IBN KHALDUN'S THEORY OF SOCIAL COHESION: A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF ASABIYYA.

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Annotation: In this article, the socio-cultural ideas of Abu Zayd Abdurrahman ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), the famous thinker of Muslim civilization, the scientific basis of the work "Muqaddimah" and the concept of "asabiyya" and their important role in the development of society, the development of society and its fall, economics, political science, cultural studies, social cohesion, genealogy, blood-kinship relations, the royal government and the city government were studied.

Key words and expression: temper, morals, religion, faith, behavior, kinship, knowledge, society, hegemony, city government, royal government, nature, potential evil.

Introduction

Ibn Khaldun (732–808 AH / 1332–1406 CE) and his seminal work Muqaddimah hold a significant place in the fields of history, sociology, economics, political science, and cultural studies. In this work, Ibn Khaldun analyzed the political and social issues of his era, exploring the causes behind historical processes, the rise of societies, and their eventual decline. A central concept in his thought is the broad interpretation of al-'Asabiyya (social cohesion/solidarity). According to Ibn Khaldun, asabiyya represents a fundamental condition for the existence of the world order. He argued that political organization is essential for the preservation of human life, yet its very foundation is dependent upon the strength of al-'asabiyya. This means that the emergence of political authority is inseparable from social solidarity. In this sense, asabiyya appears as a unique phenomenon shaped by particular times, geographical regions, and nations. It embodies the consciously constructed unity among large groups of people. Thus, asabiyya can be seen as a form of collective identity or solidarity that unites individuals or communities. Furthermore, asabiyya serves as the foundation for the development of urban civilization and social harmony, for political power is acquired only through it, and political organization, in turn, safeguards human life. Ibn Khaldun further emphasized that the key elements of asabiyya can be traced to the traditions of military democracy and tribal aristocracy.

Literature Review and Methodology.

In conducting this study, Ibn Khaldun's Muqaddimah has been used as the primary methodological source. The analysis was carried out by applying the principles of scientific inquiry such as historicism, logical reasoning, analysis, synthesis, and objectivity. Within this framework, the research identifies and examines the factors influencing social development, as well as Ibn Khaldun's insights into culture, civilization, progress, and decline. These aspects are presented from an objective philosophical perspective, highlighting the enduring relevance of his theory of social cohesion.

Discussion and Results.

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Ibn Khaldun is recognized as one of the distinguished scholars and intellectuals who contributed significantly to the development of civilization. From the perspective of both Islamic and world history, he is considered a major figure. Ibn Khaldun was not only a historian but also a philosopher, sociologist, diplomat, politician, judge, and economist — a truly versatile intellectual of his time. His works continue to inspire modern scholars in their research and critical analysis.

Through his seminal work Muqaddimah, Ibn Khaldun laid the foundations for an original concept of "civilization." He is often regarded as a theorist of civilization. While discussing sciences in Muqaddimah, he studied the ideas of earlier thinkers such as Aristotle, Avicenna (Ibn Sina), and al-Farabi, synthesizing their views within his own philosophical framework. Ibn Khaldun stressed that the human being is the decisive factor in the establishment and progress of civilization. Without human beings, civilization cannot exist; the growth of individual capacities leads to the development of society and civilization as a whole.

Abu Zayd 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Muhammad Ibn Khaldun was born on May 27, 1332 (732 AH, during the month of Ramadan) in the Hadramaut district of Tunis.[1.p.538] He became known by the name "Ibn Khaldun" because one of his ancestors was named Khalid. When Khalid ibn 'Uthman migrated to Andalusia, he became known by the honorary title Khaldun. Consequently, his descendants were referred to as "Banu Khaldun" or "the sons of Khaldun.".[2.p.197] Ibn Khaldun's father, Muhammad, was active in politics and devoted much of his life to scholarship. As his first teacher, Muhammad greatly influenced his son's intellectual formation.

The geographical and political environment in which Ibn Khaldun lived also played a decisive role in shaping his scholarly outlook. His social and philosophical views were formed under the influence of several factors:

1. Islamic philosophy and jurisprudence. Ibn Khaldun was raised within the intellectual tradition of Muslim culture and drew inspiration from the classical Islamic philosophers such as al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and al-Ghazali.

