning of states may serve as a basis for normative claims about how states ought to function for their survival and prosperity.

It is crucial to understand that in our contemporary era, the Islamic forms of governance as articulated by Ibn Khaldun do not necessarily correspond to reality, rendering his political classification more prescriptive and deontological than descriptive. Especially, his concept of religious politics or Caliphate does not hold as

the dominant form of governance today. Hence, when viewed through the prism of the current political landscape, his theory of *siyāsah sharʿiyyah* can be interpreted as a prescription for political organization rather than an account of existing conditions. Thus, in the contemporary context, with the lack of governance forms such as the caliphate that Ibn Khaldun described, his work assumes a more prescriptive character. The detailing of religious politics, while once a factual account of existing systems, now serves as a normative ideal for governance, providing a benchmark against which modern political systems can be evaluated.

This transformation, from the description of the political reality of the past to the prescription of political possibilities in the present, highlights the dynamics and fluidity of political theory. It underscores the interpretive flexibility of political discourse, where the same account can have varying roles –descriptive or prescriptive– contingent upon the socio-political context. In this vein, Ibn Khaldun's political classifications emerge as not just a portrayal of the political life of a polity of his time but also as a framework to envision alternate political structures today.

In conclusion, Ibn Khaldun's political thought transcends the dichotomy of 'descriptive' versus 'prescriptive.' His analysis intertwines these dimensions, with descriptions carrying prescriptive implications and prescriptions reflecting a keen understanding of the descriptive reality. This integration of the empirical and the ethical is a hallmark of Ibn Khaldun's methodology.

While Ibn Khaldun's political theory had a descriptive role in his era due to its alignment with the realities of Islamic governance, the evolution of political structures over time has transitioned its role to a prescriptive one today. This dichotomy underscores the versatility of political discourse and its sensitivity to historical and contextual dynamics. It also underlines the enduring relevance of Ibn Khaldun's insights, which continue to inform our understanding of political life and governance centuries after they were first articulated.

Thus, the dichotomy of 'descriptive' versus 'prescriptive' does not hold within Ibn Khaldun's framework. Instead, the accounts intertwine the two, with descriptions holding prescriptive implications and prescriptions reflecting a keen understanding of

the descriptive reality. While rooted in the descriptive realities of his time, his project holds timeless lessons that can guide our normative understanding of political life today.

CHAPTER FIVE

EDUCATION BEYOND THE EMPIRICAL AND ETHICAL DIVIDE

Educational research is part of the borderless dialogue of humanity
about how we should live and about what kind of future we want.
In that borderless dialogue facts mix with values,
and what 'is' blends seamlessly into what 'ought' to be.

—Rupert Wegerif

Ibn Khaldun's educational theory, a significant yet relatively underexplored part of his intellectual legacy, evades the dichotomy between empirical and ethical from the onset by embracing a multiplex approach to education. Akin to his political theory, Ibn Khaldun's educational theory encompasses both empirical and ethical dimensions, incorporating descriptive and prescriptive elements. This is due to the underpinning multiplex paradigm he adopts, particularly his understanding of multiplex human ontology and epistemology. As we have explored these philosophical foundations extensively in the first part of this study, we will focus here on his educational theory within the Lakatosian framework, delineating the hard core and auxiliary assumptions.

Although mainstream philosophers have for too long ignored the philosophy of education, including issues relating to the epistemological aspects of education, there is now a resurgence of interest in these issues (Siegel, 2004). These philosophical questions are mainly concerned with metaphysics, human nature, political philosophy, ethics, and most importantly, epistemology, as the major concepts utilized in educational theory are epistemic, such as learning, teaching, and education (Carter & Kotzee, 2015). In addressing criticisms that argue for the autonomy of education from philosophy due to philosophical disagreements and doubts, advocating instead for practical wisdom and experience in educational thinking, L. Arnaud Reid (2009) asserts:

> What I would like to try to do is to state, as clearly as I can, after the reflections and discussions of fifteen years as Professor of Philosophy of Education at London, the nature of philosophy of education as I see it, its relation to what is called 'educational theory', and the relation of both to the practice of education. By doing this I hope to be able to answer, in part at least, certain criticisms of philosophy of education which are frequently made from different quarters. It is said, for instance, that education can perfectly well stand on its own feet without the help of philosophy, that educational theory is autonomous and does not need philosophy. Anyhow, philosophers, it is well known, never agree. The progress of philosophy is just stumbling from one bog into the next. Philosophers are sowers of the seed of doubt and uncertainty. Away with them to their ivory towers! Let practical common sense and experience guide our thinking about education. (Reid, 2009)

L. Arnaud Reid's perspective on the importance of philosophy in education, despite criticisms advocating autonomy, emphasizes the need to integrate philosophical foundations into educational theory. The significance of this chapter lies in its effort to establish a foundation for Ibn Khaldun's educational theory, building upon his overarching philosophical framework discussed in the first part of this dissertation.

In addition to its connection with epistemology, the literature recognizes education as a normative concept. This perspective is evident in the work of Peters (1967), who argues that education cannot be separated from value judgments. Similarly, Siegel (2008) further emphasizes the normative aspect of education, utilizing the thick/thin distinction originally proposed by Bernard Williams (1985) (Watson, 2016).

Thick versus Thin Concepts

Bernard Williams discussed the relationship between fact and value in language and ethical notions. He argues that the fact-value distinction is not inherent in language but is instead brought to language by theorists (Williams, 2011, 143). Ethical terms, such as treachery, promise, brutality, and courage, are seen as expressions of both factual elements (how someone has behaved or the state of the world) and evaluative elements (a valuation of the situation or actions) (Williams, 2011, s. 143). Rather than language inherently revealing the fact-value distinction, theorists interpret these terms as a

conjunction of factual and evaluative elements that can be separated. Williams (2011) claims:

> So, it seems, either language does not disguise the fact-value distinction, or else the linguistic theorist has managed to penetrate the disguise. But neither of these options is correct. What has happened is that the theorists have brought the fact-value distinction to language rather than finding it revealed there. What they have found are a lot of those "thicker" or more specific ethical notions I have already referred to, such as treachery and promise and brutality and courage, which seem to express a union of fact and value. The way these notions are applied is determined by what the world is like (for instance, by how someone has behaved), and yet, at the same time, their application usually involves a certain valuation of the situation, of persons or actions. Moreover, they usually (though not necessarily directly) provide reasons for action. Terms of this kind certainly do not lay bare the fact-value distinction. Rather, the theorist who wants to defend the distinction has to interpret the workings of these terms, and he does so by treating them as a conjunction of a factual and an evaluative element, which can in principle be separated from one another. The clearest account, as so often, is given by Hare: a term of this kind involves a descriptive complex to which a prescription has been attached, expressive of the values of the individual or of the society. A statement using one of these terms can be analyzed into something like "this act has such-and-such a character, and acts of that character one ought not to do." It is essential to this account that the specific or "thick" character of these terms is given in the descriptive element. The value part is expressed, under analysis, by the all-purpose prescriptive term ought. (Williams, 2011, 143-144)

The passage highlights that the descriptive element give specific or thick character in these terms, and the evaluative part is expressed, under analysis, by the prescriptive term *ought*. The thick/thin distinction, as used by Siegel (2008) and Kotzee (2011), helps to characterize education as inherently normative (thick) rather than merely descriptive (thin) that goes beyond a simple description of educational practices (Watson, 2016). Kotzee argues that viewing both epistemology and education in normative terms reveals their substantial common ground, especially regarding education's role in cultivating epistemic virtues, which justifies its place in epistemology (Carter & Kotzee, 2015).

The study of human development often revolves around the long-standing debate of nature versus nurture. This dichotomy delineates whether human traits are primarily a product of hereditary factors or shaped by environmental influences. A prominent perspective throughout the twentieth century was the concept of *tabula rasa*, or 'blank slate', postulated by John Locke in 1690 (Locke, 1948). This perspective advocates that human behavioral traits develop almost exclusively from environmental influences. However, by the dawn of the twenty-first century, this view was largely seen as reductionist, with the consensus among scholars being that both nature and nurture contribute substantially, and often inextricably, to human development. In the nature-nurture debate, individuals are often depicted as passive recipients of genetic predispositions and environmental influences, while the various structural influences were deemed to be ultimate decisive factors.

Nature terms	Nurture terms
Genetic	Acquired
Heredity	Education
Inborn	Empiricism
Innate	Environment
Instinct	Learning
Intrinsic	Socialization
Maturation	
Nativism	
Preformed	

Figure 6: Terms associated with the nature or nurture conceptions of human development (Lerner, 2018, 49)

The separation, or dichotomy, between nature and nurture, as illustrated in the table, is a fundamental distinction that has long been recognized and debated by philosophers and scientists in the context of human development. This division between nature (biological or innate factors) and nurture (social-cultural or environmental factors) has served as a prominent example of a broader trend in contemporary thought regarding the study of human development. This signifies a broader pattern in which the examination of human development is approached through the lens of concepts that frequently embody conceptual divisions, splits, and either-or terms (Lerner, 2018, p.

49). This conceptual split has been a dominant theme in the study of human development.

However, more recently, proponents of relational positions have sought to transcend and bridge the gap between the biological and social-cultural facets of human development (Lerner, 2018; Overton & Reese, 1973). Relational positions propose that the biological and social-cultural dimensions should be viewed as complementary ways of understanding the same integrated whole of human development. Instead of treating them as separate and opposing influences, the relational approach emphasizes that both dimensions contribute to the complex process of development.

The process-relational paradigm, as elucidated by Overton (2015), highlights several pivotal principles crucial to comprehending human development in a non-reductionist manner (Lerner, 2018). Firstly, this paradigm places a pronounced emphasis on the concept of "process," thereby recognizing human development as an ongoing and dynamic phenomenon characterized by systematic changes over time. It emphasizes the dynamic nature of human development. Secondly, this paradigm introduces the notion of "becoming," which denotes the transformative process from potential to actualized reality. According to this perspective, human development is not a fixed or predetermined state but rather an ongoing journey with a past, a current state, and potential future. It emphasizes the idea that individuals continually evolve and grow throughout their lifespan. Additionally, the relational paradigm encourages a "relational analysis" approach, which involves a systematic examination of the bidirectional influences and interactions within the developmental system (Lerner, 2018, 24). It highlights the reciprocal relationship between individuals and their environment by acknowledging that these interactions shape individuals and, conversely, are shaped by them (Lerner, 2018). Moreover, the relational paradigm advocates for the incorporation of "multiple perspectives" and explanatory frameworks. This entails drawing insights from a diverse array of theory-based models of change to attain a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of human development (Lerner, 2018, 25). It promotes interdisciplinary approaches to the study of the development, recognizing the multifaceted nature of this complex phenomenon. Lastly, the process-relational paradigm portrays the human organism (the individual) as innately active, self-regulating, nonlinear, and complex (Lerner, 2018, 25). This perspective highlights the active role of individuals in shaping their own development,

emphasizing their agency and capacity to engage in the developmental process actively.

The primary objective of this chapter is to delve into the intricate relationship between inborn qualities, external influences, and individual volition in human development. Today, there is an approach that tends to downplay or even deny the significance of structural factors in favor of emphasizing individual self-formation. This perspective, influenced by postmodern philosophy, often places a strong emphasis on personal agency and autonomy, viewing individuals as free agents who have the power to shape their own identities and determine their own truths. Within this framework, structural factors such as societal norms, cultural influences, and institutional frameworks are sometimes seen as oppressive or limiting to individual freedom. The focus is on deconstructing and challenging these structural factors in order to create space for individual self-expression and alternative narratives. While this perspective values individual autonomy and the exploration of diverse perspectives, it sometimes overlooks the ways in which structural factors shape and influence our experiences and opportunities.

Ibn Khaldun's perspectives invite us to reevaluate reductionist understandings and binaries such as nature versus nurture and structure versus agency. Ibn Khaldun's educational theory takes into account both individual agency and structural factors. It recognizes the influence of geographical factors, societal structures, cultural norms, and historical contexts on human development while also acknowledging the role of individual volition and self-formation. Contrary to the ultimate determinacy of structural factors often considered in the nature-nurture debate, cognitive or moral development in Ibn Khaldun's framework is an active and intentional process within the context formed by the structural factors.

Thus, this chapter aims to illuminate Ibn Khaldun's multiplex perspective on human development that transcends the simplistic nature versus nurture, structure versus agency binary and highlight the indispensable role of human agency through the acquisition of *malaka*, while taking into account the structural factors as well. To fully appreciate the depths of Ibn Khaldun's educational theory, we must first acknowledge the core principles that underpin it, specifically his ontology, epistemology, and his

conception of the human nature. At the heart of Ibn Khaldun's perspective is the recognition that humans are not inherently perfect beings, but rather possess the potential for perfection. Education assumes a pivotal role in the realization of this potential, acting as the indispensable tool for intellectual and moral actualization. By bridging the gap between inherent potential and its ultimate manifestation, education plays a transformative role in shaping individuals both intellectually and ethically, along with physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually.

5.1. Education as A Necessary Component of Human Society

According to Ibn Khaldun, education is an essential property of human society. The necessity of education arises from the natural inclination of the human intellect to seek and acquire new knowledge. As already discussed in the first chapter, according to Ibn Khaldun, human beings share certain animalistic qualities such as sensation, movement, nourishment, and procreation with other living beings. However, what distinguishes humans is their ability to think and to reason (*al-fikr*). The faculty of thinking (*al-fikr*) guides human beings in (1) acquiring their livelihood, (2) collaborating with others of their kind, (3) engaging in social interactions conducive for such collaboration, (4) accepting what the prophets have conveyed from God, and act accordingly, (5) following righteous conducts (*ṣalāh*) of others. Humans are always engaged in contemplating all these aspects of life. All sciences (*al-ʿulūm*) and crafts (*al-ṣanāʿī*) arise from this faculty of thinking. It is through thinking that humans have developed various professions and crafts, as well as disciplines of study. Thus, the faculty of thinking (*al-fikr*) serves as the catalyst for intellectual advancement and societal development, leading to the formation of diverse bodies of knowledge and fields of work.

