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A Critical Approach to Causality and Rational Knowledge in Ibn Khaldūn

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A Critical Approach to Causality and Rational Knowledge in Ibn Khaldūn

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to critically approach the thoughts of causality and rational knowledge in Ibn Khaldūn, who is one of the greatest names of Islamic philosophy. Ibn Khaldūn, who is a tremendously competent sociologist, historian, and politician, constituted his work entitled *Muqaddima* in a way exhibiting the science of ‘umrān. One of the fundamentals of science undoubtedly is the theory of causality. We see that Ibn Khaldūn, who construed everything in the universe in the light of the causality, does not use the same theory when miracles and supernatural events are in question. This differentiation basing on the distinction of the human intellect and divine revelation has not eliminated any contradiction coming out in the context of the causality. Another matter we examine in this study is the critique of Ibn Khaldūn about rational knowledge against philosophers. According to him, it is not a correct method reaching the universals with abstractions made from the particulars. It is because such universals have not been compatible with the facts. Ibn Khaldūn criticizes the philosophers in the context of metaphysical knowledge. But, if we consider the science of ‘umrān to be a kind of metaphysics, we might say that his method contains some contradictions.

Keywords

Islamic Philosophy, Ibn Khaldūn, Causality, Rational Knowledge, Critical Approach

İbn Haldūn’un Nedensellik ve Rasyonel Bilgi Düşüncesine Eleştirel Bir Yaklaşım

Öz

Bu makalenin amacı İslam düşüncesinin en önemli isimlerinden olan İbn Haldun’un nedenselliğe ve akli bilgiye dair düşüncelerine eleştirel bir şekilde yaklaşmaktır. Son derece yetkin ve etkili bir sosyolog, tarihçi ve devlet adamı olan İbn Haldun’un *Mukaddime* eseri ümran ilmini etraflıca ele alan bir şekilde hazırlanmıştır. İbn Haldun tarafından tesis edilen ümran ilminin dayandığı en temel prensiplerden birisi şüphesiz ki nedensellik ilkesidir. Alemde olan her şeyi sebep-sonuç ilişkisi içinde anlamlandıran İbn Haldun’un aynı metodu mucize ve keramet gibi konularda kullanmadığını görmekteyiz. Akıl ve vahiy ayrımına dayanan bu farklılaşmanın nedensellik bağlamında ortaya çıkan çelişkiyi tam olarak bertaraf ettiğini düşünmüyoruz. Makalenin ele aldığı diğer bir konu da İbn Haldun’un filozoflara akli bilgi konusunda yönelttiği eleştiridir. Tikellerden tümel oluşturmanın doğru bir yöntem olmadığını iddia eden İbn Haldun tümellerin realiteye uygun olmadığına inanmaktadır. İbn Haldun filozofları metafizik bilgi bağlamında eleştirir. Ancak biz ümran ilminin bir tür metafizik olduğunu kabul edersek İbn Haldun’un yaklaşımının çelişkili olduğunu söyleyebiliriz.

Anahtar Kelimeler

İslam Felsefesi, İbn Haldun, Nedensellik, Akli Bilgi, Eleştirel Yaklaşım

Introduction

Ibn Khaldūn (1332-1406) is one of the most significant and famous thinkers of Islamic thought. Ibn Khaldūn, whose whole life lasted in the middle of political relations and educational affairs, lived in a period when the brightness of Islamic thought came to disappear. Most of the schools of thought, philosophical debates, sound theological refutations came out in general before him. On the other hand, this case has a positive side as well because Ibn Khaldūn could find an opportunity to look at Islamic thought holistically.

Researchers have been elaborating on the ideas of Ibn Khaldūn from various angles because he has significant assessments of politics, culture, economy, history, and sociology. Besides, his thoughts about religion, philosophy, and Sufism deserve attention. As a result of this variety, some researchers describe Ibn Khaldūn as a political theorist, economist, historian, philosopher, sociologist, and even a Sufi. These descriptions are right to some extent because what Ibn Khaldūn meant with the science of ‘umrān encompasses all of these fields.¹

This article has two main sections. In the first section, I will focus on the concept of causality and various contexts in which Ibn Khaldūn used it. Ibn Khaldūn’s emphasis on causality is unconcealed and powerful. Insomuch that this case caused Ibn Khaldūn to be qualified as a positivist thinker.² On the other hand, Ibn Khaldūn puts aside the thought of causality when religion, miracles, and supernatural events (*karāmāt*) are in question. However, while we believe that, as a religion, Islam has a metaphysical foundation, we know that its interlocutor is a human being living in the physical world. Thus, it is possible to mention a contradiction in Ibn Khaldūn’s approach. While expecting from humans to understand whole life, social structures, political affairs, economic changes under the light of causality, expecting from them at the same time to confirm religions and religious phenomenon with a claim of miracle or divine wisdom is an inconsistency.

In the second section, I will try to examine a critique of Ibn Khaldūn against philosophers and their method of logic. This section, which is partly relevant to his approach to causality, will focus on rational knowledge. The point that I would like to draw attention to is that although Ibn Khaldūn criticizes the philosophers in the matter of rational knowledge and metaphysics has a similar perspective in the science of ‘umrān. He claims that universal (*kullī*) principles or concepts generated from particular (*juz’ī*) things do not comply with facts mostly. But, as we will see, the science of ‘umrān is based on such universal principles generated from particular events and changes that happened in the fields of politics, economy, history, and

¹ Muḥammad ‘Ābid al-Jābirī, *Naḥnu wa al-Turāth: Qirā’at Mu‘āšira fī Turāthinā al-Falsafī* (Beirut: Markaz al-thaqafī al-‘arabī, 1993), 300; Süleyman Uludağ, *İbn Haldun: Hayatı, Eserleri, Fikirleri* (Ankara: Harf Yayınları, 2015), 37-41; Süleyman Uludağ, *Tasavvufun Mahiyeti: Şifâu’s-Sâil li-Tehzibi’l-Mesâil ve Mukaddime’de Tasavvuf İlmi* (Istanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2019), 58-60; Semih Ceyhan, “İbn Haldun’un Sûfilere ve Tasavvufa Bakışı: Umrande Tasavvuf İlmi”, *İbn Haldun: Güncel Okumalar*, ed. Recep Şentürk (Istanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2017), 81-120; Kadir Canatan, *İbn Haldun Perspektifinden Bilgi Sosyolojisi* (Istanbul: Açılım Kitap, 2013), 137-164; Ahmet Arslan, *İbn Haldun* (Istanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2019), 4; ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad Ibn Khaldūn, *İbn Haldun: Bilim İle Siyaset Arasında Hatıralar (et-Ta’rîf)*, trans. Vecdi Akyüz (Istanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2017), 23, 58; Ümit Hassan, *İbn Haldun: Metodu ve Siyaset Teorisi* (Ankara: Doğu Batı Yayınları, 2019), 19-57; Seyfi Say, *İbn Haldun’un Düşünce Sistemi ve Uluslararası İlişkiler Kuramı* (Istanbul: İlk Harf Yayınları, 2011); Cengiz Tomar, “Between Myth and Reality: Approaches to Ibn Khaldun in the Arab World”, *Asian Journal of Social Science* 36 (2008), 603.

