

PROBLEMS OF USING KHALDUNIAN PHILOSOPHY IN THE INTERPRETATION OF SOME POLITICAL ISSUES



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Abstract:

The purpose of this research paper is to analyze the most significant problems that have arisen as a result of the dependence on Khaldunian thought and philosophy as a framework for interpreting many current political concerns such as the state, the elite, the connection between the ruler and the ruled, and the army, This is by highlighting the viability of this concept in analyzing and interpreting these issues, particularly given that we live in a time where it differs from both the place and time of Ibn Khaldun, in which similar topics were treated extensively.

On this basis, the present research paper addresses this topic through several elements: the first covers the most notable political concepts of Ibn Khaldun ; the second of which deals with the feasibility of Khaldunian thinking as a framework for understanding some modern political challenges; and the third includes some research recommendations centered on the development of Khaldunian thought in the political sphere.

Key words: *Khaldunian thought; the state; political issues; contemporary; the war.*

Introduction:

In the perceptions of many academics and philosophers, Ibn Khaldun is one of the most prominent thinkers who passed on Islamic history. He was just not simply another traveller like the other renowned or well-known travellers of his period, He was one of the intellectuals who understood the social realities of history, as well as the challenges of urbanization, demographics, and governance. As a result, he was referred to as a prodigy and a philosopher of his era, roughly comparable to Aristotle or Machiavelli.

Ibn Khaldun was well-known for his book -Kitāb al-‘ibar.- It is well-known work in both the Islamic and Western worlds, and serious debates concerning its most important content are frequently held at universities and research institutes. He intended global research to be a source for drawing lessons not from the perspective of presenting news as it is - static - but from the perspective of enlarging its relevance and tying it to things linked to Arabs, non-Arabs, and Berbers' sociocultural context.

There is no doubt that this book contains many essential thoughts and topics that Ibn Khaldun discussed in the political arena, such as those about the state, its life cycle, uneasiness, and government. Numerous philosophers, like Taha Hussein and Abdullah Al-Aroui, were outraged by this, and many discussions about the philosophical issues it raised ensued.

Based on the aforementioned, this paper aims to identify the most noticeable flaws in Khaldunian philosophy when using it as an analytical framework to explain certain events and political concerns, The paper therefore addresses the following question: What are the most important philosophical problems raised when using Khaldunian philosophy as an analytical framework for many political issues and phenomena?

FIRST:

The Khaldunian Philosophy on some Political Phenomena

When studying Ibn Khaldun's book *-El Mukadima-*, the first thing that comes to mind is that he is not like Aristotle, a "logical thinker" who often tries to treat ideas in a hierarchical, organized, and distinct manner, but rather the polar opposite, according to Taha Hussein, who completed a PhD thesis in French in 1917 on the analysis and criticism of Ibn Khaldun's social philosophy. This might be due to his frequent travels and desire to understand experiences rather than simply narrate and convey them.

Ibn Khaldun, on the other hand, was known for his rationality. That is, he makes a notable intellectual effort while remaining connected to the world in which he lives - going from one part to the whole. Despite this, he believed in some things linked to the other world, particularly miracles and paranormalities, as he observed signs and verses addressing humanity in natural catastrophes (Al-Aroui, 1990, p. 56), and he has considerable intellectual knowledge in a variety of disciplines. His concepts are used by academics in politics, economics, and demography, in addition to sociologists. As a result, he is an encyclopaedic thinker in the same vein as Aristotle. His theories are hybrid and interdisciplinary, in the sense that he combines religion, history, and science in his interpretations of certain events. His ideas are hybrid and multidisciplinary; That is, in his

interpretation of some phenomena, he mixes religion, history and human urbanization, and sometimes politics and religion, and so on.