According to Ibn Khaldun, human cognition is driven by an innate desire to acquire knowledge. This pursuit can be fulfilled through two distinct but related ways: retrospectively and proactively. In the retrospective approach, learners draw from the intellectual contributions of their predecessors, building upon established knowledge and benefiting from the wisdom of those who came before. This mechanism mirrors the *ratchet effect* described by Tomasello:

> Human cultural artifacts and practices accumulate modifications over time based on the so-called 'ratchet effect', in which an individual invention (e.g., an arrow made by sharpening a stick) is copied relatively faithfully by almost everyone in the group, and this modification stays in place until another individual makes a further modification (e.g., feathers on the arrow to improve flight), and so on cumulatively across generations. (Tomasello, 2016, 1)

Such a dynamic allows individuals to stand on the shoulders of earlier thinkers, expanding and refining existing ideas.

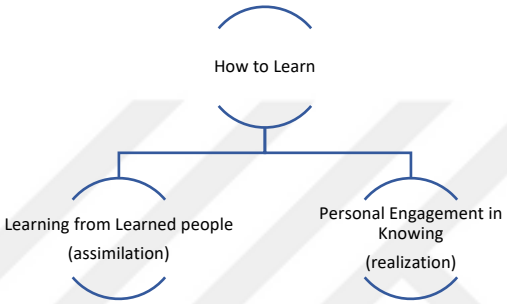


Figure 7: How to Learn

The second approach, on the other hand, is a proactive engagement with the world through one's innate faculties of knowing to generate new insights. This process involves rigorous observation, contemplation, and deep reflection on the inherent properties of entities. As learners actively immerse themselves in this intellectual activity, their knowledge matures and eventually solidifies into a *malaka*, or second nature. This *malaka* in an area of knowledge leads to the development of new distinct disciplines born out of personal contemplation. At this stage, the learner becomes a master of the newly emergent discipline.

However, this process of knowledge acquisition in society does not end with individual mastery. Younger generations, lacking this knowledge, yearn to acquire it and seek instruction from those who possess it. This is how education emerges naturally in a society (IK, ME, 2: 426). From this, it is evident that education, as construed by Ibn Khaldun, is a cyclical process of intellectual growth. This continuous process of learning and teaching highlights the essential nature of education in society.

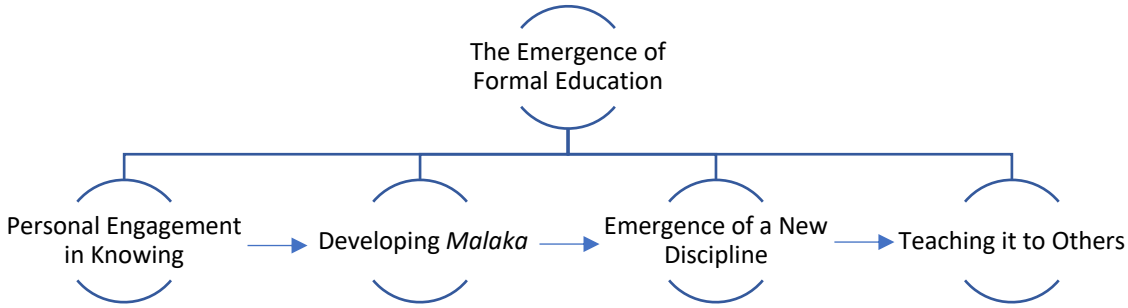


Figure 8: The Emergence of Formal Education

These arrows represent the flow and progression of the educational process, illustrating how personal engagement, expertise development, and the emergence of disciplines lead to teaching and the emergence of education. Ibn Khaldun's explanation of the necessity of education in human society takes into account the historical emergence and development of education in society. With the birth of formal disciplines, individuals who have acquired mastery become the first teachers. They transfer their knowledge of the newly formed disciplines to others. This marks the commencement of formal education, transforming a society of learners into a society of both learners and teachers.

In conclusion, Ibn Khaldun highlights the cyclical nature of education, where the pursuit of knowledge initiates a continuous cycle of learning and teaching. Individuals, motivated by their innate desire for knowledge, seek instruction from those who possess expertise in a particular field. This exchange of knowledge perpetuates the expansion and dissemination of knowledge across generations.

5.1.1. The Socio-Economic Context in Which Arts and Sciences Emerge

According to Ibn Khaldun, urban areas provide a conducive environment for the flourishing of arts, crafts, and sciences. The level of urbanization and whether it's minimal, advanced, or luxurious directly influence the quality and quantity of these crafts. The logic behind this is that such arts, crafts, or sciences are extras to what is required for mere survival or subsistence. Hence, when the activities of the urban population surpass what is needed for their subsistence, their focus shifts to endeavors related to their distinctive attributes, which are arts, crafts, and sciences, beyond basic survival. These endeavors represent the unique capabilities of humans.

5.2. *Al-Ṣanāʾīʿ*: Arts and Crafts Peculiar to Humans

According to Ibn Khaldun, the term *al-ṣanāʾīʿ* encompasses sciences, crafts, and politics. I will translate *al-ṣanāʾīʿ* as arts as an art is a skill at doing a specified thing, typically one acquired through practice (Oxford). In his examination of arts (*ṣināʿah*) and its diverse manifestations, Ibn Khaldun emphasizes the unique connection between humans and the social world. Arts, in this context, represents a habitus (*malaka*) developed through practical or intellectual pursuits. He defines *malaka* as a firmly established attribute gained through much repetition of a particular action until its form becomes deeply ingrained within the soul. Accordingly, *ṣināʿah* is not merely the process of performing a task; it signifies the mastery of a certain task, gained through continued practice, to such an extent that it becomes an integral part of one's self. It is both intellectual, in the sense of understanding and conceptualizing, and practical, in the sense of physically performing. This notion parallels with the concept of "appropriation" in contemporary understanding of learning and internalization discussed in the context of education (Wertsch 1998). For Wertsch (1998), appropriation is the process of making knowledge or a skill integral to one's own identity, such that it becomes a part of one's cognitive and emotional structure. In Islamic education, the significance of this appropriation becomes even more pronounced. This refinement in understanding internalization as mastery and appropriation is important in the field of Islamic education, where mastery may be sufficient for some practices and principles, but others, ideally, must be appropriated in order to be applied authentically in daily life (Alkouatli et al., 2015).

Ibn Khaldun's conception of the advancement of the arts reflects the transformation of societies. As the urban civilization (*al-ʿumrān al-ḥaḍarī*) advances and the city becomes more sophisticated, the focus of its inhabitants expands beyond the basic necessities of life to include luxuries and intellectual activities, paving the way for more complex arts to emerge and mature. These luxuries are not just extravagances; they are also symbolic of a society's intellectual and cultural maturity. Individuals feel like they are necessary needs for them. Hence, the flourishing of arts can be viewed as a sign of societal prosperity and intellectual advancement. However, Ibn Khaldun also raises a cautionary note about the excesses of urban civilization. As crafts diversify and specialize, they may evolve into forms that seem unnecessary or even decadent,

such as the teaching of exotic languages to birds or the training of animals to perform tricks. Here, Ibn Khaldun reminds us of the delicate balance between necessary development and excessive luxury—a reflection that resonates with our current global challenges of sustainable development.

In this sense, Ibn Khaldun categorizes arts into two types: simple and composite. As societies evolve, moving from fulfilling basic needs to luxuries, the arts they engage in also progress from simple to composite. Simple arts are associated with the necessities of life, such as butchery or carpentry. In contrast, composite arts pertain to luxuries or the finer aspects of civilization, like perfume making, goldsmithing, and sciences. In a broader classification, Ibn Khaldun suggests that arts can be divided into those related to the necessities of livelihood, be they essential or non-essential, and those related to intellectual activities—specifically those unique to human beings—such as sciences, crafts, and politics. The cultivation of arts, according to Ibn Khaldun, is not only integral to societal progress, but it also has direct implications for individuals. As crafts progress from simple to complex, so does the required intellectual and practical engagement.

5.2.1. Classification of Sciences

Ibn Khaldun classifies sciences into two categories: natural (*ṭabīʿī*) and transmitted (*naqlī*). Natural sciences are the fields of knowledge that human beings can comprehend and develop through their intellect and cognitive faculties without necessarily relying on any externally transmitted information. For example, empirical, philosophical, and logical inquiries fall into this category. Transmitted sciences, on the other hand, are the fields of knowledge that have been established by a lawgiver (*al-wāḍiʿ al-sharʿī*) and are learned and passed down through generations. They are based on revelation or traditions, such as the religious law (*Shariʿah*), Quranic exegesis (*tafsīr*), *ḥadīth* studies, Arabic linguistics, and theology (*kalām*).

As for the rational sciences, which are inherent to humans by virtue of their capacity for thought, they are not confined to a particular religious community but rather are accessible to people of all faiths. They have been present in humanity since the civilization's inception. These sciences are commonly referred to as philosophy and wisdom, and they encompass four fields. The first one is logic. This discipline protects

the mind from error when seeking unknown objectives from known facts. Its purpose is to discern right from wrong in our observations of existent things and their attributes to establish the truth about beings through either affirmation or negation to the fullest extent of our thought. The second one is natural sciences. These involve the observation of sensibles, such as elemental bodies and the things composed of them, including minerals, plants, animals, celestial bodies, natural movements, the soul from which these movements originate, and other similar things. The third one is metaphysics. This involves examining matters that are beyond nature, namely, spiritual beings. The fourth one is mathematics. It deals with quantities and includes four subfields, collectively referred to as mathematical sciences.

So, according to Ibn Khaldun, these intellectual sciences are universal and not tied to any particular religious creed. They constitute the common intellectual heritage of humanity, accessible to all regardless of their faith tradition. They reflect our capacity to reason and understand the world in which we live, extending from logic to the natural sciences, to metaphysics, and mathematics.

The source of all these transmitted sciences is the *Sharīʿah*, derived from the Qurʾān and Sunnah, which have been ordained for us by God and His Messenger. Additionally, it encompasses the sciences that facilitate our understanding of these divine decrees. This leads to the study of Arabic, the language of the Islamic civilization and the language in which the Qurʾān was revealed. The types of these transmitted sciences are numerous, Ibn Khaldun says, as each responsible person is required to understand the laws of Allah that are imposed upon them and their kind. These laws are derived from the Qu'ran and Sunnah, either by textual evidence, consensus or by association. Thus, it is necessary to examine the Qurʾān first by studying its words, which is the discipline of *tafsir*, then by attributing its transmission and narration to the Prophet, who brought it from Allah, and considering the different narrations of readers in reading it, which is the discipline of *qira'at*.

It is also important to attribute the *Sunnah* to its originator and discuss the narrators who transmitted it, understanding their conditions and integrity so one can trust their reports and know what is obligatory to act upon. This falls under the sciences of *ḥadīth*. Then, to derive these rulings from their sources, a legal perspective that provides

knowledge on how to do this extrapolation is needed, which is *uṣūl al-fiqh*. After this, the outcome is achieved by knowing and understanding the rulings of Allah concerning the actions of the responsible (*mukallaf*) individuals, which is *fiqh*. The obligations (*takālīf*) of human beings may concern the body (*badanī*) or the heart (*qalbī*). The obligations that concern the human heart pertain to faith, what one is responsible to believe in or not to believe. These are the doctrines of faith (*aqāʾid al-īmāniyyah*) concerning the *dhāt* and attributes of God, matters of resurrection, reward, punishment, and destiny. The discipline of *kalām* studies the proofs for these matters of faith based on rational evidence.

The study of the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth* through which human beings learn about their rights and responsibilities should be preceded by the study of linguistic sciences, which are dependent on them and come in various forms, including the science of language (*ʿilm al-lugha*), grammar (*ʿilm al-naḥw*), rhetoric (*ʿilm al-balāgha*), and literature (*ʿilm al-adab*).

The study of *Sharīʿah*, according to Ibn Khaldun, falls into two categories: one specialized for jurists (*fuqahāʾ*) and the issuers of religious legal opinions (*muftīs*), encompassing general rulings in acts of worship, customs, and transactions. The other category is for those who engage in spiritual struggle (*mujāhadah*), discussing states of consciousness, feelings that arise in this path, and how to progress from one state to another. It also involves explaining the terminologies used in these discussions. Ibn Khaldun claims that Al-Ghazālī brought together these two aspects of *Sharīʿah* in his *Iḥyāʾ*.

According to Ibn Khaldun, all these transmitted sciences are specific to the Islamic community and its members. He says that although every community has disciplines similar to these, they belong to a distant genus (*jins baʿīd*) because the disciplines in the Islamic civilization are the *Sharīʿah* sciences descended from Allah to his Prophet. Ibn Khaldun's classification of sciences goes beyond a simplistic taxonomy, presenting a multiplex framework highlighting the symbiotic existence of empirical and ethical knowledge. Central to this perspective is the ontological assertion that human beings are sentient entities situated within a multiplex world with a purpose. The sciences, as classified by Ibn Khaldun, testify to this purpose, as every responsible individual is tasked with understanding the obligations laid upon them. Ibn Khaldun's

multiplex epistemology forms the foundation of this classification, emphasizing the utilization of all epistemological faculties—sensory perception, reason, and divine revelation—to develop a comprehensive understanding of reality with its descriptive and prescriptive aspects.