² al-Jābirī, *Naḥnu wa al-Turāth*, 302-303. However, Recep Şentürk claims that Ibn Khaldūn, in contrary to the prevalent opinion, is an alternative thinker to positivism. See, Recep Şentürk (ed.), *İbn Haldun: Güncel Okumalar* (Istanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2017), 9.

sociology. As known, Ibn Khaldūn designed the science of ‘umrān as a metaphysic in sociology and history.³ This section, where we will assess the problem of knowledge in respect of compatibility with the facts (reality), will help us to understand better and look critically at Ibn Khaldūn’s thought.

1. Ibn Khaldūn and Causality

Causality, as a theory, is to express the process in the universe by referring to a cause-and-effect relation. In other words, it is “the relation between two things when the first is thought of as somehow producing or responsible for the second.”⁴ The causes can be natural or divine. As for Ibn Khaldūn, we know that he is a faithful believer.⁵ According to him, everything in the universe happens by God’s wish, but He, by His will, attaches all effects to causes.⁶ Some thinkers who follow the line of Ash‘arī-Ghazzālī reject the natural causality because of that it will deactivate God over the universe. According to Ghazzālī, the arrangement in the universe seems to us as the natural causality, but it is a habit of eyes. For him, God creates everything and every act individually. Ghazzālī aims to emphasize that God is omnipotent and active perpetually.⁷ While Ibn Khaldūn confirms Ghazzālī’s attitude, he explains everything in the science of ‘umrān employing causality.

At first, we should express clearly that Ibn Khaldūn highlights the coordination in the universe. According to him, “the whole of existence in (all) its simple and composite worlds is arranged in a natural order of ascent and descent so that everything constitutes an uninterrupted continuum.”⁸ This kind of continuum is an indicator of the relation between cause and effect. All acts belonging to either humans or animals can come out as a result of some causes that precede the acts. Each of these causes is temporally created (*hādith*). These temporally created causes connected to each other take people to the knowledge of God. Even though human intellect (*‘aql*) is incapable of grasping all of those causes, we know that nothing in this universe can happen without some of those causes. Therefore, Ibn Khaldūn confirms the perfect coordination based on the relation of cause and effect that is observed in the universe.⁹

In the system of Ibn Khaldūn, we witness the causality in the fields of geography, economy, sociology, and politics. He built the science of ‘umrān upon this principle. In the pages ahead, we will exemplify the claim of causality in Ibn Khaldūn from these disciplines. The geographical causality may come first because

³ Şenol Korkut, “İbn Haldun’un es-Siyâsetü’l-Medeniyye Teorisini Eleştirisi”, *İbn Haldun: Güncel Okumalar* (Istanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2017), 171; Tahsin Görgün, “İbn Haldun’un Toplum Metafiziğinin Güncelliği ve Günümüzde Toplum Araştırmaları Açısından Önemi”, *İbn Haldun: Güncel Okumalar* (Istanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2017), 325–368; Tahsin Görgün, “İbn Haldūn”, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Accessed September 17, 2020).

⁴ Alan Robert Lacey, *A Dictionary of Philosophy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1996), 45.

⁵ At this point, we notice that Taha Hussain suggests that Ibn Khaldūn is not a pious and sincere believer. Taha Hussain, *Falsafatu Ibn Khaldūn al-Ijtimā‘iyya*, trans. ‘Abdullāh ‘inān (Qairo: Maṭba‘a al-i‘timād, 1925), 25.

⁶ ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, ed. ‘Alī ‘Abd al-Wāḥid Wāfi (Qairo: Dāru nahḍa miṣr, 2014), 2/522.

⁷ Abū Ḥāmid Ghazzālī, *Tahāfut al-Falāsifa*, ed. Sulaimān Dunyā (Cairo: Dār al-ma‘rifa, 1966), 235–236; 239–251; Ilai Alon, “Al-Ghazzālī on Causality”, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 100/4 (1980), 397–405.

⁸ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 3/923.

⁹ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 3/966; 1/410.

it deals with the creation of human beings. We mean by the geographical causality Ibn Khaldūn's classifications and statements about seven different climate zones.¹⁰ According to Ibn Khaldūn, human beings have been living in seven climate zones. The most suitable zone for life and 'umrān (civilization) is the fourth one since it has the most moderate air temperature.¹¹

There is a close connection between the seven climate zones and 'umrān. In Ibn Khaldūn's mind, the differences between people and societies that live in the same climate zone are relevant to unequal improvements of civilizations. However, the differences between people and societies that live in the different climate zones are relevant precisely to geographical factors like humidity, aridity, heat, and coldness.¹² For Ibn Khaldūn, in a region, if there is extreme heat or coldness, living creatures deteriorate. Hence, the perfect level of 'umrān is possible in the fourth zone, where the climate is moderate. Perfection changes according to nearness to the moderate climate zone. Since the third and fifth zones are next to the fourth, they are also close to perfection. Since the second and sixth zones are far from the fourth zone, their perfection is lesser. As for the first and seventh zones, since they are very far from the fourth one, they have nothing to do with perfection in terms of 'umrān (civilization).¹³ As seen in Ibn Khaldūn, he employs the term moderate (*mu'tadīl*) as used in Islamic philosophy. According to many Islamic philosophers, being moderated in everything, even in worship, is the key to virtue.¹⁴ Therefore, perfection or superiority is possible with being moderated.

According to Ibn Khaldūn, if the climate is moderate in a region, the sciences, arts, buildings, foods, garments, plants, animals, and humans are moderate there.¹⁵ The people of those regions have wealth and precious mines.¹⁶ In other words, everything in that area is close to perfection. Also, for Ibn Khaldūn, it is possible to see this perfection not only on those things mentioned above but also on the souls, bodies, and morals of people who live there. Iraq, India, China, Syria, Hijaz, Yemen, Spain, and Greece are some of the regions where the climate is moderate, and, thus, people are close to perfection. He maintains that because of the effect of the climate, people of those regions are perfect in terms of body type, skin color, morality,

¹⁰ On this division, Ibn Khaldūn follows the knowledge of geography that is prevalent in the Middle Age. Bk. Claudius Ptolemaeus, *Ptolemy's Almagest*, trans. G. J. Toomer (London: Duckworth, 1984), 19, 123-129; Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥay b. Yaqzān* (Qairo: Muassasa Hindāwī, 2012), 5.

¹¹ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 1/373-381.

¹² Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 3/928.

¹³ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 1/353.

¹⁴ Ibn Miskawayh, *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq wa Taḥhīr al-A'rāq* (Egypt: al-Maktaba al-ḥusayniyya al-miṣriyya, 1908), 20-24; Abū Bakr ar-Rāzī, "et-Tıbbu'r-Rūhānī: Ahlākın İyileştirilmesi", ed. Mahmut Kaya, *Felsefe Risâleleri* (Istanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı Yayınları, 2016), 100-101; al-Kindî, "Hikemiyâtü'l-Kindî: Kindî'nin Hikemiyâtı", ed. Mahmut Kaya, *Kindî: Felsefî Risâleler* (Istanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2018), 318-319.