Ibn Khaldun had an excellent notion of politics ; in this respect the following are the most crucial topics he brought up:

1. The State and the Life Cycle:

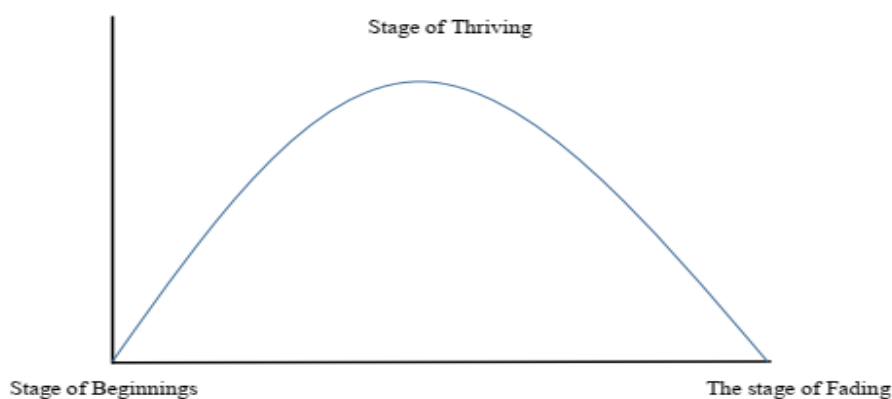
Ibn Khaldun relied mainly on the variable of nervousness or the tribe in his understanding of the state and history, whereas Karl Marx focused on class and Oswald Spengler on the flow of life between birth and death, and Ibn Khaldun believed that nervousness originates in the womb. It is natural to include relatives and lineage, which are the basic elements for the formation of a tribe, and then it develops into an emirate, and Ibn Khaldun links the development of nervousness here with the element of security and lack of conflict between lineages because if it lives in security and without conflict, it will develop into an emirate. (Ibn Khaldun, 1995, p. 56), also links the nervousness with religion, where he sees that it is not It can work alone without it, as it increases the bonds of the tribe and works to push it more towards progress and prosperity.

In Ibn Khaldun's opinion, the state is formed by the following equation: the state = security + fanaticism + religion + land + people

Security + asabiyyah (Social Cohesion) + Religion+Land for Stability + People = State.

Ibn Khaldun established a fixed law for the development of urbanism, which was influenced by the laws of living things in the natural world (born, arises, matures, and dies), and then applied it to the field of urbanization, which was also influenced by what happened and affected some previous empires, such as the Roman Empire, Thus Ibn Khaldun believes that every urbanization has five phases in its life cycle: establishment, construction, prosperity, old age, and renewal.

Figure 1: The life cycle of the state at the political level according to Ibn Khaldun



Source: designed by the researcher.

The following are significant aspects of each phase or stage:

- Stage of beginnings: This is the commencement of state-building, and it is defined by the elite's constituent groups sharing power.
- Stage of thriving: When one of these parties defeats the other and monopolizes the sultan, riches, and glory, aided by their zeal and loyalists, and the state thrives.
- The stage of fading: When anxiety (group spirit / collective will) fades and the initial vigour of states is lost among affluence and refinement. (Al-Aroui, p. 39)

The topic of governance or leadership in Ibn Khaldun's time: "Know that every neighbourhood or clan is of the tribes, even if they are one gang due to their general lineage, then there are also other groups among them for special lineages that are more closely aligned than the general lineage of them, like a single clan," Ibn Khaldun writes in the eleventh chapter of his book *al-Muqadimah*- or the people of a home or the brothers of one father's sons, who are seated in their specific lineage and share with others from the kindred in the general lineage, unlike the people of the near or distant. And the lineage falls on the people of their specific lineage and the people of the general lineage, except that it is in the special lineage more tightly because of closeness and leadership in them, but in the quorum is one of them, and it is not in all, and since the leadership is to be predominant, and the nervousness of that gang must be stronger than the rest of the gangs in order for it to prevail and the leadership to be completed for its people"; the meaning of this hadith, according to Ibn Khaldun, is that the leadership can only be through victory, and the victory is only for the strongest fanaticism (Ibn Khaldun, p 54), What distinguishes this nervousness that seeks for king , furthermore is that it possesses the elements of influence, strength and coercion, which endows it with the ability to control and influence other fanaticism (Hadi, 1977, p. 84).

2. Ibn Khaldun and Human Activity:

Ibn Khaldun considers that the human element is a necessary pillar for the establishment of human gatherings in cities; without it, urbanization would not have spread, and no city or civilization would have been established, and he devotes many paragraphs in his book to discussing them, their characteristics, and their activities, with the following being among the most prominent ideas that arise in this regard:

There is indeed a strong connection between the citizenry, nature, and the land on which they live, For example; he sees that the climate's nature affects human economic activity, he also sees that, residents of harsh environments, particularly the desert, rely on agriculture and animal grazing for their survival.