In this framework, divine revelation plays a pivotal role in providing insights into aspects of reality that lie beyond the scope of unaided human reason. While sensory perception and rational reasoning enable the comprehension of the empirical and descriptive structure of the world, divine revelation offers knowledge of the ethical and prescriptive dimensions of existence. It thus complements empirical knowledge and provides human beings with a meaning in which their understanding of reality becomes empirical and ethical simultaneously. This comprehensive understanding that grounds Ibn Khaldun's classification of sciences not only encapsulates the descriptive structure of the world as furnished by empirical sciences but also the prescriptive ethical meaning drawn from divine revelation.

Ibn Khaldun's classification of sciences offers a multiplex framework for appreciating the comprehensiveness of human knowledge. His perspective highlights the inherent unity within diverse forms of knowledge, revealing the profound interconnectedness or inherent harmony between the natural and transmitted sciences. He stresses the essential unity of seemingly disparate ways of knowing, ultimately illuminating the profound interconnectedness, or at least conformity, between the natural and transmitted sciences. His taxonomy encourages individuals to harness their epistemological assets—sensory perception, rational reasoning, and divine revelation—to foster a holistic understanding of reality. While the sensory and rational faculties allow us to comprehend the empirical, descriptive structure of the world, it is the divine revelation that grants us insights into aspects of reality beyond the reach of unaided reason. Divine revelation unveils the ethical, prescriptive dimensions of existence and equips us with knowledge that wouldn't be accessible otherwise.

In this context, the classification of sciences by Ibn Khaldun emphasizes the essential unity and interplay of different modes of knowledge acquisition. Through this holistic approach to knowledge, humans are transformed into responsible beings endowed with free will, becoming aware of the obligations placed upon them. Through divine

revelation, operating in concert with sensory perception and rational reasoning, what once appeared as a brute, meaningless world assumes its ethical significance. Consequently, a synthesis of descriptive and prescriptive elements emerges, leading to praxis—the practical application of knowledge to pursue a purposeful and meaningful existence.

From a methodological perspective, Ibn Khaldun's analysis of various sciences is beyond being merely empirical. In his elaboration of various sciences, he goes beyond cataloging and describing existing sciences of his time and delves into providing his own views and critiques. For instance, he was critical of the application of Aristotelian logic to theological matters. He argued that logical tools developed for use in empirical and rational domains might not be suitable for tackling metaphysical questions, which are typically beyond the realm of sensory perception and rational understanding. In this sense, his approach is prescriptive in guiding the reader on how to think about his disciplines.

More importantly, Ibn Khaldun's narrative on the sciences goes beyond the binary of empirical vs. ethical. Ibn Khaldun's analysis of the disciplines extends to a sociological perspective that considers the benefits and harms they bring to civilization. In his evaluation of the different sciences, he considered not only their methodological foundations and theoretical content but also their social implications. He observed how different fields of knowledge contribute to the overall well-being and progress of societies. This approach adds a normative dimension to his analysis.

An example of this is his elaboration of astrology. He proposes that it is necessary to prohibit astrology for all members of society due to its harmful effects on religion and the state (*duwal*). However, he noted that the existence of astrology is natural for humans based on their perceptions and knowledge. He further elaborates that good and evil are two inherent aspects of the world that cannot be separated, but individuals are responsible for seeking the causes of good and avoiding the causes of evil and harm. Thus, prohibiting astrology is the duty of those who recognize the harmful effects of astrology.

Consequently, in addition to understanding the empirical reality of the presence of the sciences in a community, he also evaluates their practical implications on society. This can indeed be seen as an ethical approach, as it goes beyond mere descriptions and theoretical analysis and takes into account the actual consequences and moral implications of these disciplines on society and civilization as a whole.

5.3. Arts Need Instruction, While Instruction is also an Art

Ibn Khaldun asserts that the acquisition of expertise or proficiency is fundamentally through the development of *malaka* (habitus) (IK, ME, 2, 426). All *malaka*s, whether they reside in the body or the brain, such as thinking or other faculties like calculation, are physical (IK, ME, 2, 426-27). *Malaka*s inherently carry a tangible, sensory component, thus necessitating instruction or education for their proper development. Since it is this conceptual framework that underpins Islamic educational practices, the concept of *sanad*, the chain of knowledge transmission from Prophet Muhammed ﷺ, has become an essential aspect of Islamic scholarship. This intellectual chain of transmission signifies the lineage of learning and assures that the knowledge passed down is authentic, comes from a trustworthy source, and is eligible for teaching. This practice underscores the importance of learning from a teacher whom himself has a '*malaka'*, ensuring that the knowledge and skills imparted are not only accurate but also come with the ethical and intellectual qualifications necessary for teaching. Therefore, the quality of education in every discipline or art depends on the reputation and greatness of its teachers, held in high regard by all people of every horizon and generation.

Consequently, the quality and authenticity of education in any field of knowledge or art are fundamentally reliant on the ethical and intellectual competence of its teachers. This also indicates that teaching a discipline is an art (*ṣināʿah*) in itself. Each craftsman has their teaching methodology or procedure, which indicates that the teaching of knowledge is an art.

5.4. Humans as Imperfect Beings Created with a Desire to Perfect Themselves

If human beings were perfectly created, they would not need education to perfect themselves. The need for education and its philosophical justification stems from this

basic axiom: that humans are imperfect beings created with a desire to perfect themselves. According to Ibn Khaldun, when God brought the soul into existence, He created it with a desire to perfect itself through knowledge of and learning of the realities of existent entities and the attributes of its Creator (IK, S, 62). To achieve this, God gave the soul two faces: one side of the soul faces the material world, and the other side of the soul turns towards the Tablet (*lawḥ*) where the images of the creation are reflected. On this tablet, the truths of past, present, and future until the Day of Resurrection are recorded.

From the perceptible world, the soul draws the forms of the existents. They are brought by the senses to the intellect where their abstract meanings are disengaged Finally, the imagination and discursive thinking arrange them in a significant order. The second face of the soul is turned towards the inside, which is the spiritual realm represented by the Tablet. There is a veil between the human heart and the tablet. If the veil is lifted through purification and deliverance from impurities, then perception (*idrāk*) is achieved in its most perfect aspect, more perfectly so than by means of the first facet.

Ibn Khaldun also mentions that the Qurʾān and the Sunnah affirm that God-wariness (*ṭaqwāʾ*) is the key to guidance and unveiling. Outwardly, it is to abide by the divine limits, and inwardly, it is to have the right intention and sincerity (*ikhlāṣ*). “Be mindful of Allah, and he will teach you” (Qurʾān, 2:282). And he says it is knowledge obtained through being ethical without a learning process. Ibn Khaldun suggests that the soul’s journey is about navigating this gap between reality and the ideal, the actual and the potential.

Ibn Khaldun’s views on the necessity of individuals to actualize themselves resonate with al-Ghazālī’s views. Al-Ghazālī also expounds that all existents are divided into two categories. The first category consists of complete and perfect entities, such as the heavens, stars, and organs of the body. These entities are formed without human choice or intervention. The second category includes imperfect entities, like human beings, who have the potential to attain perfection under certain conditions.

In this context, the concepts of *tarbiyah* (education) and *tadbīr* (administration) emerge as a task of responsible individuals to enhance the intellectual and moral

development of human beings, aiming to bridge the gap between what "is" and what "ought to be." The discipline of *fiqh* serves as a source of knowledge for understanding the ideal state without imposing a binary division between the empirical and the ethical. It is the responsibility of humans to bridge this gap across three key domains: the individual self, households, and cities. The first domain involves intellectual and moral education, while the second pertains to ethical norms for social coexistence and economic conduct. The third domain focuses on politics. It is important to recognize that these endeavors and fields of study exist in reality, and at times, the ideal may manifest itself in reality, while in other instances, the reality is incompatible with the ideal and needs to be regulated.

5.5. Nature, Nurture, and Human Agency in Human Development

The study of human development often revolves around the long-standing debate of nature versus nurture. This dichotomy delineates whether human traits are primarily a product of hereditary factors or shaped by environmental influences. A prominent perspective throughout the twentieth century was the concept of tabula rasa, or 'blank slate,' postulated by John Locke in 1690. This perspective advocates that human behavioral traits develop almost exclusively from environmental influences. However, by the dawn of the twenty-first century, this view was largely seen as reductionist, with the consensus among scholars being that both nature and nurture contribute substantially, and often inextricably, to human development.

In the nature-nurture debate, individuals are often depicted as passive recipients of genetic predispositions and environmental influences. However, Ibn Khaldun's perspectives invite us to reevaluate this reductionist understanding. Contrary to the ultimate determinacy of structural factors often considered in the nature-nurture debate, cognitive or moral development in Ibn Khaldun's framework is an active and intentional process. Ibn Khaldun's educational views challenge the notion that character traits, intellectual or behavioral, is solely determined by genetics or environmental influences. While influenced by natural geography and cultural surroundings, humans have the capacity to shape their own character traits through repeated actions consciously.

5.5.1. Human Nature: Inborn Predispositions

As discussed in the first chapter, according to Ibn Khaldun, human existence is multiplex comprising physical and spiritual dimensions that have universal qualities of human nature. The physical aspect, or *al-nafs al- ḥayawāniyyah*, is shared with the animal kingdom. The soul, or *al-nafs al-nāṭiqah al-ʿāqilah*, is unique to humans, underpinning our unique capacity for rational thought and ethical behavior. These inborn or natural aspects are universal among human beings.

Yet, these inherent characteristics, both in the body (*al-khalq*) and character (*khuluq*), can be influenced and shaped by external factors. For the physical aspect, external elements such as geography, climate, and diet have an influence on human beings. For the spiritual side or the character, a variety of influences, both structural and intentional, are at play. This spiritual dimension is inherently present in humans universally as part of human nature but needs nurturing for its actualization. Hence, Ibn Khaldun envisages humans as situated between animals and angels in a metaphysical hierarchy, with their position fluid based on their cognitive and spiritual development. This places humans in a unique position in the universal order, with the potential to ascend or descend based on their actions and intellectual capacity.

In Ibn Khaldun's view, the spiritual essence of human beings, which is commonly referred to as character and is manifested through their actions, is undoubtedly influenced by external factors such as geography, climate, and the cultural context in which they reside. Additionally, socio-economic conditions and the type of power exerted upon individuals by political authorities, parents, or teachers also contribute to shaping human character and behavior. These external factors are collectively known as nurtural factors, as they play a significant role in influencing individuals' traits.

5.5.2. The Impact of the Societal Context on Human Character Formation

Ibn Khaldun posits that the human soul, when still in its primordial state, is naturally predisposed to accept whatever goodness or wickedness it encounters. He refers to a saying of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ: "Every child is born upon the *fiṭrah* (natural predisposition), then his parents will make him Jewish, Christian, or Magian."

Therefore, the characteristics imprinted earlier on the soul have a strong influence, making it difficult for it to acquire traits that contradict these.

An individual exposed to virtuous habits from an early age will find it hard to veer toward wrongdoing and vice versa. This, Ibn Khaldun suggests, is particularly applicable to city dwellers who, due to their regular exposure to various arts and indulgences, develop a strong inclination towards worldly desires and pleasures. As a result, their souls get colored by several reprehensible traits, making the path of virtue difficult for them. For instance, he observes that many urban dwellers engage in indecent talks in their gatherings and with their peers, oblivious to the voice of modesty. Their repeated exposure to such misconduct makes them comfortable with it verbally and behaviorally.

On the contrary, those from a pastoral lifestyle, while they too are drawn towards worldly matters, their engagement remains confined to necessary extents, not indulgences. Their transactions are generally simpler, and their exposure to harmful habits is considerably less than their urban counterparts. They are closer to their original natural disposition and less prone to the imprint of harmful traits due to the fewer reprehensible habits they encounter. This makes their rectification and moral recovery easier compared to city dwellers.

Ibn Khaldun makes a profound assertion: civilization represents the peak of social organization, but it's also the harbinger of corruption, marking the end of goodness and the initiation of evil. Hence, he concludes that pastoral societies, being closer to natural disposition, are generally closer to virtue than urban societies.

5.5.3. The Human Being is the Child of their Habits and Customs

Ibn Khaldun asserts that humans are shaped more by their habits and customs rather than by their inherent nature and temperament (IK, ME, 1, 261). He strongly argues for the predominance of acquired characteristics over inborn ones in determining an individual's behavior and thought processes. This reflects his firm stance on the nurture side of the "nature versus nurture" debate, although he does not deny the existence of inborn qualities of human nature, making this nature vs. nurture dichotomy useless in his framework.

اعلم أن الله سبحانه ركب في طبائع البشر الخير والشر
كما قال تعالى «وهديناه النجدين» وقال «فألهمها فجورها وتقواها»
والشر أقرب الخلال إليه إذا أهمل في مرعى عوائده ولم يهذبه الاقتداء بالدين
وعلى ذلك الجم الغفير إلا من وفقه الله
(IK, MA, 1, 254)

> Know that Allah, the Exalted, has instilled in the nature of humans both good and evil, as He says (in the Qurʾān): 'And We have guided him on the two highways' (90:10), and He says: 'And inspired it (the soul) with discernment of its wickedness and its righteousness' (91:8). Evil is more closely related to his traits if he neglects the observance of his habits and does not refine them by following the religion. This is the case with the vast majority, except for those Allah guides. (IK, ME, 1, 261)

This passage emphasizes Ibn Khaldun's conception of the nature of human beings, embodying inborn tendencies to both good and evil. Ibn Khaldun suggests that while this disposition to both good and evil is inherent, the environment in which individuals are nurtured, and the education they receive plays a crucial role in which these qualities dominate their personality and behavior. Ibn Khaldun notes that if an individual neglects watching over and regulating his habits and fails to follow religious or ethical guidance, the evil traits are more likely to manifest. While nature is embedded in humans by divine design, nurture, represented by one's habits and ethical or religious education, can significantly shape these inborn traits.