¹⁵ According to Ibn Khaldūn, also the development of architecture is relevant to the climate directly. In the climate zones that are far from moderation, people live in underdeveloped shelters or caves. As for the fourth climate zone, which is the most moderate one, the architecture has been advanced. We should note that to Ibn Khaldūn, the moderation of climate influences the building of cities, castles, big walls, roads, and bridges. Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 2/781-782; 2/865-866. On the other hand, we know that the climate is not a determiner alone on the development of the architecture or arts. It is a requirement as well for a society to transform from Bedouins into a sedentary society. According to Ibn Khaldūn, although Arabs live in a moderate climate zone, they are far from the arts very much. Therefore, we can say that it is a necessity living in the climate zone moderate and having a sedentary civilization. Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 2/854-897.

¹⁶ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 1/393.

and religion.¹⁷ For him, even the prophethood is relevant to the climate to some extent. By referring to a Qur'ānic verse (Āli ʿimrān, 3/110), Ibn Khaldūn says that since the prophets are the most perfect of people in terms of soul and body, they should be in those regions. We never already heard that a prophet came to another area.¹⁸

On the other hand, those people who live in the first and seventh climate zones are very far from perfection. Ibn Khaldūn claims those people are unaware of morality, sciences, arts, elegant garments, and esthetical buildings. Since those people, including people of the second and sixth climate zones, are far away from moderation, they are insufficient for ʿumrān. Sudanese and Slavs are among them. For Ibn Khaldūn, those people are similar to savage animals more than human beings in terms of morality because of the conditions of the climate. For instance, Sudanese are hasty, hedonist, reveler, and stupid because of some negative effects of the climate. In this respect, Ibn Khaldūn criticizes the historian Masʿūdī and philosopher al-Kindī, who associated such states of affairs of Sudanese with the weakness of their intellect. According to Ibn Khaldūn, this approach is faulty and insufficient because neither Masʿūdī nor al-Kindī pointed out the enormous effects of the climate.¹⁹ The situation of those people is the same in religion as well. According to Ibn Khaldūn, those people neither know about prophethood nor follow a religion (*sharīʿa*). Its reason is that they are far away from humanity and ʿumrān and that they are not appropriate to understand the subtlety of the divine message.²⁰ Even though Ibn Khaldūn has such a claim, it is more reasonable to expect from God, as per His justice and mercy, to send prophets to those people to empower them and to make them moral, knowledgeable, civilized, and educated.

As for the economic causality, we see that Ibn Khaldūn explains some issues such as the enrichment of ordinary people and rulers, changes in population, tax policies, and financial situations of states with the relation of cause and effect. For Ibn Khaldūn, a state or dynasty is bedouin at the beginning. Since there is not much welfare and traditional activities among bedouins, the expenses of states or dynasties are low. Soon after, a bedouin society moves to a sedentary civilization, and then new customary activities and habits appear. Correspondingly, the expenses of the state increase and taxes gain more importance. Raising and collecting taxes are necessary to keep the welfare of the state and to fund new habits and luxurious expenses. As a result of the boost in taxes, the loyalty of people living there declines. They are aware of the unbalance between the amount of taxes and services that the state offers. So, people consider paying taxes to be unnecessary. By degrees, the taxes decrease, and the state begins to enlarge the scope of taxes and to collect taxes from everything. These changes come to end with the destruction of the state.²¹

¹⁷ For example, Ibn Khaldūn, who has some explanations about black and white races, claims many of genealogists to have erred in this issue. In the Old Testament (Genesis, 9: 20-29), Noah curses his son, Ham. According to many genealogists, Sudanese, who are acknowledged to be children of Ham, are black because of this curse. For Ibn Khaldūn, this claim is a superstition. The different skin color does not stem from race, but the climate differences. In this regard, he attempts to get support from Ibn Sīnā, who is a scientist and philosopher, and to explain the difference of skin color by referring to natural causes only. Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 1/394-395.

¹⁸ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 1/392.

¹⁹ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 1/397-398.

²⁰ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 1/394.

²¹ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 2/688-689.

Besides, Ibn Khaldūn examines some effects of the population on the economy in the context of causality. For him, if a city develops and has many dwellers, the prices of foods and necessary items decrease. But, the prices of fruits and luxury items increase. If the population of the city decreases, the opposite situation occurs.²² By the population increases, welfare and enrichment also increase. In this way, welfare and enrichment spread all over the city. Ibn Khaldūn explains this case with the term labor. For him, when the labor increases, its value also rises among the laborers, so that their profit enhances inherently. As a result of the increment and enrichment, the people of the city come to own good buildings, garments, servants, mounts, and pieces of equipment.²³

In addition, when Ibn Khaldūn exhibits his thought of the economy, he also stresses that rulers should not occupy with trade. Rulers, because of their ranks, have various opportunities that can make them rich faster than ordinary tradesmen. Moreover, since people are eager to serve the rulers free of charge, it causes unstable competition and tax problems. According to Ibn Khaldūn, almost in every example, the rulers, who deal with the trade, are wealthier than other tradesmen, who do not have a political rank.²⁴ This is just an example of economic changes that cannot happen without a rational reason. Eventually, in those paragraphs, where I attempt to sum up the ideas of Ibn Khaldūn concerning the economy, we see that the whole economic system continues through the relation of cause and effect, follows an order, and does not develop or decline randomly.

Concerning causality in Ibn Khaldūn's thoughts, it is possible to give some additional examples as well from the field of sociology. The social causality is a concept, which suggests a relation of cause and effect, on which social formations, changes, and developments rely upon. The scope of this concept is broad encompassing also the moral and religious attitudes of human beings. According to Ibn Khaldūn, everything in a social area happens with the relation of cause and effect. At first, he highlights the fact that the reason why human beings live together is a need for defense and protection. A person, as a social being, cannot defend him/herself against the dangers of nature without the help of other people. He/she cannot produce defense pieces of equipment alone. Even if he/she does, he/she cannot use them effectively. Thus, a person must live together with fellow men.²⁵

Ibn Khaldūn divides societies into Bedouins and sedentary people. The reason of this kind of division is the difference of livelihood seen in those societies.²⁶ According to Ibn Khaldūn, this difference causes people to differentiate as well in terms of physical and moral features. In other words, Bedouins and sedentary

²² Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 2/806; 2/811.

²³ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 2/803.

²⁴ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 2/843; 2/691-697.

²⁵ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 1/340-341.