The latter group lives in an environment isolated from urban life and society, unlike Those live in the cold regions, whose population is characterized by activity, and whose societies are often regarded as civilized, since they are active in industry and trade, and their earnings are the finest and most developed. (A Farhat and Hamidano, 2017, pp 60-66).

Working, according to Ibn Khaldun's theory, is a subjective need for man to prove himself, his existence, and his role in society, and it is a reference for every human progress. Working, according to Ibn Khaldun's theory, is not to fill an economic need, but rather to prove oneself, one's existence, and one's role in society. (Ibn Khaldun , pp 302-304).

3. *Ibn Khaldun and War:*

Ibn Khaldun's interpretation of the phenomenon of war begins with the idea of human nature to explain aggression and wars, and thus predates Hobbes, Locke, and Machiavelli, he sees aggression as an instinct inherent in man, the source of all evils, and thus wars, and that in order to curb it, it is necessary to establish a state of war. Whoever has a political inclination will have the upper hand, authority, and enslavement to compensate for the wrong done to the people – the authority -. As a result, he argues that one of the primary causes of prior conflicts was the tribes' lack of rule and their submission to a political structure and omnipotent power. He adds that war is a historical human phenomenon inherent to humanity since the dawn of history. For him, there are two kinds of war:

Wars of sedition, which are wars that are usually within a single state and occur as a result of the conflict between sects over the Sultan.

A war of jihad and justice, which he sees it as a binding war for self-defence and the propagation of Islam, usually directed to the outside world.

As for the tactics of wars, he classifies them into two types according to the nature of societies, He sees that non-Arab fighting is a creeping fight, that is, it depends on organized armies, while the fighting of Arabs and Berbers is close to fighting hit and run, and is not distinguished by order and organization. (Ice, 2017).

SECOND:

The problems of Using Khaldunian Thought to Explain The Current Reality

Undoubtedly, Ibn Khaldun is regarded as one of the most influential intellectuals in Islamic civilization because of his significant contributions to a variety of disciplines of knowledge, and this is acknowledged not just by Muslims and Arabs, but also by Orientalists and many Western academics. Despite the relevance of his thought to many of the political and social issues and events that occur now, the time difference notwithstanding, he remains a thinker of medieval

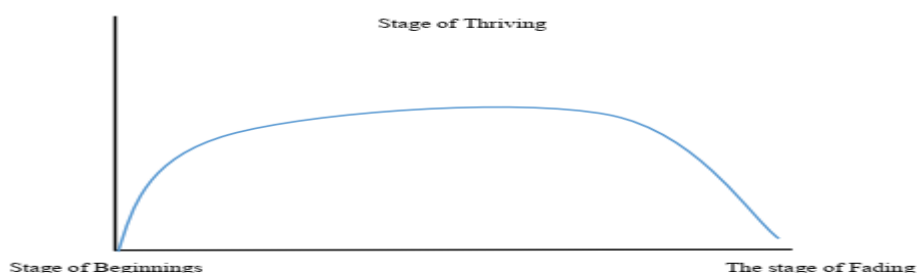
time, like Machiavelli, and perhaps for this and other reasons, several criticisms were levelled at him, particularly from thinkers such as Taha Hussein and Abdullah Al-Aroui. Among the most prominent criticisms directed at Ibn Khaldun are the following:

1. The state is not a fixed law, and it does not resemble the life cycle of living organisms:

As previously stated, Ibn Khaldun established a fixed law for the development of the state from birth to death or old age, which is natural given that it was influenced by the history of some civilizations, emirates, and Mamluks that grew and then fell, But according to some scholars, the state cannot a fixed law, does resemble living organism, I therefore argue that that states can be likened to living organisms in such a straightforward manner.

The first criticism directed at Ibn Khaldun here is his limitation of the time period for each generation to 40 years because he considered that the average age of one person is the age of a generation, also gave examples of some of time spans of countries at that time, such as the Almoravids, the Almohads and the Hamdanids in Aleppo, It should be noted, however, that time span of the stages of states cannot be determined simply by a certain number, as this is subject to several variables and logical reasons. The age of the state may be more or less the same at each stage. If, for example, this approach was applied with its detailed implications on a modern state such as the United States, since the First World War it has been a pioneer in several areas globally until today, it would relatively invalid today, This is because there are foundations, premises, ideologies, centers and many new things that may prolong the lives of states and the time intervals between each stage according to Khaldunian thought, The figure below shows a hypothetical approach to a state (x) The temporal stages in the life of a modern state violates the time limit set by Ibn Khaldun which is 40 years. The life of a modern state in conjunction with the current facts, as the youth stage lasts 60 years, while the maturity stage may exceed 100 years, with the state entering a period of decline that may exceed 20 years, At stage the state may regain its strength if it realizes its conditions and reality and tries to advance its economy and improve its conditions through effective strategies and policies (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: A hypothetical life cycle for a contemporary state



Source: designed by the researcher.