Ibn Khaldun's saying that "if he neglects the observance of his habits and does not refine them by following the religion", resonates with Foucault's idea of "technologies of the self" (Foucault, 2003). Foucault's technologies of the self are methods and techniques that individuals employ, either by themselves or with the assistance of others, to influence and shape their own personal behavior, thoughts, and overall persona (Foucault, 2003: 146). This mechanism enables them to achieve desirable states such as happiness, purity, wisdom, or perfection (Foucault, 2003: 146). Ibn Khaldun emphasizes the role of 'nurture,' particularly religious or ethical education, as a technology of the self. It serves as a crucial mechanism that individuals must utilize to control, shape, and refine their inherent traits and habits.

Ibn Khaldun sees this refinement process as essential for managing the dual nature of humans, consisting of both good and evil tendencies. Like Foucault's subject, this

process is not entirely free or autonomous but occurs within specific religious, moral, social, and educational constraints. Here, one's religion or ethical guidance serves as the normative field within which this ethical self-formation takes place. This field provides the foundational guidelines that direct the transformation of the individual towards good and away from evil. In Ibn Khaldun's theory, the nurturing process through religious or ethical education can be seen as a form of self-technology that allows individuals to become subjects of a particular moral discourse, leading them towards desirable states of existence.

In Ibn Khaldun's view, most people fall into the trap of letting their negative traits dominate due to a lack of proper nurture—yet some manage to refine their behavior and moral character, often under the guidance of ethical or religious education. Ibn Khaldun seems to propose that the aim of education, specifically moral education, should be to guide individuals to make the right choices, encouraging the manifestation of their good traits while suppressing the evil ones.

أن الإنسان ابن عوائده ومألوفه لا ابن طبيعته ومزاجه
فالذي ألفه في الأحوال حتى صار خلقا وملكة وعادة تنزل منزلة الطبيعة والجبلة
واعتبر ذلك في الآدميين تجده كثيرا صحيحا
(IK, MA, 1, 251)

> Indeed, human beings are the product of their habits and customs, not their nature and temperament. What one is accustomed to in terms of conditions, to the point where it becomes a character trait, a habitus, and a custom, takes the place of natural disposition. Consider that in humans, you will find it abundantly correct. (IK, ME, 1, 258)

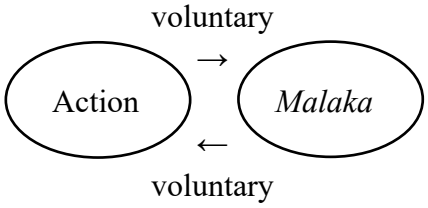
In this passage, Ibn Khaldun accentuates the centrality of acquired characteristics, or habits (*awāʿid*), in shaping an individual. Ibn Khaldun posits that when a behavior, action, or thought pattern becomes so ingrained through repetition, it takes on the force of nature as though it were an innate part of one's disposition. This suggests that the influence of one's environment, societal context, and repeated practices determines who they are. There is indeed a universal human nature *bi al-quwwa*; how this universal nature manifests *bi al-fiʿl* in actuality depends on nurtural factors. This illustrates that the negative potentialities of human nature can be controlled by nurture

through ethical or religious education, and here, the concept of watching over and controlling one's habits is important.

5.5.4. Human Agency in Character Formation through the Acquisition of *Malaka*

Ibn Khaldun's perspective goes beyond attributing character formation solely to structural factors. He places great emphasis on the role of human agency in intellectual and moral development, which he describes through his concept of *malaka*. According to Ibn Khaldun, individuals can actively shape their character traits through deliberate efforts and intentional practices. While environmental and social factors undoubtedly influence individuals, they have the ability to mitigate or reduce these influences through their own efforts. Thus, human development is not a deterministic process, even though the impact of external structural factors may be unavoidable to some extent. This perspective is also compatible with the Islamic worldview, as individuals are held responsible for their actions, while they are not held accountable for the circumstances determined by destiny.

While nurtural factors undoubtedly influence human development, Ibn Khaldun highlights the power of human agency in intellectual development and character formation. Through the intentional cultivation of *malaka*, individuals can voluntarily acquire intellectual and ethical traits, ultimately shaping their own character. At this point, one can question whether *malaka*s acquired in the soul act like a structure and influence individuals to act in certain ways. However, both the acquisition of *malaka* itself and the actions that emanate from the *malaka* are all voluntary actions (Müneccimbaşı in Aykıt, 2013, 260).



This perspective highlights the profound transformative potential of human agency and recognizes the active role individuals play in their own self-development, all while acknowledging the impact of external structural factors.

5.5.4.1. What is Malaka?

Malaka, often translated as 'habitus,' is a central concept in Ibn Khaldun's educational philosophical framework. This concept has been explored extensively by Islamic scholars such as al-Ījī (b. 1281), al-Ghazālī (d. 1111), and Müneccimbaşı (b. 1631). *Malaka*, often synonymous with *khuluq*, refers to an acquired intellectual or practical disposition, a deeply ingrained skill or proficiency that an individual acquires through repeated practice and habituation until it becomes almost second nature. Individuals can voluntarily acquire intellectual and practical traits through repetitive actions. Thus, intellectual development and character formation go beyond being solely determined by external structural factors, natural or cultural.

Al-Ījī defines *khuluq*, which refers to the moral character and internal qualities of human beings, as *malaka* through which actions effortlessly emanate without deliberation (al-Ījī, 54). The term *hayʾa*, meaning disposition, is often used interchangeably with *malaka*. Al-Ghazālī shares a similar perspective, defining *khuluq* as a firmly established state (*hayʾa rāsikha*) in the soul from which actions proceed easily without conscious thinking. When this disposition leads to praiseworthy actions in line with religious norms and intellect, it is considered 'good character.' Conversely, if it predisposes individuals towards objectionable actions, it is classified as 'bad character.' Al-Ghazālī emphasizes the spontaneous aspect of character, highlighting that true character traits consistently prompt actions without conscious effort. Al-Ghazālī identifies four elements related to character: the action itself, which can be either beautiful or ugly; the ability to perform the action; the cognitive awareness of the action; a condition of the soul that inclines it towards the action, making it easy to execute. This interpretation separates 'character' from 'action', 'ability', and 'cognition.' Character, therefore, is not necessarily revealed through individual actions but is a fundamental and persistent condition of the soul that predisposes an individual toward certain types of actions. For instance, the mere act of giving money does not automatically indicate a person's generosity, as generosity is a quality of human

character that goes beyond individual actions. Although acts of generosity arise from the internal trait of generosity within the human soul, it is important to recognize that not all actions indicate generosity as an internalized trait in the soul. Al-Ghazālī emphasizes this distinction, illustrating that human character (*khuluq*) is a reflection of the state and inner essence of the soul, separate from individual actions.

Similarly, Ibn Khaldun draws a clear distinction between *malaka* and actions, employing the term to signify a state of the soul, an internalized trait. Merely memorizing all the concepts and information within a discipline does not imply the possession of *malaka* in that field. Given that, we understand that a *malaka* is an acquired intellectual or practical disposition, a deeply ingrained skill or proficiency that an individual acquires through repeated practice and habituation until it becomes almost second nature.

*Malaka*s can be both practical (*ʿamalī*) and intellectual (*fikrī*). *Malaka*s reside in the body or the brain, such as thinking or other faculties like calculation. Regardless of their type and place, Ibn Khaldun asserts that all *malaka*s are physical. This implies that they are not merely abstract mental capacities but are rooted in physical, embodied experiences. Thus, *malaka*s inherently carry a tangible, sensory component, thus necessitating instruction or education for proper development.

5.5.4.2. Ḥāl and Malaka: Transient State and Ingrained Disposition

In Ibn Khaldun's framework, *ḥāl* and *malaka* represent different stages of a person's spiritual and intellectual development. *Ḥāl* is often translated as "state," referring to a temporary, fluctuating condition of one's intellectual or spiritual journey. It is a transient phase of realization or consciousness that can shift or transform based on one's experiences and thoughts.

Malaka, on the other hand, represents a more stable, ingrained characteristic or ability. Derived from the root word meaning "to own," it signifies an "owned" or internalized state of knowledge or skill. When a person transitions from a temporary *ḥāl* to a more consistent *malaka*, it signifies that the individual has thoroughly integrated the

knowledge or skill into their understanding, making it a part of their intrinsic intellectual or spiritual being.

Ibn Khaldun likens the relationship between *ḥāl* and *malaka* to the relationship between *qawl* (statement or affirmation) and *ittiṣāf* (attribute or embodiment) (IK, ME, 3, 39-40). The relationship between *qawl* and *ittiṣāf* similarly delineates different levels of intellectual engagement and realization. *Qawl* refers to the vocal affirmation of a fact or belief. It signifies the external manifestation of knowledge or belief but does not necessarily entail a deep, internalized understanding. *Ittiṣāf*, however, indicates a higher level of realization where the affirmed knowledge or belief is not merely articulated but is embodied and lived by the individual. It refers to the stage where the knowledge has become an attribute of the person, manifesting in their thoughts, actions, and overall disposition.

Taḥqīq represents the ultimate stage of understanding in Ibn Khaldun's epistemological and pedagogical scheme. It refers to the "realization" of knowledge, achieved when an individual transcends the superficial stages of knowledge affirmation (*qawl*) and the temporary states (*ḥāl*) and arrives at the point where the knowledge is fully embodied (*ittiṣāf*) and becomes an ingrained disposition (*malaka*).

The concept of *taḥqīq* signifies a comprehensive and deep-seated understanding, where the knowledge is not merely cognitively affirmed or superficially understood but is deeply rooted in the individual's consciousness, manifesting in their thought patterns, actions, and overall behavior.

5.5.5. Intellectual and Practical Procedures for Self-Formation

Then, we see that according to this understanding, the acquisition of *malaka* is an essential component of character formation and intellectual and moral development. Even in one's faith and practices, such as helping people and praying, mere knowledge is not what is intended. What matters concerning faith or *tawḥīd* (oneness of God) is not just blind faith, which is a vocal affirmation. Rather, the perfection of the belief in the oneness of God is the emergence of an attribute from this belief, with which the soul acquires a quality. Similarly, what matters in human actions and worship is the acquisition of a deeply ingrained skill (*malaka*) of obedience and submission and

freeing the heart from distractions of anything other than God until the seeker becomes godly (*rabbānī)*.

To elaborate, Ibn Khaldun gives an example. Many people know that showing mercy to an orphan and the poor is an act God recommends, and they verbally affirm this. They recognize and remember its sources in the *Sharīʿah*. However, if they saw an orphan or a poor person among the oppressed, they would shy away and feel too high to interact with them, let alone show mercy and do more like kindness, compassion, and charity. In this case, they have only achieved the level of knowledge and have not reached the state or level of attribution. Among people are those who, along with the state of knowledge and acknowledgment that showing mercy to the poor is close to God, achieve a higher level than the first, which is to attribute mercy to themselves and acquire its deeply ingrained skill. Whenever they see an orphan or a poor person, they immediately approach them, console them, and seek rewards for showing compassion for them. They can hardly be patient, even if they were to be prevented. They then give them charity from what they have at hand.

There is the same relationship between the verbal affirmation of *tawḥīd* and *tawḥīd* being the quality of the self. The transformative power of knowledge lies in its internalization. Under Ibn Khaldun's philosophy, the mere acquisition of knowledge is not considered enough; rather, it is through the repeated application and habitual practice of this knowledge that one becomes 'qualified' by it, leading to the attainment of a deeply ingrained skill or disposition (*malaka*). This repetitive practice and internalization of the knowledge is what he refers to as "*ittiṣāf.*" Ibn Khaldun advanced the idea of *ittiṣāf* as an integral part of acquiring knowledge, which refers to the embodiment or internalization of the knowledge one acquires. It is about internalizing knowledge to the point where it becomes an integral part of one's character or nature—a trait one is qualified by.

Moreover, after going through the process of *ittiṣāf*, the acquired knowledge transforms into a different, second form of knowledge that is more reliable, well-grounded, and spiritually beneficial in the afterlife. Despite being accurate, the prior, 'first' form of knowledge is seen as less useful or beneficial because it lacks this component of internalization and embodiment. According to Ibn Khaldun, this mere

knowledge is what most philosophers possess, indicating a certain superficiality of understanding without the depth provided by internalization (*ittiṣāf*). Therefore, Ibn Khaldun highlights the distinction between merely possessing knowledge and being characterized or qualified by that knowledge. He emphasizes that the ultimate aim is not just to know but to embody that knowledge, both intellectually and morally, suggesting that the transformative power of knowledge lies in its internalization and lived experience.

According to Ibn Khaldun, perfection in God's eyes in everything he has obligated us to do lies in this: whatever is required to believe, its perfection is in the second knowledge attained through internalization (*ittiṣāf*) of that knowledge. And perfection in whatever God requires us to do in terms of worship is in attaining *ittiṣāf* and *taḥqīq* in it, in other words, making those acts a quality of the soul through internalizing them. This only comes true through repeated practice.

Furthermore, Ibn Khaldun asserts that the core goal of all religious obligations, whether they are spiritual (of the heart) or physical (bodily), is the attainment of a deeply rooted disposition or habitus (*malaka*) in the individual. This disposition then gives rise to a necessary knowledge ingrained in the soul, *tawḥīd*. *Tawḥīd* is the creed of faith, and it is what brings about happiness. Hence, fulfilling religious obligations is not just about the external act but about internalizing the beliefs and principles.