²⁶ The essential factor of distinction of societies as Bedouins and sedentary people is the means of livelihood. The difference in the means of livelihood causes the structural differences of societies as well. Concerning the concepts of Bedouins and sedentary civilization, Ibn Khaldūn says "Some people adopt agriculture, the cultivation of vegetables and grains, (as their way of making a living). Others adopt animal husbandry, the use of sheep, cattle, goats, bees, and silkworms, for breeding and for their products. Those who live by agriculture or animal husbandry cannot avoid the call of the desert, because it alone offers the wide fields, acres, pastures for animals, and other things that the settled areas do not offer. It is therefore necessary for them to restrict themselves to the desert. Their social organization and co-operation for the needs of life and civilization, such as food, shelter, and warmth, do not take them beyond the bare subsistence level because of their inability (to provide) for anything beyond

people, even though they are the same in nature and disposition, differentiate physically and morally because of the effect of different social structures. The sedentary people are ugly and unhealthy physically, while Bedouins are not. Concerning morality, while sedentary people are close to evil, Bedouins are close to goodness. It is because sedentary people lose their moral sensitivities and foul their souls when they try to accommodate to the requirements of the urban lifestyle. Thus, while Bedouins, in general, are sincere and pure, sedentary people are cunning and pretentious.²⁷

As known, the purpose of ʿumrān is the welfare and sedentary civilization. For Ibn Khaldūn, an ʿumrān that arrived target grows old and comes to deteriorate. It means a kind of moral corruption at the same time. The sedentary people who live in cities cannot meet all of what they need alone because, in the urban lifestyle, the division of labor is an obligation. Thus, sedentary people always need those who protect, help, and serve them. This case is an obstacle for sedentary people to be free and independent. In addition to these physical and moral divergences, according to Ibn Khaldūn, Bedouins and the sedentary people are different on religious feelings. The religious feelings and lives of sedentary people are not steady because luxury and comfort in urban life make their souls unclean. Whomever's soul is unclean, his/her religious feelings and sincerity weaken contemporaneously.²⁸

Another difference between Bedouins and sedentary people is about their personalities. Sedentary people care about luxury, comfort, and tranquility. They live in wealth, and to obtain this wealth, they always deal with a specific job. While occupying with their jobs, they entrust the task of defense to administrators and security staff members. As for Bedouins, they spend a long time alone in dangerous and deserted areas. They successfully learn how to struggle against savage animals and natural troubles. According to Ibn Khaldūn, as a result of these conditions, sedentary people become coward and submissive while Bedouins are brave and stubborn.²⁹

According to Ibn Khaldūn, a human being is the child of his habits, not that of his nature and disposition. People assimilate the characteristics of their jobs and lifestyles. For example, since traders, as per the nature of their jobs, pursue profits and advantages, their personality fouls. They lose many human virtues

those (things). Subsequent improvement of their conditions and acquisition of more wealth and comfort than they need, causes them to rest and take it easy. Then, they co-operate for things beyond the (bare) necessities. They use more food and clothes and take pride in them. They build large houses and layout towns and cities for protection. This is followed by an increase in comfort and ease, which leads to the formation of the most developed luxury customs. They take the greatest pride in the preparation of food and fine cuisine, in the use of varied splendid clothes of silk and brocade and other (fine materials), in the construction of ever-higher buildings and towers, in elaborate furnishings for the buildings, and the most intensive cultivation of crafts in actuality. They build castles and mansions, provide them with running water, build their towers higher and higher, and compete in furnishing them (most elaborately). They differ in the quality of the clothes, the beds, the vessels, and the utensils they employ for their purposes. Here, now, (we have) sedentary people." Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 2/467; ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958), 1/249.

²⁷ ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddime*, trans. Süleyman Uludağ (Istanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2018), 329 (fn.7).

²⁸ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 2/821; 2/473.

²⁹ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 2/476.

after a while. As understood clearly from these statements, for Ibn Khaldūn, social environment, occupations, and lifestyles have a determinative role in the moral, personal, and religious aspects of humans.³⁰

In the context of social causality, another example is the effect of the psychology of winner-loser on humans and societies. As the relation between winner and loser can be military, it can be political and economic as well. In any case, its effects are observable on humans and societies. According to Ibn Khaldūn, a loser admires the winner because the former thinks that he does not have perfection as the winner does. If he had the same competence, he would not be a loser. As a result of this assumption, the loser is inclined to imitate the garments, customs, professions, weapons, and training and manufacturing methods of the winner. In this way, a critical individual or social transformation happens.³¹ As seen from these expressions, Ibn Khaldūn attempts to ground almost all transformations and imitations observed in societies with rational explanations and a cause-and-effect relation.

Concerning causality in Ibn Khaldūn's thoughts, lastly, we may attract attention to some examples from the field of politics. The political causality defines all relationships that occur among individuals, societies, and states with a cause-and-effect relation. Previously, we said that in Ibn Khaldūn's thought, everything in the universe happens with God's will. Moreover, God creates everything according to constant rules and immutable customs. In His deeds, there is no place for a coincidence or arbitrariness. In this sense, Ibn Khaldūn examines some political issues also by considering causality. Some of those issues include the following: all states have natural limits, the quantity of a group feeling (*ʿaṣabiyya*) affects states, variety of the groups and tribes affects states negatively, political leaders are ambitious to be one man in dominions, Bedouins always is before sedentary civilizations, the royal authority (*mulk*) provides welfare, it and regresses after reaching welfare and comfort, and all states, like human beings, also have a lifetime.³²

According to Ibn Khaldūn, human beings must protect themselves not only from natural troubles and savage animals but also from other human beings. It is because human beings have a potential impulse and ambition leading to harm to each other. For Ibn Khaldūn, people need an authority to protect their rights. Thus, rulership is mandatory and natural as well as protection, nutrition, and sustaining life are obligations. It is possible only with people helping each other.³³ People who come together with those purposes constitute a group feeling that is a pre-condition of sovereignty. A person who is eligible to be the ruler must be a member of this group feeling. In this way, a group or family can transform into political power because a royal authority comes only after the group feeling.³⁴

³⁰ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 2/477; 2/854; Ibn Khaldūn, *Mukaddime*, 331 (fn.8). Another factor that is effective in human characteristics and morals is nutrition. According to Ibn Khaldūn, the bodies of Andalusians, who live far from abundance, are beautiful and healthy, their morals are close to moderation, and their minds are clear. As for people who live where foods are abundant, their bodies are shapeless and unhealthy, and their minds are blurred. Also, nutrition affects the religious attitude of humans. For Ibn Khaldūn, people, who are in abundance and eat much some foods such as meat and wheat, are negligent and care about religion less because of their negligence. As seen, Ibn Khaldūn prefers to elucidate the influences of geography, climate, the types and amount of food on the human body, moral, character, and religious feeling by relying on the natural causes. Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 1/400-401; 1/403.

³¹ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 2/505.

³² Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 2/522-538.

³³ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 1/341; 2/495; 2/559.

³⁴ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 2/485-488; 2/580.