2. Historical events. Having lived in Tunisia, Morocco, Andalusia, and Egypt, Ibn Khaldun witnessed the flourishing and decline of different states, which prompted him to develop theoretical reflections on the rise and fall of societies.

3. Personal experience. His service as a statesman, judge (qadi), and politician gave him first-hand insights into the inner workings of society and state, thereby enriching his socio-philosophical theories.

The socio-philosophical ideas of Abu Zayd Abdurrahman ibn Khaldun, one of the great thinkers of the Middle Ages, are expressed in his famous work "The Introduction". Ibn Khaldun divides this work into six parts: "The introduction to this book consists of six parts".[3.p.17]

Some of the theoretical formulations put forward by famous scholars can be traced back to Ibn Khaldun. Examples include Karl Marx's stages of human history, the dynamics of the dialectic of group conflict, Marx Weber's typology of leadership, Wilfredo Pareto's elite rotation, and Ernest Gellner's pendulum theory.[4.p.101] Ibn Khaldun was a true Muslim who believed in the afterlife. He insisted that philosophy could not comprehend the divine. In this regard, he clearly believed that logical thinking could not fully comprehend all aspects of life. However, this did not prevent Ibn Khaldun from distinguishing between the religious and political principles of social organization.[5.p.38]

He used abstraction in his attempt to find the essential parts of truth and knowledge. He established empirical truth as an essential object in addition to the truth attained by the soul. His methodology was to use a priori hypothesis using logical hypothesis. In addition, he used empirical data where it was divine and vital. For Ibn Khaldun, there is a dialectical relationship between the past and the present. In his famous proverb, he says that "the past and the present are similar, just like water." That is, water falls to the ground as rain, then goes to the river, then evaporates and becomes rain again. Another important thing about Ibn Khaldun is the subject of his analysis. For many centuries, the West has focused on the individual. For Ibn Khaldun, the group, not the individual, was the decisive factor in the central point of history. Individuals rarely, if not divinely inspired, have more than a little influence on the greatest forces in history. Indeed, for Ibn Khaldun, the individual is practically ignored as a philosophical subject. [4.p.101]

His disregard for individuality did not prevent him from studying the nature and characteristics of man. He saw man as savage, stupid, weak, ignorant. Given the lack of virtue and the low level of intelligence that Ibn Khaldun attributed to people, how could societies unite? His answer was asabiyya. This article by Ibn Khaldun, entitled "Asabiyya for Social Cohesion," was written for this purpose. What is asabiyya? At the heart of Ibn Khaldun's comprehensive theory is the concept of asabiyya. This term is one of his most untranslatable, and Western translators have differed greatly in its meaning. Rosenthal translates it as "group feeling," while Monteil mainly translates it as "esprit de corps" or "esprit de clan." It seems wrong to equate this. Durkheim's mechanical solidarity and the attribution of this concept to Ibn Khaldun are the same as the solidarity theory. [5.p.5-6]

Some others have used it as group consciousness, gemeinsinn, milleitatsidee, corporate spirit, sense of unity, group solidarity, group will, collective spirit, social unity, fighting spirit, striking power and social unity [7.p.87-89] Ibn Khaldun's understanding of nervousness is very complex and multifaceted, and nervousness is a mechanical unity. Ibn Khaldun argues that there must be some factor, some impetus, for the ego to exist on a larger scale among some people than among others. He calls this factor nervousness, which he has adopted from the classical usage of the word and which he himself gives a new positive meaning to. The group to which a person feels closest is his clan or tribe, the people to whom he is attached by common descent. But politically nervousness can also be shared by people who are not related by blood but by distant and close ties as members of the group. Ibn Khaldun: "Blood ties lead a person to love his relatives and blood. No harm or destruction can reach his relatives". [8.p.98]

Thus, due to the conditions of life, purity of lineage is impossible. On the one hand, he emphasizes that purity of lineage is complete, lost among the Arabs and other similar peoples, on the other hand, he puts forward that nervousness, which is not a matter of simple tribal unity. Pure lineage is found only among savages. Desert Arabs and other similar peoples. The reason for this is poor life, difficult conditions and bad habitats. The settled Arabs, Persians and non-Arabs have mixed. Pure lineage has been completely lost and its fruit, the group feeling, has been lost and rejected. The tribes, then, have disappeared, and with them nervousness has been destroyed. [7.p.99-100]

Muhammad said: "The noble son of the noble father of the noble grandfather of the noble grandfather. Joseph, the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham. This shows that Joseph had reached the limit of glory. [7.p.106] Asabiyya is not simply a matter of tribal unification.