Therefore, according to Ibn Khaldun, true knowledge is not confined to verbal affirmation or theoretical comprehension alone. It requires a profound internalization and integration of knowledge, leading to the development of a qualitative change within oneself. This transformative process of *ittiṣāf* allows individuals to embody knowledge, becoming qualified by it and manifesting its effects in their character and actions.

Furthermore, acquiring *malaka* extends beyond mere rote memorization of a subject. It involves a thorough immersion into the principles, processes, and practices of a discipline, allowing the individual to assimilate and embody the knowledge so deeply that it becomes an inherent part of their being. This learned proficiency or habitus then

becomes almost reflexive, enabling the individual to respond, think, or perform tasks associated with that discipline with a high degree of competence almost effortlessly.

The development of a *malaka* necessitates continuous practice and persistent effort, often under the tutelage of an expert or teacher who possesses the *malaka*. The acquisition of *malaka* also implies an intellectual, ethical, and emotional engagement with the subject matter, underscoring the holistic approach toward education in Ibn Khaldun's thought.

5.5.5.1. Munāẓara as the Most Efficient Way of Malaka Acquisition

The easiest method that Ibn Khaldun suggests for acquiring *malaka* is through *munāẓara* (lit. co-thinking) or ethical argumentation. Engaging in rigorous, scholarly discussions not only deepens one's understanding of a subject but also improves one's skills for critical thinking. The consistent practice of *munāẓara* assists in the internalization of the discipline that is being studied, thus contributing significantly to the development of the associated *malaka*.

5.5.5.2. The Importance of Linguistic Malaka in Learning

According to Ibn Khaldun, all fields of knowledge are essentially concerned with the conceptual meanings that exist in the mind. He maintains that this principle applies to both religious sciences and rational sciences. In his view, languages play a crucial role as translators of these meanings held within consciousness, facilitating their conveyance through methods such as *munāẓara*, teaching, and the practice of scientific inquiry. Ibn Khaldun asserts that words and languages act as mediums and veils between these meanings, serving as both connections and barriers. He emphasizes that in order to grasp these meanings, one must have a deep understanding of the linguistic implications embedded within the utterances and possess a strong malaka of language. Without such comprehension, he argues that the knowledge gained remains limited, and the comprehension of meanings becomes insufficient.

However, according to Ibn Khaldun, if one has a firm grasp of these linguistic implications to the extent that meanings naturally spring to mind when utilizing the corresponding words, the veil between meanings and comprehension is either lifted

entirely or considerably reduced, leaving only the need for further exploration of the subjects. He notes that this primarily applies to teaching through discourse and verbal expression. However, Ibn Khaldun highlights that in situations where learners rely on studying books and analyzing written diagrams and illustrations in scientific works, another veil arises. This veil exists between the script and its illustrations in the book and the spoken words in the imagination. Ibn Khaldun asserts that the written script carries its own specific indications for the spoken words, and without understanding these indications, comprehending the content becomes challenging. Even if one possesses partial knowledge of these indications, he maintains that it remains limited. According to Ibn Khaldun, this additional veil further obstructs the learner's acquisition of knowledge, making it more challenging to attain a complete *malaka* of the subject matter. He argues that only when one's command of linguistic and written implications is solidified does the veil between them and the meanings become heightened, creating a barrier to full comprehension.

5.5.6. Malaka Acquisition Facilitates Cognitive Development

According to Ibn Khaldun, human development, cognitive or moral, occurs in the soul with the help of the physical body. The soul develops through two major things: cognitions (*idrākāt*) and the imprints (*āthār*) of the *malaka*s in the soul. *Malaka*, an acquired skill or disposition, is gained through repeated practices, and these practices reciprocally leave an impact on the soul. The concept of imprint suggests a two-way relationship between human action and *malaka*. On one hand, *malaka* is acquired through intentional practices, and on the other hand, these practices leave an imprint on the soul, as well.

Thus, *malaka* acquisition is transformative, where the interplay between one's actions and the acquired habits shapes one's overall character and cognitive abilities. The concept of malaka, as used by Ibn Khaldun, indeed pertains to both praiseworthy and wicked dispositions or habits that one can acquire. These *malaka*s, or acquired skills, leave an imprint on a person's soul, shaping their intellect and the way they think. The good *malaka*s (*ḥusn al-malakāt*) in teaching, arts, and mastery over routine tasks add to a person's intelligence by leaving an array of cognitive imprints and illuminate their thought due to the multitude of acquired *malaka*s in the soul. In other words, the more

‘*malaka*s’ or skills one acquires, the more intellectual imprints are left on one’s soul, contributing to one’s overall intellectual development.

One can wonder whether the actions emanating from *malaka*s are involuntary or voluntary. Muneccimbasi says that both the acquisition of the *malaka* itself and the actions that emanate from the *malaka* are all voluntary actions (Muneccimbasi, 260). This view underscores the active role individuals play in shaping their *malaka*s, and, by extension, their intellectual and spiritual growth. The philosophy here is the affirmation of the interactive relationship between human actions and their cognitive and moral dispositions (*malaka*s). It stresses that individuals, through their deliberate actions, influence their process of *malaka* acquisition, and these *malaka*s, in turn, can guide their future actions, perpetuating a cycle of cognitive and moral development.

Besides this micro perspective on the individual, Ibn Khaldun emphasized the impact of the social environment, particularly an urban setting, and education on the intellectual development of individuals. He contended that humans in the urban environment and societal structures established a set of norms and etiquettes that individuals adhere to in all aspects of life, from livelihood to religion, construction, and dealings. They exhibit standards in all their works, customs, dealings, and actions, which essentially act as boundaries they do not cross. This urban etiquette is passed from generation to generation, like an art. Every art leaves a mark on the human soul, giving it a new intellectual capacity (*ʿaql jadīd*) to accept another craft. This way, the mind becomes quicker in comprehension. Hence, according to Ibn Khaldun, the variance between people’s minds is unnatural. People living in urban settings are compared to nomads, and among urban, those with better pedagogical methods and continuity in the chain of knowledge transmission are better in terms of *malaka*, which improves their minds.

5.5.6.1. Cognitive Development

Ibn Khaldun provides a comprehensive account of the cognitive development process centered around the actualization of *al-nafs al-nāṭiqah* (the rational soul). According to him, the rational soul is initially present in humans as a potentiality. The journey from potentiality to actuality starts with the renewal of knowledge and perceptions

based on sensory experiences. As humans interact with their external environment, they absorb and process sensory information, constituting the primary stage of cognitive development.

Following this, the theoretical faculty comes into play. This refers to the intellectual capability that allows humans to analyze sensory data, connect various pieces of information, and draw abstract inferences. This theoretical contemplation aids in the transformation of basic sensory data into intellectual understanding. Consequently, the rational soul evolves, becoming a discerning and intellectual entity—a process Ibn Khaldun refers to as becoming a 'pure intellect'.

The cognitive development process is further facilitated by various external factors. He mentions three things that help cognitive development: personal experience, having different *malaka*s, and living in a culturally rich urban civilization contribute to cognitive growth. Living in a culturally rich urban civilization fosters cognitive development. This is because such a civilization is a hub for various arts (*al-ṣanāʾīʿ*) and sciences that govern aspects ranging from household administration (*tadbīr al-manzil*), social interactions, and proper etiquette in social conduct, enforcement of religious norms by observing its proper etiquette and conditions. Each of these fields has a unique set of principles and rules that are organized under specific disciplines, the mastery of which demands cognitive effort, thereby promoting cognitive development.

Arts (*al-ṣanāʾīʿ*) play a crucial role in cognitive transformation. Each art has an associated set of rules or principles that embody its underlying knowledge. The mastery of an art, therefore, contributes to one's intellectual development by instilling this unique knowledge. Moreover, each art or craft imprints a unique cognitive structure on the practitioner's mind, fostering specific intellectual capabilities. Ibn Khaldun articulates the role of certain practices, particularly writing and arithmetic, in shaping and improving cognitive capacity. He asserts that these practices contribute to the development of the intellect because they necessitate and encourage the application of cognitive skills. These practices foster mental refinement, characterized by the ability to infer, deduce, and reason—the hallmarks of *ʿaql*.

Writing is a *malaka* (habitus) that belongs to the human hand. It involves a progressive transition from written symbols to verbal utterances in the tongue, and from these utterances to the meanings or concepts in the mind that these utterances represent. In this process, one continually moves from sign to signified, hence nurturing the intellectual faculty of inference.

written symbols > verbal utterances > concepts/meanings in the mind

As one becomes accustomed to this transitive process, the intellectual ability to shift from signs to what they signify improves, thereby enhancing cognitive acuity. In this regard, writing stands out among other arts due to its direct engagement with knowledge and contemplation. Similarly, the craft of arithmetic calls for a great deal of reasoning and inference. It necessitates the manipulation of numbers through addition and subtraction, which demands continuous inferential thinking. This art thereby enhances one's intellectual capability and instills the fundamental operations of the intellect.

5.5.7. No Mastery in Arts Without *Malaka*

Ibn Khaldun suggests that proficiency or mastery in knowledge or in a discipline is acquired through attaining a habitus (*malaka*) in comprehending the principles of that discipline, its rules, and problems and being able to extrapolate specific issues from its fundamental principles. Proficiency is not due to an inherent superiority of intellect but because of their greater exposure to and training in various disciplines. This concept applies to the perceived intellectual superiority of the urban residents over the rural inhabitants. The urban dwellers seem more intelligent, not because they are intrinsically more capable but because of their broader exposure to various crafts, arts, and etiquettes unknown to their rural counterparts. He clarifies that such a habitus is distinct from understanding and awareness, as understanding of a single issue in a discipline is common to a beginner, a layman, and an ordinary writer. The *malaka*, however, is exclusive to a scholar or an expert in the discipline.

5.5.8. *Malaka* in an Art Restrict the Development of New Ones in the Same Art

Ibn Khaldun offers insights into the relationship between mastery in one art (*ṣinā'ah*) and the potential to excel in another. He suggests that when an individual has fully mastered one art, their ability to acquire a similar level of proficiency in a different art is diminished. This is primarily because the skills and habitus (*malaka*) that have been thoroughly embedded into the person's being through one craft can restrict the development of new ones. Ibn Khaldun's perspective here resonates with contemporary understandings of expertise and cognitive development. It is widely acknowledged in modern psychology and neuroscience that while an individual can acquire proficiency in a variety of fields, achieving high levels of expertise usually requires significant specialization and dedication to one particular domain.

Yet, Ibn Khaldun also provides an important admonition to his assertion. He notes that this constraint does not apply if the mastery over the first craft is not yet complete or fully ingrained. This resonates with the modern concept of a 'learning curve,' where the initial stages of learning a new skill are often characterized by rapid gains in proficiency, which then slow as the learner approaches mastery.

5.5.9. Lacking *Malaka* Despite Being Educated

Ibn Khaldun emphasizes the crucial role of effective pedagogical approaches and an unbroken scholarly lineage in acquiring *malaka*. Furthermore, he underlines the impact of a society's condition and cultural circumstances on the quality of education. Ibn Khaldun observed that the minimum duration for education in Tunus is five years, while it is sixteen years in the Maghreb. This variance is primarily because the teaching methodologies in Maghreb are not optimized for acquiring *malaka*, resulting in an extended learning curve. Despite their longer education, students in the Maghreb still lack *malaka* due to these ineffective educational practices. Hence, while they may be technically educated, their mastery over specific skills or professions is not as proficient as it should be. In Andalusia, the situation is even more critical. With the decline of Muslim civilization in the region over two centuries, the tradition of teaching has been lost, as has their dedication to sciences. The only knowledge preserved is Arabic and literature. Unfortunately, the jurisprudence has lost its structure, and the rational sciences have completely disappeared. The decline is

attributed to the disruption of the chain of knowledge transmission (*inqiṭāʾ sanadihi*), signifying that there were no longer teachers with *malaka* and proper *sanad* (certified scholarly lineage) to pass down the knowledge.

Another factor that curbs *malaka* acquisition is the abundance of scholarly works and the diversity of terminology and approaches within different fields of knowledge (IK, ME, 3, 288). Ibn Khaldun critiques the abundance of scholarly works and the complexity that arises from variations in terminology and approaches. He recognizes the challenges faced by learners who are expected to navigate through this vast sea of knowledge. He argues that this proliferation of texts and variations in teaching methods hinder the acquisition of knowledge and the understanding of its objectives. The learner is burdened with the task of memorizing numerous works and discerning between different approaches, often spending a lifetime studying just one subject. Ibn Khaldun suggests that if educators focused solely on the foundational principles of their respective disciplines, the process of education would be much simpler. However, he acknowledges that this abundance of texts and variations in approaches is difficult to overcome, making education more challenging.

Ibn Khaldun illustrates this issue by referring to the field of jurisprudence within the Mālikī school, where learners are required to study numerous written works, understand different approaches, and differentiate between them. Similarly, in the study of the Arabic language, learners are confronted with a vast array of texts, methodologies, and historical developments. Ibn Khaldun highlights that devoting a lifetime to studying all these works is nearly impossible, and only a few individuals attain mastery in specific areas.

Another factor that hinders the acquisition of *malaka* is the low quality of the pedagogical approach, which is concise summaries. According to Ibn Khaldun, the use of concise summaries as a pedagogical approach poses challenges to the acquisition of *malaka*. The immediate presentation of complex subjects without a solid foundation for beginners hampers their ability to comprehend the subject matter fully. The intricate language used in these condensed texts further complicates understanding and extracting the core concepts becomes challenging. The knowledge acquired through these condensed works, even if successfully attained, remains limited compared to the

comprehensive understanding that comes through studying lengthy texts in which subjects are elaborated in detail and repeatedly. Ibn Khaldun remarks that the intention behind these condensed works was to facilitate memorization for students, but in reality, they present unnecessary difficulties that hinder the acquisition of knowledge and *malaka*.