Furthermore, the effect of social structures on the coming political powers into existence is enormous. According to Ibn Khaldūn, savage tribes are more capable of triumphing and dominating because courage is a natural result of Bedouins. This kind of courage impels Bedouins to oppress and dominate other tribes. Consequently, they increase their political power and influence. In this respect, Ibn Khaldūn gives an example from the Muḍar tribe and says: “In this connection, one may compare the Muḍar with the Ḥimyar and the Kahlān before them, who preceded them in royal authority and in the life of luxury, and also with the Rabīʿa who settled in the fertile fields of Iraq. The Muḍar retained their desert habits, and the others embarked upon a life of abundance and great luxury before they did. Desert life prepared the Muḍar most effectively for achieving superiority. They took away and appropriated what the other groups had in their hands.”³⁵

When the relation between the group feeling and the royal authority is in question, Ibn Khaldūn evaluates Arabs in itself. For him, Arabs, because of their Bedouins and savage characteristic, are people tough to obey other tribes or nations. Besides, arrogance, envy, and passion for a presidency are prevalent among Arabs. However, by Islamic law and morality, Arabs’ such negative features evanesced, and their political situation consolidated.³⁶ On the other hand, Ibn Khaldūn’s statements in this manner are not clear enough. We have learned through the Qur’ān that the Arabs’ group feeling is so powerful. According to Ibn Khaldūn, even prophethood develops by the group feeling. Ibn Khaldūn, who claims to the group feeling has brought out a royal authority, propounds that religion as well, is influential in the foundation of royal authority. In the pre-Islamic period, Arabs did not have powerful empires. However, with the Islamic religion, Arabs possessed powerful empires, like the Umayyad and Abbasid empires. In this case, we may ask whether the group feeling, or religious identity was influential in the establishment of these empires. If it was the group feeling, why did the Arabs not have powerful empires before Islam? If it was a religious identity, the theory of group feeling propounded by Ibn Khaldūn shows weakness even though not destroyed. Also, if we say it was because of religion, we also know that religion makes a group feeling and the group feeling brings a royal authority. And then, the royal authority causes moral corruptions such as luxurious life, wastage, vanity, and greed. In this case, a question of whether religion is good or bad arises.³⁷

The last example regarding the political causality is about the lifetime of dynasties. According to Ibn Khaldūn, all dynasties are born, grow, and die. Some signs of old age come out in all dynasties after reaching welfare and comfort. The most evident one of those signs is the division of the dynasty and domestic disturbances. For Ibn Khaldūn, it is not a result of mismanagement, but it is an immutable fate of all dynasties. He sets forth many rational explanations to evaluate this matter with a natural cause and effect relation.³⁸

So far, I have tried to exemplify the causality in the science of ʿumrān established by Ibn Khaldūn from the fields of geography, economy, sociology, and politics. I underlined that causality plays a vital role in Ibn Khaldūn’s thought. However, when some matters that especially are relevant to religion are in question, we see that Ibn Khaldūn does not conform to the causality, although it is a key in the science of ʿumrān.

³⁵ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 2/494; Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, 1/283.

³⁶ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 2/510-511.

³⁷ Aslan, *Ibn Haldun*, 162-170.

³⁸ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 2/706-708.

It is acceptable for the metaphysical dimension of religion to some extent. But we may see that Ibn Khaldūn violates the causality on some religious matters that are relevant to the physical world.

Ibn Khaldūn mentions some battles that happened between old and new dynasties. For him, it is not possible to destroy the old and settled dynasties with sudden attacks. There must be for a long time and gradually attacks to defeat such dynasties. He attempts to support his claim through many historical events and rational explanations based on the natural cause and effect relation. He says that it is the way whereby God rules so in the universe. And then, he refers to the Qur'ānic verse, "No change you will find in the practice of God" (al-Aḥḍhāb, 33/62). Afterward, Ibn Khaldūn speaks about Islamic conquests that do not happen compatibly with his claims. For him, the fact that three to four years after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, Muslims conquered the territories of Persian and Byzantine, in a short time, does not confute his claim aforementioned because those conquests happened by the miracles of the Prophet only. In this respect, he says,

It should be realized that this was one of the miracles of our Prophet. The secret of it lay in the willingness of the Muslims to die in the holy war against their enemies because of their feeling that they had the right to religious insight, and in the corresponding fear and defeatism that God put into the hearts of their enemies. All these (miraculous facts) broke through the known custom of a long wait (governing the relationship) between new and ruling dynasties. Thus, (the rapid conquest) was one of the miracles of our Prophet. The fact of the appearance of (such miracles) in Islam is generally acknowledged. Miracles cannot be used as analogies for ordinary affairs and constitute no argument against (them).³⁹

Another example is about the cases of birth of the Prophet Muhammad. Where Ibn Khaldūn explains the art of midwifery and its significance for humanity, he claims some people to have not needed this art. For example, according to traditional sources, when the Prophet was born, his umbilical cord was already cut off by itself, and he was circumcised. Since Ibn Khaldūn cannot find a rational explanation for such cases, he says that they happened directly by God's creative act.⁴⁰

Also, when Ibn Khaldūn mentions the science of *taṣawwuf*, he affirms the effect of powerful souls to other existent beings. It is a claim concerning the supernatural events asserted greatly by Sufis. As Ibn Khaldūn says, there are such claims abundantly about the companions of the Prophet and the friends of God. However, Ibn Khaldūn, who claims the skin color, height, weight, and even morality of people to have been determined by geographical, social, and economic causes, do not try to find a rational explanation for why some people's souls are powerful. He interestingly says that it is just God's blessing.⁴¹ Even though a human

³⁹ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 2/721; Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, 2/134; Hussain, *Falsafatu Ibn Khaldūn al-Ijtimā'īyya*, 61-62. Also, see Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 1/408; 2/623; Ali Çaksu, "Ibn Khaldun and Hegel on Causality in History: Aristotelian Legacy Reconsidered", *Asian Journal of Social Science* 35 (2007), 54.

⁴⁰ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 2/874.

⁴¹ Ibn Khaldūn, 'Abd ar-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad, *Shifā al-sā'il wa tahdhīb al-masā'il*, ed. Muḥammad Muṭī' al-Ḥāfiẓ (Damascus: Dār al-fikr, 1996), 59-65.

soul is a metaphysical being, it is together with a human body that is a physical being and the most significant component of ʿumrān. Thus, it is not a convincing way to accept the human soul as a part of the metaphysical world only and to speak of the soul as incompatible with the principles of the physical world.⁴²

Ibn Khaldūn has similar thoughts about sorcery and talisman as well. For him, the soul of some people who deal with sorcery and talisman can affect things in the universe and connect with the spirits of celestial bodies. So, those people influence the world. According to Ibn Khaldūn, while the effects of prophets and saints are divine, the effects of magicians are satanic. He does not explain this difference by employing a rational argument, but his statements rely on some traditional acknowledgments.⁴³ For him, since the supernatural events of Sufis and miracles of prophet's stem from the divine source, they are more influential and superior to sorcery, talisman, and magic. Although Ibn Khaldūn has not any rational argumentation or concrete causality, he affirms the accuracy of those narratives. Most probably in Ibn Khaldūn's mind, the story between Moses and magicians that is in the Qur'ān stays as a point of reference literally.⁴⁴ It is possible to say that since Sufis ascend this rank by training their souls, their effects on the world happen with physical causes. But, according to Ibn Khaldūn, worship or training is not mandatory for the rank of sainthood. God's selection is adequate to be a saint. Whomever God wills, He can exalt him or her to a degree.⁴⁵