Ibn Khaldun answers the question, "Why do people have common behaviors?" Power situations, egoism, social contract, language, religion, symbolic communication, instincts, individual psychology, detachment, learned behavior, obedience.

Ibn Khaldun distinguishes two types of civilization. His labels for them are Bedouin (badawa) and sedentary (hadara). The Bedouin type includes agriculture and pastoralism. The groups and sedentary lifestyles include cities and rural communities, crafts and trade, and are thus integrated into the larger orbit of the urban network. He assumes that Bedouin civilization is an older form of life that preceded the sedentary type. It is also a more limited and stagnant pattern of human development. The Bedouin tribes have a high degree of nervousness. [9.p.6]

Ibn Khaldun states that the Arabs are the most extreme form of Bedouin civilization, but he adds that "No one is so quick to accept truth and correct guidance." However, he never draws ethnic conclusions. He simply wants to emphasize this. "The differences in the conditions of people are the result of their different ways of making a living. With this simple statement, he laid the foundation for the modern scientific method, what today might be called historical determinism. He compared different societies, showing the structures that determined their modes of production and their historical limits. [10.p.226]

He was able to show that human society is becoming increasingly complex. The techniques of production have become more complex, and the division of labor has become more extensive. He has accepted the forms of social psychology, religious, legal, and social structures of a given society as being related to its mode of economic production. Ibn Khaldun did not have the illusion, like the Marxists, that everything obediently follows economics. The main difference between atheist Marxists and Ibn Khaldun is that Ibn Khaldun considered the spiritual realm to be prior to and influenced by the physical world. [9.p.227]

According to Ibn Khaldun: "The life of a dynasty is the life of a dynasty. The individual: it grows, goes into a period of stagnation, and then into a period of regression. Thus, every society eventually experiences "incurable old age" and disappears, because this is a natural thing and natural things do not change. Thus, there are periods of development in societies. But these cycles are not all the same for all societies, because all societies, like all creations, are undergoing very dynamic processes and are constantly changing due to a number of influences. [7.p.83-85]

In connection with Umran, it can be concluded that the Asabiyya and the Bedouin lifestyle are closely related. According to Ibn Khaldun, this is what happens when these societies become more civilized and they become accustomed to luxury and forget the values   they once had. Ibn Khaldun sees human fluctuations as an external sign, because the human child is accustomed to customs and what he is accustomed to, which replaces his natural nature. Those who have lost their religion behave unnaturally, acting contrary to their true nature. As their Asabiyya dries up, their human nature (fitrah) deteriorates and the ego overcomes society, raising prices and taxes.

Ibn Khaldun points out the factors that lead to the decline and disappearance of Arab civilization because it has moved away from innate values. Islam gives people something, a framework within which we can accept or reject, we can choose to act justly, unjustly or in each case, the consequences are suffering. Ibn Khaldun shows that authoritarian societies are always decadent societies that are moving towards social and political decay. Ibn Khaldun supports the ideal of monotheism - fitrah - which destroys everything. He concludes that fitrah and asabiyya are positively related. If one withers, the other also withers, and if one rises, the other also rises. Ibn Khaldun's main contribution is to analyze the relationship between asabiyya and politics. Although power is the basis of rule and the king's power was established, it was based on asabiyya that held societies together through military power. Kinship and religion are stronger in tribes than in urban society. Strong conquerors, with a sense of group, can create larger and more lasting empires.[11.p.329]

For Ibn Khaldun, the group with the strongest sense of the Asabiyya is destined to be strong and dominant, at least as long as they are able to maintain a sense of identity and unity. For Ibn Khaldun, Asabiyya is the basis of political power and culture, while unrestrained individualism is one of the sources of the collapse of groups. He understands revolutions as a struggle for power between alien groups. [7.p.14]

The supremacy of the king is the goal that the Asabiyya lead to. Even if a separate tribe is different, with different houses and many different group feelings, there must still be a stronger group feeling than all the other group feelings combined, which is superior to them all and makes them subordinate, in which case all the different group feelings will unite and become seemingly great. Otherwise, divisions will arise, causing discord and conflict. [10.p.107]