5.6. How to Teach: Proper Pedagogical Methods

To effectively teach knowledge, it is essential for teachers to adopt a proper pedagogical method. This method should follow a gradual, non-intense, and systematic approach that considers the intellectual capacity and readiness of the learners. The learner should be introduced to the fundamental issues of a subject one by one, starting with the basics and gradually progressing towards the advanced concepts. The teacher should simplify the explanations, taking into consideration the learner's intellectual capacity and readiness to comprehend the material.

The pedagogical method Ibn Khaldun offers involves three rounds of studying a subject. In the first round, the teacher introduces the fundamental issues of the subject, starting with the basics and gradually progressing to more advanced concepts. The explanations provided by the teacher should be simplified and tailored to the learners' level of comprehension. This initial round lays the foundation for the learners' understanding and establishes a weak level of *malaka*.

In the second round, the teacher revisits the subject and guides the learners to delve deeper into the intricacies of the subject matter. Different perspectives and viewpoints are explored, and any remaining ambiguities are addressed. The aim of this round is to elevate the learners' understanding and consolidate their knowledge. By exposing them to a more comprehensive and detailed explanation, the teacher facilitates a stronger level of *malaka* in the learners.

Finally, in the third round, the teacher revisits the subject once again, ensuring that no questions or uncertainties remain in the learners' minds. This round focuses on clarifying and explaining any remaining ambiguities, leaving no room for confusion. This is the end of the instruction process of the subject, and the student must have the proper *malaka* concerning the subject.

According to Ibn Khaldun, this iterative process of revisiting the subject multiple times leads to a more complete and thorough mastery of the knowledge. Studying the same subject three times at different levels is a minimum standard for Ibn Khaldun, as some individuals may learn and progress more quickly based on their natural aptitude and ease of learning.

5.6.1. Challenging the Learner at the Beginning Not an Effective Strategy

Ibn Khaldun's approach can be understood in the context of his larger educational philosophy, where the goal of education is not merely to impart information but to cultivate understanding and intellectual growth. According to Ibn Khaldun, the learners' understanding and intellectual capacity should guide the pace and method of instruction. The pace and method of teaching should be learner-centered rather than teacher-centered. This is not to be confused with modern pedagogical approaches where learner-centered education also implies that the content of instruction is determined by learners themselves. Although Ibn Khaldun acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and their distinct skills and interests, he does not advocate for learners dictating what should be taught. Instead, he emphasizes that instruction should be adapted to meet learners' cognitive capacities and understanding levels.

Ibn Khaldun offers a critique of some of the teachers of his time. He observes that they overlook effective teaching methods and expect beginners to tackle complex issues from the start. He warns against the pitfalls of burdening learners with complexities beyond their capacity or dividing their attention among multiple subjects at the same time. They mistakenly believe challenging the learner with difficult problems is an effective teaching strategy. However, for Ibn Khaldun, such a strategy only leads to confusion. This confusion and the mixing of different objectives of the subject matter impede the learner's comprehension, resulting in disinterest and abandonment of the pursuit of knowledge. Thus, it is crucial for teachers not to overload learners with information beyond their comprehension and to ensure that learners understand the content according to their individual capacities and the level of their acceptance of the material, whether they are beginners or advanced students.

Ibn Khaldun also advises educators to avoid mixing different subjects in their instruction. He warns that presenting multiple subjects simultaneously can divide and distract the learner's attention, thereby hindering a full understanding of each subject. Instead, the learner's focus should be directed toward mastering one subject at a time. This targeted approach allows for a more effective acquisition of knowledge. Learners need to comprehend the entire content of a book from beginning to end, acquire its purpose and objectives, and attain mastery before moving on to another subject. This ensures a solid foundation of knowledge, which enables learners to seek further knowledge and advancement in their studies.

5.6.2. Learning Brings About Happiness

According to Ibn Khaldun, the pursuit of knowledge and the acquisition of understanding bring about a profound sense of joy and satisfaction. This joy stems from the inherent human inclination towards learning and exploring the world. Just as a child experiences excitement and delight when discovering new things, adults can similarly find immense happiness through their ongoing journey of perception and learning.

Furthermore, Ibn Khaldun suggests that the promised happiness and fulfillment can be achieved through deliberate action. It implies that in order to attain true happiness, individuals must actively work towards it by aligning their actions with the teachings and principles outlined by religious laws and societal norms.

5.6.3. Instruction and Personal Interaction: Two Ways of Education

In the pursuit of intellectual and moral development, Ibn Khaldun highlights the importance of two distinct approaches to education: formal instruction and personal interaction. These two methods of education are not mutually exclusive but complementary to each other in acquiring different aspects of knowledge and *malaka*s. Ibn Khaldun suggests that knowledge and *malaka*s obtained through direct observation and practical instruction tend to take deeper roots and have a stronger impact compared to those gained solely through formal education. Thus, the most profound understanding and solidification of knowledge occur through direct engagement with

knowledgeable individuals, meeting with scholars, and exposure to diverse teaching methods. Through these experiences, learners can distinguish the essence of knowledge and refine their understanding.

According to Ibn Khaldun, the number of teachers or mentors an individual encounters can significantly influence the depth and permanence of these acquired *malaka*s. However, specific terminologies used in teaching can sometimes become so intermingled with the learning process that many learners mistake them as integral parts of the knowledge itself. Only by directly interacting with various teachers and observing their diverse approaches can a learner distinguish the underlying knowledge from the teaching terminology, thus distilling the essence of the knowledge.

Consequently, the pedagogical approach of personal interaction between teacher and student that Ibn Khaldun offers places great emphasis on the teacher's role as a mentor, guide, and facilitator, going beyond the traditional conception of a mere intellectual figure. This approach recognizes that effective education encompasses more than the transfer of knowledge; it requires the teacher to embody their knowledge and act as a moral exemplar. By actively observing the teacher's actions and behavior, students gain profound insights into the practical application of knowledge and the development of ethical conduct. The teacher's authentic presence and embodiment of knowledge create a transformative learning experience that surpasses the limitations of traditional didactic instruction.

5.6.4. Different Forms of Instruction

Teaching occurs through the process of communication (*bayān*), which involves the transmission of knowledge from one individual to another. According to Ibn Khaldun, there are two levels of bayan, or communication, through which knowledge is transmitted: *lafẓ* (verbal articulation) and *khat* (written form).

Teaching through verbal articulation (*lafẓ*) pertains to the spoken word, where knowledge is expressed through language and communicated orally. This level of communication involves using spoken words, pronunciation, and intonation to convey ideas and concepts. Through *lafẓ*, teachers communicate directly with their students,

explaining and elaborating on various subjects. Verbal articulation allows for immediate interaction, clarification, and feedback, enabling a dynamic exchange of knowledge between the teacher and the student. Verbal communication is particularly effective in face-to-face teaching, where the teacher can adapt their delivery based on the student's understanding and provide real-time explanations.

Khat, on the other hand, refers to the written form of communication. It involves expressing knowledge through writing, using scripts, symbols, and structures to convey ideas. Through *khat*, knowledge can be preserved, documented, and transmitted across time and space. Written texts serve as repositories of knowledge, allowing individuals to access and learn from the insights and experiences of previous generations. Writing enables communication beyond immediate and direct interaction, reaching individuals absent or distant from the original discourse. It provides a more permanent and tangible form of communication, enabling a wider dissemination of knowledge.

5.6.5. The Etiquette of Authoring Scholarly Works

As we discussed above, one of the ways knowledge is transmitted is through authoring scholarly works. According to Ibn Khaldun, a scholarly work is not only a disciplined, rigorous endeavor aimed at the transmission of knowledge, but also at contributing to intellectual progress and societal well-being. This is the reason that there is a proper etiquette that should be followed in order not to deviate from the intended purpose and potential benefits of scholarly works. Ibn Khaldun emphasizes the importance of adhering to this etiquette in order to maintain the integrity and effectiveness of knowledge transmission.

Ibn Khaldun comments on the seven requirements of scholarly authoring: (i) putting forward the subject matter of a discipline, ordering its sections, laying down its problems and issues; (ii) building upon the knowledge of earlier scholars and making their ideas accessible to a wider audience, (iii) discovering mistakes or inaccuracies in the works of renowned scholars and rectifying them through clear evidence and arguments, (iv) filling in the gaps or missing aspects in a particular field of study to achieve a comprehensive understanding, (v) organizing and arranging the topics and

concepts within a particular field of study to ensure coherence and logical progression, (vi) recognizing a distinct area of study and articulating its subject matter and associated issues, (vii) presenting complex subjects concisely and succinctly, while preserving the essential aspects and avoiding unnecessary repetition.

In conclusion, Ibn Khaldun's emphasis on the etiquette of scholarly authoring highlights the significance of adhering to established guidelines and principles in transmitting and communicating knowledge. By prescribing the etiquette of authoring scholarly works, Ibn Khaldun sets a normative standard for scholars to follow in their pursuit of knowledge and intellectual progress. As outlined by Ibn Khaldun, the etiquette of scholarly authoring aims to ensure that knowledge is transmitted accurately, ethically, and with a focus on societal well-being. According to Ibn Khaldun, deviating from these principles is unnecessary and erroneous, indicating ignorance and imprudence. By adhering to the guidelines and principles of scholarly authorship, Ibn Khaldun emphasized the importance of producing works that positively impact the academic community and society as a whole.

5.6.6. What to Teach: What Conforms to Reality and What is Useful

Ibn Khaldun argues that knowledge should not only correspond to reality but also be of benefit. The process of knowledge acquisition, in his view, is not merely about achieving conformity between the intellect and the external world, but also about its implications for human life and society. In this context, Ibn Khaldun's critique of the *falāsifah*'s study of physical sciences can be seen as stemming from both epistemological and ethical considerations. Epistemologically, he challenges the degree of certainty that these sciences claim to offer based on their reliance on mental judgments that may not precisely conform to the unique external entities. Ethically, he questions the value of these sciences in terms of their relevance and usefulness for human life and religious practice.

Ibn Khaldun asserts that intellectual efforts should not be wasted on pursuits that lead only to conjecture and uncertainty, especially when these pursuits involve complex metaphysical concepts that are inherently beyond human comprehension. This is not to say that he rejects intellectualism or rigorous philosophical investigation, but he emphasizes the need to direct these efforts wisely. For Ibn Khaldun, the most valuable

knowledge is the one that is useful in this world or the hereafter. Therefore, his outlook carries a normative dimension as he considers the societal and practical implications of different areas of knowledge. He held that the pursuit of knowledge should be guided by its potential utility and benefits to individuals and societies, both in worldly and otherworldly terms.

Furthermore, by emphasizing the limits of human reason in understanding divine realities, Ibn Khaldun underlines the importance of faith and revelation as complementary sources of knowledge. His view reflects a sophisticated understanding of epistemological diversity, recognizing the multiplexity of knowledge sources and the need for their harmonious integration.

5.6.7. The Education of Children and Diverse Curriculum Designs

Ibn Khaldun discusses different methods of teaching children, particularly focusing on Quranic instruction and the varying approaches employed in different Islamic regions. He emphasizes the central role of Quranic instruction in the education of children within the Islamic civilization. The Qurʾān, he says, forms the foundation of all learning, serving as the initial point of contact between a young learner and the wealth of knowledge to come. Early teachings, according to Ibn Khaldun, lay a solid foundation for later intellectual growth and understanding. Yet, he notes, there is a diversity of opinions regarding how this Quranic instruction should be delivered, as the methodologies may vary based on the desired learning outcomes. He mentions the Maghribi, Spanish, Ifriqiyan, and Eastern methodologies of Quranic instruction, each with its unique emphasis and approach (IK, ME, 2, 300; 427-431).

The Maghribis have a distinct methodology for educating their children (IK, ME, 2, 429). They dedicate the entirety of the learning process to the Qurʾān, with particular attention paid to the correct methods of writing and understanding its verses, including the exploration of divergent interpretations among Quranic scholars. Importantly, they do not integrate other disciplines, such as the study of the *Sunnah*, *fiqh*, poetry, or the Arabic language itself, until the students have achieved a deep understanding of the Qurʾān. If a student discontinues the study before achieving proficiency in the Qurʾān, they typically end up with no significant knowledge at all other than the knowledge of the Qur'an. This rigorous Quranic-centered approach is practiced uniformly

throughout the Maghreb region, among both urban and rural populations, and is applied to all age groups, from children to adults. This has led to the Maghribis becoming particularly skilled and efficient in the orthography and memorization of the Qurʾān, more so than any other Muslim community.

The *Andalus* pedagogical approach presents a more holistic approach to education (IK, ME, 2, 430). While acknowledging the Qurʾān as the basis of learning, Andalusian instructors do not limit their teachings to Quranic studies alone. They integrate other subjects, such as poetry, composition, and Arabic philology into their curriculum, with a particular emphasis on teaching good handwriting. The outcome of this approach is a student who, upon reaching adulthood, has a firm grasp of Arabic language and poetry, excellent handwriting skills, and a broad acquaintance with general scholarship, given the persistence of traditional scholarly instruction.

The Ifriqiyan approach adopted a blended curriculum, which combines Quranic instruction with teachings of *Sunnah*, basic principles of sciences, and specific scientific problems (IK, ME, 2, 431). While maintaining a focus on instilling a thorough understanding of the Qurʾān and its various readings, they also emphasize good handwriting. On the whole, the pedagogical approach of Ifriqiya towards teaching the Qurʾān is more akin to that of Al-Andalus. The reason for this is that their educational tradition traces its roots back to the scholars of Al-Andalus, who sought refuge in Tunis when Christians took over eastern Al-Andalus. These scholars from Al-Andalus became the teachers of Tunisian children and thus influenced their educational methods.