Eventually, God, who has the power to create everything how He wills, created the physical world with the relation of cause and effect. As Ibn Khaldūn also says, the mines transform into plants, the plants transform into animals, and the animals transform into human beings by a cause-and-effect relation.⁴⁶ Although God has the power to create all of them independently, He did not do it. Ibn Khaldūn, who attempts to explain even black and white races by relying on the theory of causality, prefers to explain matters that are relevant to religion with the will of God. In those matters, he is not eager to connect causes and effects and to resort to rational analyses but inclined so much to accept those narratives as admitted in the tradition. This attitude of Ibn Khaldūn is not compatible with his theory suggested in the science of ʿumrān, which is the human area that relies on the causality. Within this framework, there must be some rational explanations about supernatural events because those events influence nature. Also, when the effects of the celestial bodies are in question, Ibn Khaldūn refers to the refutations of theologians approvingly and claims the relation of cause and effect to have been different from what we know. In other words, according to Ibn Khaldūn, some cases that seem as a relation of cause and effect may be an individual manifestation of the divine will. Thus, for him, it is useless to contemplate the causes in the universe and is a danger misleading human reason. Ibn Khaldūn, who asserts that human reason cannot grasp all causes, offers to hold on tightly to the oneness of God (*tawhīd*). As clearly seen, Ibn Khaldūn follows intensively traditional thoughts. With

⁴² Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 3/992.

⁴³ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 3/1043-1045; 3/1031; Ibn Khaldūn, *Shifā al-sā'il*, 157-158.

⁴⁴ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 3/1037; 3/1079; 3/1042-1043.

⁴⁵ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 1/431; 1/414-415; al-Jābirī, *Naḥnu wa al-Turāth*, 276.

⁴⁶ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 1/410-412.

this perspective, we can say that everything that Ibn Khaldūn tries to explain with the causality in geography, economy, sociology, and politics can happen in fact by God's will, not by the relation of cause and effect. Consequently, this kind of approach of Ibn Khaldūn weakens the theory defended by himself.⁴⁷

2. Ibn Khaldūn and Rational Knowledge

The second section of this study is about knowledge and we will also touch on the concepts of human reason and logic.⁴⁸ This section focuses on the point where Ibn Khaldūn's critiques intensify. A holistic approach is necessary to understand the issue. Firstly, we know that Ibn Khaldūn does not have sympathy with philosophy. He claims al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā to have been a heretic. For him, dealing with matters of physics and metaphysics is useless. Thus, giving up dealing with those matters is a sign of being a good Muslim at the same time. Besides, instead of the way of philosophers who follow the rational method, he recommends the way of *taṣawwuf* to attain the truth. In the way of *taṣawwuf*, isolation from all sensate and rational comprehensions is the main principle.⁴⁹ Even though Ibn Khaldūn has many critiques against philosophy, the purpose of this section is not to answer them. This section aims to show a similarity between Ibn Khaldūn's abstractions in the science of 'umrān and philosophers' abstractions in physics and indirectly in metaphysics. We see that Ibn Khaldūn contradicts himself when he criticizes philosophers concerning the formations of universals.

Ibn Khaldūn mentions three different worlds: the sensate world (*'ālam al-ḥiss*), cogitation world (*'ālam al-fīkr*), and the spiritual world (*'ālam al-arwāḥ*). The sensate world is the physical world where human beings and animals share. The world of cogitation, where there are no animals, is higher than the sensual comprehensions. As for the spiritual world, it is in the highest degree, and humans attain the knowledge through dreams and divine guidance (*sharī'a*). According to Ibn Khaldūn, we have knowledge and thoughts in our hearts about the existence of the spiritual world, but the most obvious proof is the authentic dreams. Rational knowledge that philosophers try to reach with the method of logic is not functional in this world. Also, the knowledge of philosophers about this world is nothing else other than conjecture. The way of acquiring certainty (*yaqīn*) is to believe what the religion informs. As seen, Ibn Khaldūn does not have any proof or sound argument, whereby most humans can affirm for the existence of this world, except personal dreams and beliefs. Thus, we cannot say that the knowledge that comes through dreams and religions is more reliable than the rational knowledge that philosophers try to acquire with the methods of logic.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 3/966-968; 3/1089; Arslan, *İbn Haldun*, 360-372.

⁴⁸ Since the concept of knowledge has a connection with sciences, Ibn Khaldūn touches upon the classification of sciences. However, it is not at the center of our study. For detailed information, see Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 3/1114; 3/930; 3/991; 3/1006; Aygün Akyol, "İbn Haldun'un İlim Anlayışında Felsefe ve Tarih Tasavvuru", *Hitit Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 10/20 (2011), 35.

⁴⁹ Ibn Khaldūn denies the philosophers' claim that it is possible to attain an authentic knowledge in the metaphysics by employing rational and logical methods. This point is a problem worthy of research in detail. However, when we look at al-Fārābī, who is at the center of Ibn Khaldūn's critiques, we see that al-Fārābī does not have such a claim. On the contrary, he says that since we have a physical body, our knowledge about God cannot be perfect at all. Abū Naşr Muḥammad al-Fārābī, *el-Medīnetü'l-Fāzıla: Tanrı-Âlem-İnsan*, trans. Yaşar Aydın (Istanbul: Litera Yayıncılık, 2019), 60-65; Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 3/1082-1084.

⁵⁰ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 3/921; 3/930; 3/1003-1004; 3/1029; 3/1083; Arslan, *İbn Haldun*, 196.

In the pages ahead, the point where we focus on is the world of cogitation. According to Ibn Khaldūn, the greatness of the human aspect of human beings is proportional to the greatness of their cogitative faculty. It is because, by this faculty, human beings understand the coordination and the relation of cause and effect in the universe.⁵¹ Human beings perform plausible and consistent acts with this faculty only. It is the most significant difference between humans and animals. On the other hand, Ibn Khaldūn considers human reason to be incapable of grasping all causes and criticizes the philosophers, for they claim people to know God by contemplating the natural cause and effect relation.⁵²

Human beings acquire knowledge with the cogitative faculty beyond the sensual perceptions and think of immaterial beings. According to Ibn Khaldūn, the term *afida* (heart-*fu'ād*) in the Qur'ān means contemplation. The cogitation has several degrees. The first is the degree of the discerning intellect (*tamyīzī*) whereby human beings distinguish good from bad, and it is relevant to conceptualizations (*taṣawwūrāt*) mostly. The second is the degree of experimental intellect (*tajrībī*) that helps human beings to regulate social relations. It is relevant to assents (*taṣdīqāt*) mostly. The last one is the speculative intellect (*naẓarī*) that enables human beings to pass beyond senses and know things that are not physical. This degree is relevant to conceptualizations and assents arranged in specific conditions. Human beings can produce new knowledge in this degree of cogitation.⁵³