Ibn Khaldun says: "Only those who share the group feeling can have a 'home'. Nobility exists in the main sense and in reality, and in others in a figurative sense. For nobility and prestige are the result of the individual." He adds: "The group feeling is truly formidable and where its soil is preserved pure, the advance of the common lineage is most certain and the group feeling is more effective. Having several noble ancestors is an additional advantage. Thus, prestige and nobility are firmly established in those who share the group feeling, because there is a result of the common lineage, the nobility of the 'Home' is directly proportional to the different degrees of group feeling, because nobility is the secret of group feeling". [8.p.102]

Why do people have common behavior? What is the basic dynamic that gives rise to and gives strength to political structures like the state? What holds society together? Ibn Khaldun answered these questions using the same instrumental concept - asabiyya. Can asabiyya be used as a fundamental, instrumental and functional concept for the social? Is there a union of many nations and nationalities, different cultures and lifestyles in the Turkish and European Union? Ibn Khaldun argues that asabiyya is a natural phenomenon when blood ties are few at first. When the number of groups with close blood ties increases, then the phenomenon of blood ties does not reflect reality, but rather becomes an illusion, believed by the group. People in the group fall into the illusion that they are close blood ties, but in reality they no longer exist. At this point, Ibn Khaldun argues that blood ties are not so important. Such ties, which can lead to the existence of a belief in ownership, close relationships, and mutual assistance, are of great importance. Ibn Khaldun's concept of the Asabiyya is functional, not biological or ethnic. [7.p.91]

Ibn Khaldun clearly states that the aim of Asabiyyah is property or state, in other words, kingship, hegemony or rule. Ibn Khaldun emphasizes the existence of Asabiyyah in political terms. If it exists, it leads the members of the group to a political collective. This forces them to demand a higher political position. Asabiyyah brings to politics the dimensions of a temporal and spatial approach, discipline. [7.p.114]

Conclusion.

Ibn Khaldun's concept of "asabiyya" is one of the central concepts of his historical and social theory, which is a key factor in explaining the formation, development and crisis of societies. The term asabiyya refers to the internal unity, social solidarity and mutual support of a tribe, group or society. Ibn Khaldun elaborated on this concept in his famous work "Muqaddimah" and analyzed it in depth in political, moral and social aspects. According to Ibn Khaldun's theory, asabiyya is an important factor in the formation and strengthening of states. When there is a strong asabiyya in a society, a tribe or group is able to unite and seize political power. However, asabiyya is strong only at the initial stage of state formation. As the state becomes more stable, asabiyya weakens, and this leads to the weakening of the state and crisis. Stages of the state: Ibn Khaldun distinguishes several stages in the development of states. According to him, asabiyya initially manifests itself as a strong unity within a tribe or society,

which leads to the formation of a state. However, when the state reaches the peak of its development, it loses internal unity and declines. This allows groups equipped with new asabiyya to seize power. Morally, asabiyya is a means of strengthening unity and mutual assistance between people in society. It helps to develop mutual trust and moral standards within a tribe or group. However, according to Ibn Khaldun, excessive asabiyya can lead to aggression against other groups. This situation increases the likelihood of violating social justice and peace. Positive moral impact: Asabiyya strengthens mutual unity and helps maintain social moral standards. Negative moral impact: Asabiyya can discriminate against other groups or cause conflicts against them. Ibn Khaldun sees asabiyya as a means of understanding the development of social structures and their interrelationships. He divides society into two main types. Bedouin societies: Tribal or traditional groups united by strong asabiyya, which live in harmony with natural conditions. Cultural societies: Societies formed in urban centers, relatively weak asabiyya, and governed by rules. According to Ibn Khaldun, because Bedouin societies have strong asabiyya, they are able to assimilate cultural societies and form new states. However, over time, they also adapt to urban life and lose their asabiyya, which leads to the replacement of new groups. Ibn Khaldun's theory of asabiyya deeply analyzes the processes of development and decline of societies in social, political, and moral terms. While asabiyya serves as a source of social solidarity and power on the one hand, on the other hand, its excessive or improper use can cause conflicts and injustice in society. This theory is still relevant today in understanding issues such as nationalism, inter-community solidarity, and state governance.

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