In the educational system of Ifriqiyah and the Maghrib, where the focus is solely on the Qurʾān, learners may find themselves lacking in the acquisition of linguistic *malaka*. The Qurʾān, being an unmatched text that no human can reproduce, does not offer a model that can be copied to develop linguistic skills. As a result, even those deeply versed in the Qurʾān may not necessarily develop the *malaka* of the Arabic language, leading to difficulties in achieving eloquent expression or fluent speech.

This deficiency is somewhat less pronounced among the people of Ifriqiyah compared to the Maghrib since they combine Quranic instruction with the learning of scientific

terminology. This additional component provides learners with practice and examples to emulate, supporting the development of some linguistic *malaka*. However, it still fails to promote a good style or eloquence, as the knowledge base primarily comprises scientific terminology, which does not sufficiently support comprehensive mastery of the Arabic language.

In contrast, the Andalusians adopted a different educational approach. Their curriculum, with a substantial focus on poetry, composition, and Arabic philology from an early age, facilitates a more robust linguistic *malaka*, providing learners with a solid grasp of the Arabic language. However, the broad focus also means they are less proficient in religious sciences due to lesser exposure to Quranic studies and traditions—the pillars of religious sciences. Consequently, Andalusians often develop strong writing skills. They may receive an excellent literary education, but their proficiency in these areas ultimately depends on their secondary education after their initial years of study.

5.6.8. Curriculum Design: Ideal Education and Real-world Context

Ibn Khaldun also mentions the educational advice offered by Qādi Abu Bakr Ibn al-ʿArabī (IK, ME, 3, 303-304). In the recommendation put forward by Ibn al-ʿArabī, he emphasizes a more sequential, holistic approach to education that diverges from the prevailing practices of the time. He suggests beginning with the study of Arabic and poetry, which he argues are essential for understanding the linguistic heritage of the Arabs. He claims that such early emphasis on language and cultural expressions can help to rectify any existing linguistic corruption in society. Next, he proposes the study of arithmetic to establish a strong foundational understanding. Only after this groundwork has been laid does he recommend studying the Qurʾān. His reasoning is that the previous preparation in language, poetry, and arithmetic would make the comprehension of the Qurʾān much easier. Only after this foundational knowledge has been acquired should students move on to studying the Qurʾān and religious texts.
The urgency of ensuring a child's early acquaintance with the Qurʾān was fueled by the belief that while they were young and under parental authority, children were more likely to learn and accept religious instruction. As they grew older and more independent, there was a risk that they could be led astray, missing the opportunity to learn the Qurʾān. Consequently, there was a societal preference to seize the chance to

impart Quranic knowledge while the children were still at home and under parental control.

Ibn Khaldun acknowledges that Ibn al-ʿArabī's pedagogical approach could be ideal if one could be sure that a child would continue to pursue education independently as they grow older (IK, ME, 3, 304-305). Ibn Khaldun recognizes the potential effectiveness of Ibn al-ʿArabī's method, but also emphasizes the importance of considering the broader societal context in evaluating educational approaches. He suggests that what may be considered an ideal pedagogical approach cannot be divorced from the prevailing customs, norms, and conditions of a given society. Ibn Khaldun's insights remind us that educational philosophies must be adapted and tailored to suit the specific context in which they are implemented. The notion of 'best practice' in education, therefore, varies depending on the societal and cultural factors at play, and it is necessary to take these factors into account when designing and implementing educational systems.

5.7. Ibn Khaldun's Advice for Learners

Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah* includes intriguing advice for learners, offering valuable insights into the nature of knowledge acquisition and the role of logic in learning (IK, ME, 3, 295). One key aspect of Ibn Khaldun's advice is his distinction between 'natural thinking' (*manṭiq/fikr ṭabīʿī*) and 'technical logic' (*manṭiq ṣināʿī*). Natural thinking or logic can be interpreted as an intuitive or inborn ability to think, while technical logic implies the discipline of logic and its formalized or methodical thinking. According to Ibn Khaldun, true knowledge acquisition goes beyond formalized thinking and methodologies. It involves a deeper connection to one's inner intellectual abilities and a sincere commitment to seeking truth. This perspective acknowledges that education is not merely an external process of acquiring information but a transformative journey that engages the intellect and the heart (the soul).

> O student! Know that I am bestowing upon you a beneficial piece of advice in your education. If you accept this and apply it with skill, you will seize a great treasure and honorable resource. I present you an introduction to assist in comprehending this:

The human intellect is of a unique nature that God has created, just like all His other creations. It is a conscious movement within the central part of the brain. Sometimes, it serves as the origin of human actions, providing order and sequence. At other times, it is the origin of knowledge that did not exist before, directing its attention to what is desired. ... This is the unique quality of cognitive nature that sets humans apart from all other animals.

The discipline of logic is a method of exercising this cognitive nature, detailing it to learn how to differentiate between its accuracy and its errors. While accuracy is intrinsic to cognitive nature, errors may occasionally occur... The discipline of logic, as an artificial tool, aids in avoiding the difficulties of these errors when they arise. Hence, logic corresponds to the rules of the natural operation of intellect and reasoning, ensuring that the operation of human thinking is without faults. Therefore, logic is a technique that parallels cognitive nature and matches the form of its operation.

That is why you find many of the great thinkers in the world achieve their goals in sciences without the use of the technical discipline of logic. Particularly with sincere intentions and the search for God's mercy, there is less need for this technical discipline. Those who are sincere and seek God's mercy can think properly using their natural intellectual capability (*fikr ṭabīʿī*) and arrive at conclusions that conforms to reality.

Beyond this artificial endeavor (*amr ṣināʿī*), which is logic, there is another prerequisite for learning—knowledge of words and their connotations in mental meanings. Words convey these meanings through the representation of writing with lines and the speech with the tongue.

Therefore, O learner, you must pass through all these veils to focus on thinking about what you are looking for.

writing (*khat*) /// speech (*lafẓ*) /// meanings in the mind (i.e., concepts and judgments) /// logical rules /// countless abstract meanings in mind

(///: representing veils)

Firstly, the representation of drawn writing to spoken words, which is the thinnest among the veils. Then, the representation of spoken words to the desired meanings, followed by the rules of arranging meanings for inference in known forms in the art of logic. Then those abstract meanings in thought, by which the desired is captured by cognitive nature (*fikr ṭabīʿī*), with the reliance on Allah's mercy and gifts.

Not everyone can quickly progress through these levels of implications or easily overcome these veils in learning. Sometimes the mind stops at the veils of words with discussions or stumbles in the partnership of evidence with the turmoil of argumentation and doubts, and it gives up attaining what it is looking for. Only a few who are guided by God manage to overcome this state of perplexity.

If you face such a situation and experience confusion in your understanding, or become entangled in doubts in your mind, discard them. Cast aside the veils of words and the obstacles of doubts. Leave the artificial endeavor (*amr ṣinā'ī*) —the technical rules provided by the discipline of logic— as a whole. Devote yourself to the vast realm of natural thinking, which is your innate nature. Allow your insight to roam and empty your mind to delve into the depths of your desired meaning (*maṭlūb*). Place your thoughts where the great thinkers before you placed theirs, exposing yourself to the divine enlightenment from God, just as He blessed them with His mercy and taught them what they did not know. Once you do that, the lights of divine inspiration will shine upon your heart, leading you to your objective, achieving the middle term, which God has made essential for this thought process, just as we have explained. Then, return to the technical rules of the discipline of logic, pour your newfound understanding into these molds and forms of evidence, fulfilling their due as per the discipline of logic. Then, cloak your abstract meanings in the form of words and present them to the world of discourse and representation, with a solid foundation and robust structure.

However, if you find yourself halted by discussion or doubt concerning the artificial evidence (*burhān ṣinā'ī*) of the discipline of logic, understand that these rules are artificial, and their multiple dimensions may appear similar due to their context and terminology. Truth cannot manifest through these artificial procedures. The truth is only clear when it is naturally evident. Therefore, uncertainty may persist, casting a veil over the desired objective, and the seeker may struggle to attain it.

This is the case for the majority of *ahl al-naẓar*, especially those whose mother tongue is not Arabic, as it ties up their intellect and they get caught up in the laws of logic, they become bigoted towards it and believe that it is the natural means to perceive the truth. They end up lost in the turmoil of evidence and doubts, and can hardly escape from it.

The natural means to perceive the truth, as we have mentioned, is natural thought (*fikr ṭabī'ī*), as long as it is free from all illusions and the seeker exposes it to God's mercy. As for the discipline of logic, it merely describes the action of this thought and often aligns with it. Consider this

> and seek God's mercy whenever you struggle to understand issues. His divine light will shine upon you, guiding you to the truth. And knowledge is solely from God.
>
> (IK, ME, 3, 295-296)

In this excerpt, Ibn Khaldun places a strong emphasis on the utilization of natural thinking over strict adherence to formal logical rules, suggesting a holistic approach to learning that takes into account innate human abilities and divine guidance. The passage suggests that this overemphasis may lead to a rigidity of thought and an inability to truly perceive and comprehend the truth. Thus, while acknowledging the role of logic in organizing and refining our thinking, Ibn Khaldun underlines the importance of allowing room for natural thought, intuition, and divine guidance in our pursuit of knowledge.

Furthermore, Ibn Khaldun's reference to veils symbolizes the various stages and layers involved in the process of learning (IK, ME, 3, 295-296). These stages encompass the progression from written representation to spoken words, from words to meanings, from meanings to logical organization, and finally to abstract conceptualization. It is through this pathway that a student studies books and ideas takes shape within their minds.

This notion of veils is underpinned by Ibn Khaldun's multiplex ontological perspective: *wujūd fī al-khārij* (existence in the external world), *wujūd fī al-dhihn* (existence in mind), *wujūd fī al-lafẓ* (existence in utterance), and *wujūd fī al-khat* (existence in writing). It represents a hierarchical classification that delineates how we process knowledge. The journey begins with perceiving entities in the external world, leading to mental image formation within our minds. These mental representations are then articulated through oral utterances, and eventually, they are translated into written symbols. These written symbols serve as external manifestations of the concepts and ideas originating from our minds, which correspond to aspects of the external reality. There exist symbolic curtains between the written symbols of letters and their vocal utterances, just as there are barriers between oral utterances and the mental forms they represent.

Similarly, veils separate these forms within our minds from the external reality they aim to capture. Thus, studying and learning are not merely a passive absorption of information. Learning encompasses a dynamic cognitive process that involves the mind's active engagement with written symbols, oral utterances, and the corresponding mental concepts.

5.8. Conclusion

In conclusion, Ibn Khaldun's educational theory offers a comprehensive and nuanced perspective that transcends the empirical and ethical dichotomy. By adopting a multiplex approach to education, he recognizes the intertwined nature of these dimensions and incorporates both descriptive and prescriptive elements. Drawing from his multiplex worldview and understanding of human ontology and epistemology, Ibn Khaldun emphasizes the interconnectedness of knowledge and the importance of considering the social context in which education takes place.

This chapter has explored the intricate interplay between inborn qualities, external influences, and individual volition in human development. While the nature-nurture debate has been a prominent aspect of understanding human development, Ibn Khaldun's perspectives challenge reductionist views and acknowledge the significance of both nature and nurture in shaping individuals. Furthermore, the chapter has highlighted the influence of structural factors and the role of individual agency in education. It recognizes that individuals are not solely passive recipients of genetic predispositions and environmental influences but active participants in their development.

The journey from mastering essential crafts to achieving proficiency in complex crafts encapsulates both the 'is' and 'ought' aspects of education. It is a narrative of factual human progress and a prescription for how it should ideally occur. Similarly, Ibn Khaldun's evaluation of the sciences encompasses not only their theoretical foundations and methodological approaches but also their broader social implications. He recognizes that knowledge is not detached from society but plays a crucial role in shaping the well-being and progress of societies. By observing how different fields of knowledge contribute to the overall advancement of civilizations, Ibn Khaldun

introduces a normative dimension to his analysis. Thus, thanks to his multiplex paradigm, Ibn Khaldun's educational theory is beyond the binaries such as empirical versus ethical, descriptive versus prescriptive, positive versus normative, structure versus agency, and nature versus nurture.

Ultimately, Ibn Khaldun's educational theory highlights the indispensable role of education in bridging the gap between the IS and OUGHT of human development. Education is a transformative tool for intellectual and moral development, shaping individuals intellectually and ethically. By embracing a multiplex perspective and recognizing the interconnectedness of empirical and ethical dimensions, Ibn Khaldun's educational theory provides valuable insights that remain relevant in contemporary discussions on education and human development.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has explored Ibn Khaldun's political and educational theories through the lens of the Lakatosian framework, aiming to understand why there is no tension between the empirical and the ethical elements. By adopting this framework, we have delved into the philosophical foundations of Ibn Khaldun's work and analyzed how his theories encompass both descriptive and prescriptive dimensions. Through this exploration, we have sought to unravel the harmonious integration of empirical observations and ethical considerations in Ibn Khaldun's socio-political thinking. Throughout our analysis, we have demonstrated that Ibn Khaldun's theories go beyond a mere juxtaposition of the empirical and the ethical. Instead, they symbiotically coexist in the multiplex nature of his approach.

In the initial part of our thesis, we explored Ibn Khaldun's hardcore, specifically focusing on his ontology, epistemology, and methodology. Our findings revealed a fundamental aspect of his philosophical framework: the symbiotic coexistence of the empirical and the ethical. This coexistence becomes evident from the beginning in Ibn Khaldun's multiplex ontology, which incorporates elements of both empirical and ethical. This foundational understanding permeates his political and educational theories, enabling a holistic and integrated approach that transcends this traditional divide.