Ibn Khaldūn begins the process of comprehension of the soul with senses. Then, the common sense (*ḥiss al-mushtarak*), which is the first of internal comprehension faculties, comes into play. It helps people to perceive tangible things. Afterward, the perceptions ascend to the imagination, which forwards the perceptions to memory. Lastly, all of them arrive in the cogitative faculty, whereby the act of thinking develops. It is a kind of spiritual area because human beings with this faculty can contemplate concepts without a need for material things. As compatible with these explanations, Ibn Khaldūn points out three kinds of human souls. The first is the soul of people who live at the level of sensory perception and imagination. Those people are scholars who do not have spiritual comprehensions. The second kind is the soul of saints. The scope of this kind of soul is broader than the first. Thus, saints, who have this kind of soul congenitally, are familiar with religious sciences and divine knowledge. As for the last kind, it belongs to prophets, who have precisely spiritual comprehensions that are superior to the knowledge of an ordinary human being. It is the divine revelation.⁵⁴

According to Ibn Khaldūn, the knowledge of an ordinary human being is an acquired knowledge (*muk-tasab*). Since human beings acquire knowledge through various methods, some veils between the knower and a known thing occur. Consequently, those veils are obstacles for a correspondence (*muṭābaqāt*) that is the mandatory condition of sound knowledge. Even though people resort to the principles of logic to assure

⁵¹ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 3/917-918.

⁵² Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 3/966-968; Murteza Bedir, "İslâm Düşünce Geleneğinde Naklî İlim Kavramı ve İbn Haldun", *İbn Haldun: Güncel Okumalar*, ed. Recep Şentürk (Istanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2017), 44.

⁵³ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 3/916; 3/924; al-Jābirī, *Naḥnu wa al-Turāth*, 269.

⁵⁴ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 1/413-414; al-Jābirī, *Naḥnu wa al-Turāth*, 271-274.

the existence of such correspondence, they usually do not succeed. For Ibn Khaldūn, with worship such as fasting, prayer, and invocation, a person turns to God, so that those veils may be removed.⁵⁵

In this context, the critiques of Ibn Khaldūn against the science of logic and his emphasis on correspondence as a criterion for sound knowledge are remarkable. For him, “the science of logic is rules “enabling a person to distinguish between right and wrong, both in definitions that give information about the essence of things (*māhiya*), and in arguments that assure apperception.”⁵⁶ In this definition, the point underlined is the fact that the science of logic contains many rules and whereby arrives at decisions. According to Ibn Khaldūn, those rules are not natural but technical.⁵⁷ As he said above, the process of comprehension begins with sense perceptions that are common to humans and animals. Only human beings can arrive at universals, so that they differentiate from animals. Ibn Khaldūn explains this process of comprehension concisely as follows:

The basis of perception is the *sensibilia* that is perceived by the five senses. All living beings, those which are rational as well as the others, participate in this kind of perception. Man is distinguished from the animals by his ability to perceive universals, which are things abstracted from the *sensibilia*. Man is enabled to do this by virtue of the fact that his imagination obtains, from individual objects perceived by the senses and which agree with each other, a picture conforming to all these individual objects. Such (a picture) is universal. The mind then compares the individual objects that agree with each other, with other objects that (also) agree with them in some respects. It thus obtains a picture conforming to both of the two groups of objects compared), in as much as they agree with each other. In this way, abstraction continues to progress. Eventually, it reaches the universal (concept), which admits no other universal (concept) that would agree with it, and is, therefore, simple.⁵⁸

After those explanations, Ibn Khaldūn gives more details about logic. He criticizes the philosophers’ understandings concerning the concepts of primary intelligibilia and secondary intelligibilia. Ibn Khaldūn clarifies those concepts as follows:

There are (certain) intelligent representatives of the human species who think that the essences and conditions of the whole of existence, both the part of it perceivable by the senses and that beyond sensual perception, as well as the reasons and causes of (those essences and conditions), can be perceived by mental speculation and intellectual reasoning. They also think that the articles of faith are established as correct through (intellectual) speculation and not through tradition, because they belong among the intellectual perceptions...They [philosophers] did research on the (problem of perception). With great energy, they tried to find the purpose of it. They laid down a norm enabling intellectual speculation to distinguish between true and false. They called (that norm) ‘logic.’ The quintessence of it is that the mental speculation which makes it possible to distinguish between true and false, concentrates on ideas abstracted from the individual *existentia*. From these (individual *existentia*), one first abstracts pictures that conform to all the individual (manifestations of the *existentia*),

⁵⁵ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 3/922.

⁵⁶ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 3/1021; Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, 3/137.

⁵⁷ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 3/1112.

⁵⁸ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 3/1021; Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, 3/137.

just as a seal conforms to all the impressions it makes in clay or wax. The abstractions derived from the *sensibilia* are called ‘primary *intelligibilia*.’ These universal ideas may be associated with other ideas, from which, however, they are distinguished in the mind. Then, other ideas, namely those that are associated (and have ideas in common) with (the primary *intelligibilia*), are abstracted from them. Then, if still other ideas are associated with them, a second and third abstraction is made, until the process of abstraction reaches the simple universal ideas, which conform to all ideas and individual (manifestations of the *existentia*). No further abstraction is possible. They are the highest genera. All abstract (ideas) that are not derived from the *sensibilia* serve, if combined with each other, to produce the sciences. They are called secondary *intelligibilia*.⁵⁹

Ibn Khaldūn’s critiques start at this point. According to him, the philosophers assume that their ideas about the material world rely on demonstration (*burhān*), but this assumption is false. Whatever they call demonstration is nothing else than conjecture. The philosophers, of course, have some rational premises. Those premises that have been originated mostly from secondary *intelligibilia* are not compatible with the fact. For Ibn Khaldūn, primary *intelligibilia* are compatible with the fact more than secondary ones, even though the philosophers claim secondary ones are absolute. Ibn Khaldūn says that even if we accept secondary *intelligibilia* to be compatible with the fact, it proves that they are not rational but sensory because the confirmation is possible with observation. Thus, the philosophers err twice: the first, they accept secondary *intelligibilia* as absolute and the second, claim those premises to have been purely rational.⁶⁰

According to Ibn Khaldūn, it is possible to determine the accuracy of information about the material world only by its compatibility with the fact. We should assess historical, sociological, political, economic, and military events and narratives conforming to this principle. For him, the narratives or information only that are in the sphere of possibility are acceptable. By the term possibility, Ibn Khaldūn refers to the possibility in actual fact, not in the intellect.⁶¹ Ibn Khaldūn criticizes scholars similarly. For him, the philosophers do not succeed in reaching *intelligibilia* from physical beings. Because of the same reason, scholars are not successful in politics either. Scholars deal with meaning always and produce the meaning by abstracting from sensory things. Like the philosophers, they have many ideas, which are not compatible with the fact. They are incompetent in political matters that are the area of reality since the thoughts found in the minds of scholars do not have any equivalent in the real world.⁶²

⁵⁹ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 3/1080; Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, 3/246.

⁶⁰ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 3/1082.

⁶¹ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 2/553. Furthermore, Ibn Khaldūn claims the prophets’ knowledge to have been superior since it relies on direct observations and is compatible with the facts. Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 3/923.