Furthermore, we must recognize that while evaluating the phenomenon of the state, a contrast must be made between the form of the world system in Ibn Khaldun's time and the form of the world system now. The modern systems of administration differ from those Ibn Khaldun's time them because modern countries are built on institutions rather than the on the ruler's person or fanaticism.

Ibn Khaldun, moreover, did not take into account other factors that may have contributed to the state's abrupt collapse, such as war or economic difficulties.

2. The idea of asabiyyah:

The concept of asabiyya, which is based on giving someone precedence over others owing to dominance and other factors, has detrimental consequences, particularly in the political sector. The main thing at the moment is to construct a state with institutions and governance processes, through which he was able to organize the energy of the believers to expand Islam and build the state (Ismik, 2011).

It is also worth noting that asabiyyah is not limited to religion, as Ibn Khaldun suggests, but can also be triggered by ideology, belief, or any other motivator and that we are moving towards electronic asabiyyah, which cuts across the temporal framework that Ibn Khaldun discussed, as well as the radical social changes brought on by technology and virtual means of communication. We should consider the hypothesis that the first sectarianism is going to vanish, and that the electronic and technical space will offer new horizons for us to belong to a new, much bigger group, capable of encompassing individuals of all ages, regional, sectarian, political, and other affiliations (Ismik, 2011).

3. The issue of complexity:

The 21st century is more complicated than it was in Ibn Khaldun's time as well as the centuries that followed, and perhaps it could be said that the measurements and standards of the concept of Bedouins and urban areas that he always talked about in his introduction have changed and been replaced by many other criteria and differences thanks to technological development, Thus the specifications that Ibn Khaldun talked about in relation to the state, to its health is decline, are incompatible with today's world.

THIRD:

Research Proposals for the Development of Khaldunian Thought in the Political Field

It is evident that Ibn Khaldun made a substantial intellectual contribution to Islamic thinking and civilization, granting him the title of one of the Early Days' most important thinkers. It is crucial to Highlighting the significance of improving and developing his views in line with current facts, rather than simply analyzing and reporting them. Western scholars have arguably understood this, writing a lot about him by criticizing and developing his ideas.

Rationally speaking, Ibn Khaldun was a thinker of his time and a basic reference in many ideas, especially in sociology, demography, history, and politics, but not in the way that some researchers market him today when they analyze political issues based on the presentation of previous ideas that were valid at the time, which was indicated by Abdullah Al-Aroui and Taha Hussein. On this foundation, the study offer the following recommendations for developing Khaldunian philosophy.

-Identifying the basic political variables mentioned by Ibn Khaldun, such as the fork, the state, the presidency, the king, and the sultan, and attempting to analyze and comprehend them accurately, then criticizing and developing them to achieve the so-called cumulative intellectual, and post-Khaldonism.

- Using Khaldunian fact-checking as a model for researchers in explaining and transferring events according to organized scientific frameworks based on the truth and objectively in the attempt to eliminate any confusion or research defect that affects the content in several topics due to the researcher's bias.

- Reorganizing Ibn Khaldun's ideas in the political field, and sorting them out because he was talking about them at length and in an unorganized manner.

- Holding research and scientific conferences on Khaldunian thought in order to renew and adapt it to the realities taking place now, especially in the Arab countries, which to this day are still based on the tribe.

Conclusion:

In sum, as Abdullah al-Arwi pointed out, Ibn Khaldun is an ancient thinker, not a product of the twentieth century or even contemporary times, Nevertheless, he defined numerous principles in human sociology and urbanism that cannot be disregarded or surpassed.

Various academics continue to depend on his theories to study many topics, such as government, sultanhip, anxiousness, and the state, which is why it is vital to improve Khaldunian philosophy in line with current facts.

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