In the first chapter of this thesis, we embarked on a detailed exploration of Ibn Khaldun's ontology, seeking to uncover the fundamental principles that shape his worldview. Within Ibn Khaldun's worldview, the world is not perceived as a mere brute entity governed solely by empirical processes. Beyond the tangible reality of the world, it is a meaningful entity imbued with an inherent ethical purpose. This multiplex ontology encompasses empirical and ethical elements and acknowledges that the world has ethical implications and significance. This understanding sets the stage for Ibn Khaldun's approach, where the empirical and the ethical are intertwined inextricably. Thus, from the outset, his conception of existence evades the possibility of an empirical-ethical divide.

			EMPIRICAL	ETHICAL	MULTIPLEX
THEORY	**Hard Core**	**Ontology**	Real, Sensible	Meaningful, Regulated, Accountable	**Multiplex Ontology** (physical, metaphysical, divine) Meaningful, Regulated, Accountable
		Epistemology	Sensory Experience	Rational, Religious, Intuitive	**Multiplex Epistemology** (Senses, Reason, Revelation, Intuition, *Kashf*)
		Methodology	Inductive	Mostly Deductive	**Multiplex Methodology** Reasoning (Inductive, Deductive, Analogical) and Spiritual Unveiling through Purification of the Self
	Auxiliary Hypotheses	**Theory (Linguistic Analysis)**	Constative (*ikhbari*) Positive	Performative (*insha'i*) Normative	**Multiplex Meaning** (i) Constative, (ii) Performative, (iii) Constative in the meaning of Performative; (iv) performative in the meaning of constative (*al-khabar bi maʿnā al-inshāʾ*)
		Theory (Function)	Descriptive	Prescriptive	Descriptive and Prescriptive Simultaneously (Depending on the Context)

Figure 9: The Manifestations of Empirical and Ethical Dimensions

Even his ontology of politics transcends this dichotomy. Ibn Khaldun highlights that governance, in its broader sense, is an inherent trait of human nature. As rational beings, humans possess the capacity for reasoning, analysis, and envisioning the consequences of their actions. This rationality drives individuals to seek governance to establish order, address conflicts, and uphold justice. Through this innate drive,

humans recognize the benefits of cooperation, establish rules and institutions, and ensure the fair distribution of resources and opportunities.

Within Ibn Khaldun's political theory, good manners and *ʿaṣabiyyah* prove the existence of political authority and the role of a ruler. These qualities and behaviors demonstrate the ethical dimensions of governance and contribute to maintaining social order and justice.

Ibn Khaldun highlights the significance of good manners in the context of the existence of political authority in an individual who is a ruler. A ruler who possesses and demonstrates virtues such as generosity, forgiveness, assistance to the needy, respect for the elderly, mercy toward the helpless, and humility embodies the ethical responsibilities of leadership. Good manners are not merely a subjective preference but the real ontological cause of the emergence of political authority for the ruler.

Moreover, the concept of *ʿaṣabiyyah* is not solely dependent on blood ties or shared ancestry. It is also influenced by the presence of praiseworthy qualities and virtuous behavior among its members. In this sense, *ʿaṣabiyyah* encompasses the psychological and ontological dimensions and the ethical dimension of human actions and interactions. It emphasizes the importance of individual character and behavior in shaping the fabric of society. In summary, *ʿaṣabiyyah* as an ethical concept emphasizes the significance of good manners and virtuous behavior in the development of nobility within a social group. Through his concept of *ʿaṣabiyyah*, Ibn Khaldun emphasizes the inseparable connection between moral conduct, nobility, and the bonds individuals form within their social groups.

In the second analytical level of Ibn Khaldun's theory, this multiplex conception of existence is further manifested in his conception of knowledge as multiplex epistemology. The ontology of human existence, which we have explored in the preceding chapter, forms the foundation of Ibn Khaldun's theory of knowledge. According to Ibn Khaldun, humans exist on two levels: the physical and the metaphysical. The physical level encompasses the observable and tangible aspects of human existence, such as the body and its functions. On this level, knowledge is acquired empirically, relying on sensory experience and observation of the external

world. This empirical knowledge forms the foundation of scientific inquiry and understanding of the natural world. However, Ibn Khaldun's epistemology goes beyond the physical level and acknowledges the existence of a metaphysical dimension of human existence. This metaphysical level encompasses the intangible and non-observable aspects, such as the mind and the soul. Different types of knowledge are acquired through various means within this metaphysical realm.

Furthermore, Ibn Khaldun's understanding of human existence also recognizes that humans are not created perfectly. This imperfection opens the door for intellectual and moral education at the individual level and social and political administration at the macro level. Also, Ibn Khaldun's philosophical framework acknowledges the inherent limitations of human understanding and perception. He recognizes that human comprehension is created and restricted, whereas the knowledge and creation of God surpass human capabilities. This realization leads him to question the definitive understanding of the universe and existence, as he believes that God's knowledge encompasses all aspects beyond our grasp. Therefore, Ibn Khaldun advises against relying solely on our own understanding and emphasizes the importance of following the guidance prescribed by the *Sharīʿah* in matters of belief and actions.

Ibn Khaldun does not diminish the value or reliability of reason. He considers reason to be a reliable tool that can provide certain knowledge. However, he cautions against expecting reason alone to encompass divine realities and metaphysical matters related to monotheism, the afterlife, prophecy, and divine attributes. He likens such expectations to a man who attempts to weigh mountains using a balance designed for weighing gold. While the balance may be accurate for its intended purpose, it is limited in its scope. Similarly, reason, as a human faculty, has its limitations and cannot hope to comprehend the entirety of God and His attributes.

Ibn Khaldun argues that prioritizing reason over revelation in matters beyond reason's reach reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of the role and limitations of reason. He warns against the error of placing excessive reliance on reason, which can lead to deficiencies in understanding and sound judgment. Thus, Ibn Khaldun's perspective offers a harmonious reconciliation between reason and faith, affirming the reliability and necessity of both while acknowledging their distinct domains and limitations.

This multiplexity philosophy is further manifested in Ibn Khaldun's methodological pluralism. Drawing from various sources of knowledge, including the senses, reason, divine revelation, intuition, and spiritual ways of knowing, Ibn Khaldun adopts a comprehensive and inclusive approach in the *Muqaddimah*. He integrates empirical observations, rational analysis, and religious insights harmoniously in his methodology. By incorporating empirical observations, Ibn Khaldun utilizes direct sensory experience and empirical evidence to understand the social and historical phenomena he investigates. He observes the patterns and dynamics of societies, drawing upon his keen observations of human behavior and societal structures.

At the same time, Ibn Khaldun emphasizes the importance of reason and rational analysis in comprehending these observations. Through his logical reasoning, causal explanations, and systematic analysis, Ibn Khaldun's accounts transcend mere factual observations and become positive in nature, providing the basis for the applicability of his thoughts. By employing these analytical tools, he goes beyond describing historical events or social phenomena and seeks to understand the underlying principles and dynamics at play. He uses deductive and inductive reasoning to draw conclusions based on the evidence at hand, allowing for the formulation of general principles and theories that can be applied beyond specific historical contexts.

In addition to empirical and rational approaches, religious insights from divine revelation are also quite significant in his multiplex framework. Throughout the *Muqaddimah*, he frequently references Quranic verses within and at the end of each section, which demonstrates the integration of religious wisdom into his work. This acknowledgment of the spiritual dimension of knowledge enhances the depth of understanding regarding human nature, moral values, and the ultimate purpose of human existence, which are not available to unaided human reason. Ibn Khaldun's engagement with religious insights also highlights the interconnectedness of various realms of knowledge. He sees religious teachings as complementary to empirical and rational approaches, offering additional insights into the nature of reality and the human condition. This holistic approach enables him to provide a comprehensive analysis that encompasses both material and spiritual aspects of human existence.

It is thanks to this multiplex paradigm, Ibn Khaldun's political and educational theories are beyond the empirical and ethical divide. Ibn Khaldun's authorship of the *Muqaddimah* during a period characterized by political turmoil and decline hints at his intention to comprehend the underlying causes of these challenges. To achieve this goal, he employed a descriptive and empirical approach, carefully observing and analyzing the political dynamics of his time. By studying the empirical realities of the political landscape, Ibn Khaldun aimed to provide an objective account of the factors contributing to political decline. Yet, the very act of identifying these factors and highlighting their significance inherently involves normative judgments. In other words, Ibn Khaldun's analysis of the causes of decline can implicitly indicate what should be avoided or addressed to prevent further deterioration. Thus, his empirical observations carried a normative significance even within his own historical context. By examining the empirical realities of his time, Ibn Khaldun provided insights and lessons (*ʿibar*) that can guide future political development.

When we describe Ibn Khaldun's theory as ethical, we imply that it allows us to simultaneously understand the current state of affairs (the "is") and engage in critical reflection on what should be (the "ought"). Thus, in his multiplex framework, the ethical is empirical, and the empirical is ethical. In this context, the term "ethical" signifies aligning reality with moral principles and ideals through intentional action, akin to the notion of *praxis*. It goes beyond mere consequentialism, which may overlook universal ethical principles, and principalism, which may neglect individual interests and benefits. Instead, this perspective is rooted in the belief that God possesses a comprehensive understanding of the best interests of His creation, both in this world and the hereafter. It is the responsibility of humans to bridge the gap between what is (the "is") and what ought to be (the "ought") by implementing and adhering to these divine laws.

Grounded in the dynamics of his contemporary world, Ibn Khaldun's descriptions of politics were no doubt factual representations of the political realities of his time. While Ibn Khaldun accurately depicted the existing realities, his account goes beyond a purely factual representation. Through a positive account, he offered explanations that have the potential to elucidate phenomena beyond his immediate context. This cross-temporal and cross-cultural relevance of his work is evident in the burgeoning

field of Applied Khaldunism (Alatas, 2014), wherein Ibn Khaldun's theories are utilized as an analytical tool to evaluate contemporary societal and governance structures. Yet, the application of Khaldun's work is not confined to purely descriptive or empirical analysis. A crucial aspect of Applied Khaldunism lies in its 'ethical' dimension, guiding what ought to be rather than merely illuminating what is. Ibn Khaldun's insights present a detailed depiction of the nature of civilizations and societal phenomena at large, identifying elements that either pose a threat or contribute to the 'normal' functioning of societies. Thus, it provides an evaluative framework for scrutinizing current societal structures and governance models. By highlighting the harmful or beneficial components of societal organization, Applied Khaldunism doesn't just provide a comprehensive understanding of societal dynamics, but it also proposes an ethically informed path towards improved societal conditions and more sustainable governance. The 'ought' in this sense stems from the discernment of the ideal societal conditions derived from Ibn Khaldun's insightful analysis.

Ibn Khaldun's work offers a descriptive analysis and prescriptive guidance, subtly suggesting what to embrace and avoid across various spheres, from political governance to scientific disciplines. His depiction of the ideal political governance as a caliphate that enforces divine laws is a subtle prompt to rulers about the structures to adopt and the pitfalls to evade. He cautions, for example, "Excessive harshness is detrimental to royal authority and often leads to its destruction," indirectly hinting at a more preferred, measured approach to governance. The linguistic analysis of the arguments made in the *Muqaddimah* also shows that there is no separation between empirical and ethical statements, similar to the linguistic concept of *al-khabar bi maʿnā al-inshāʾ* in Arabic, where the constative has performative implications.

His engagement with the sciences of his era is similarly insightful. Rather than merely describing these disciplines, Ibn Khaldun critically scrutinizes them theoretically and pragmatically by considering their societal implications. For instance, he discusses the detrimental effects of specific disciplines like astrology on religion and the state, two indispensable institutions that enable human existence on earth. In doing so, he advises that such sciences should be limited in society, demonstrating the ethical dimension in his approach to understanding and applying knowledge.

This research also has illuminated Ibn Khaldun's multiplex perspective on human development, which transcends the simplistic binary oppositions of nature versus nurture and structure versus agency. It demonstrated that Ibn Khaldun's educational theory highlights the indispensable role of human agency through acquiring *malaka* while also considering the structural factors that shape the context within which individuals develop and learn. His approach provides a more nuanced understanding of the factors influencing human development, a crucial contribution to educational theory.

More interestingly, the distinction between positive and normative statements can become blurred when considering Ibn Khaldun's work in different historical contexts. His account takes on a more prescriptive tone when his descriptive statements no longer correspond to reality. For example, the descriptive statements of good governance can imply normative when the reality is changed. As the political structures he once delineated, such as the caliphate, have faded away, his discussions on religious politics acquire normative implications in the mind of the contemporary reader, presenting a normative framework for evaluating and potentially reshaping contemporary political systems. Thus, Ibn Khaldun's work cannot be categorized as solely empirical or ethical due to the blurred distinction between positive and normative statements. His descriptive observations acquire normative significance as political structures evolve and historical contexts shift. The empirical foundation of his observations, even within his own time, presents opportunities for evaluating and reshaping political systems to address contemporary challenges.

In conclusion, our exploration of Ibn Khaldun's political and educational theories in the context of the empirical and ethical divide through a Lakatosian framework has brought to light the multiplex philosophy of Ibn Khaldun. In essence, this philosophical foundation, or the hard core of the Khaldunian research program, evaded the separation between the empirical and the ethical from the onset. The multiplex philosophy of Ibn Khaldun offers a valuable contribution to contemporary debates in social science and beyond, challenging traditional binary frameworks and encouraging a more inclusive and holistic approach to politics and education.

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