⁶² Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 3/1120. In this context, we may remember some words of Süleyman Uludağ, who claims Ibn Khaldūn to have been a realist eminently even in religion. It is because Ibn Khaldūn defends that natural and social phenomena – with some exceptions – cannot contradict Islam. Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddime*, 432 (fn.23). However, it is not clear how to determine those exceptions. How do we know which things we should reject because of their incompatibility with the facts? For example, in one town of Maghrib, there were some problems such as air pollution, stench, and some illnesses. According to some narratives, those problems stem from breaking a talisman. For Ibn Khaldūn, this claim is unacceptable and just a superstition. The reason for the air pollution is the stagnancy of air in that region. Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 2/786. But then, when Ibn Khaldūn mentions the supernatural events that happen at the hands of the saints, he refers to a narrative about a famous Sufi, Abū Yazīd Bastāmī. According to the narrative, when Abū Yazīd comes to the banks of Tigris, two banks of Tigris come together for him. Although

Having pointed out the similarities between scholars and philosophers, we continue Ibn Khaldūn's statements concerning the science of logic. According to him, no one can keep himself safe from mistakes in the science of logic because this science relies on abstractions. Those abstractions are far from sensory perceptions. Already the essence of this science is to constitute universal principles by moving away from material things.⁶³

As in human perceptions, Ibn Khaldūn considers rational methods in understanding the matters of the unseen to be useless. He claims those matters to have belonged to the spiritual world and been understandable only with a transmission (*naql*) coming from that world. Also, he reminds us that this kind of knowledge belongs to prophets and saints only. For Ibn Khaldūn, whoever attempts to reach this kind of knowledge through rational or scientific methods can arrive only where which is nothing else than error and heresy.⁶⁴

Ibn Khaldūn criticizes those who reach the universals through rational methods. Moreover, he says that since the matters of the spiritual worlds exceed the limits of the human intellect, a person should obey the religious transmissions. In this case, the human intellect becomes only a vehicle that enables people to distinguish the good from harmful and to maintain life in order. The only benefit of the science of logic Ibn Khaldūn considers is that the science sharpens the human intellect. Besides, people must be aware of the dangers and harms of this science.⁶⁵

Concerning the universals, Ibn Khaldūn says that each event in the ʿumrān is not suitable to compare with another one. Even though some events are similar to each other in some respects, they are different in other manners. Thus, we should not evaluate all of those events with the same criteria or rules.⁶⁶ On the other hand, when Ibn Khaldūn mentions history, he claims that in historical, sociological, and political events, only names and some data change while the flux of the events does not change at all. In this sense, he says “the past resembles the future more than one (drop of) water another.”⁶⁷

Furthermore, Ibn Khaldūn, who claims the universals that are produced by rational methods to have not been compatible with the facts, uses a similar method with the philosophers. The philosophers make the universals by abstractions from the particulars. And then, they build sound knowledge over those universals. In line with this knowledge, they produce new knowledge and arrive at a decision. As for Ibn Khaldūn, he also follows a very similar way. He observes social, political, economic, and military events and

he is in a hurry, he gets on a boat without steering towards this divine bestowal. Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 3/1044. Ibn Khaldūn, who considers much historical information to be superstition and nonsense because of their incompatibility with the facts, affirms this narrative either literally or metaphorically. So, why does he not prefer to interpret other historical information metaphorically?

⁶³ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 3/1121.

⁶⁴ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 3/994; al-Jābirī, *Naḥnu wa al-Turāth*, 269-270; Ömer Türker, “Mukaddime’de Aklî İlimler Algısı: İbn Haldun’un Bireysel Yetenekler Teorisi”, *İbn Haldun: Güncel Okumalar*, ed. Recep Şentürk (İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2017), 67; Arslan, *İbn Haldun*, 13, 371-379; Hasan Tanrıverdi, “Problem of Possible Rational Metaphysics According To Ibn Khaldun”, *Hitit Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 17/34 (2018), 9; Hasan Ocak, “İbn Haldun’un İslam Filozoflarına Yöneltilmiş Eleştiriler: Metafizik Örneği”, *Dinbilimleri Akademik Araştırma Dergisi* 13/3 (2013), 119.

⁶⁵ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 3/1086.

⁶⁶ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 3/1121.

⁶⁷ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 1/292.

changes, and then makes some universal principles by abstractions from the events. In line with those principles, he builds some knowledge concerning the fields of sociology, politics, and the economy as well. By basing on this knowledge, he arrives at some decisions about events that are general, not particular.⁶⁸ We know that Ibn Khaldūn's critiques against the philosophers are not about only their attempt to interpret the metaphysical world with the human intellect. He criticizes in the same way the philosophers' method of understanding the physical world as well. Therefore, we can use the same approach for Ibn Khaldūn's thoughts about sociology, history, economy, and politics that are among the elements of the physical world. In this respect, we can see that Ibn Khaldūn contradicts himself.⁶⁹

Conclusion

In the mind of Ibn Khaldūn, between religion and philosophy or human intellect and divine revelation is separated clearly. In this way, he intends to prevent the human intellect from interfering in the area of the religion. According to Ibn Khaldūn, while the divine knowledge addresses the soul of human beings, another kind of knowledge that enables humans to regulate the social life, where human beings reside physically, is in the domain of the human intellect. However, the intellect is a faculty of the human soul. Thus, identifying religion with soul and the social life with the intellect is a problem. The nature of humans is not suitable for this kind of matching. Hence, Ibn Khaldūn, who interprets both the religion and the worldly life through this distinction, could not get away from some contradictions mentioned in this study.

As a result of this contradictory attitude, Ibn Khaldūn explains everything in the universe with the relation of cause and effect while accepting narratives of miracles and supernatural events, which are found abundantly in the religious tradition, without regarding the absence of the causality. While he elucidates all social, historical, and political events with some specific rules, he does not need to provide rational or natural causes, for example, for the Islamic conquests that he considers to be the miracles of the Prophet.

⁶⁸ Some examples of universal principles that Ibn Khaldūn constitutes through his observation on particular individuals or events are the following: "conditions within the nations and races change with the change of periods and the passing of days... a few individuals only become aware of it." Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 1/321; Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, 1/56; "The common people follow the religion of the ruler." Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 2/506; Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, 1/300; "[Because of egoism-ta'alluh] in the nature of humans there is the inclination of haughtiness." Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 2/531; 2/846; Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, 1/337; 2/332. We encounter many similar examples that are based on such generalizations. Cannot say that those judgments always are valid and compatible with the facts. When we think that the science of 'umrān is full of these kinds of judgments that do not rely on demonstration, can we say that the science of 'umrān is useless, harmful, or false?

⁶⁹ Although this kind of similarity, Ümit Hassan claims that Ibn Khaldūn opposes the speculative rationalism, which does not rely on observation, is not objective and realistic. In this way, Hassan softens Ibn Khaldūn's anti-rational attitude. However, When Ibn Khaldūn criticizes the science of logic, he says that even if we accept that the ideas of the philosophers are compatible with the fact, it proves that they are sensory, not rational. So, in contrary to Hassan, it is not possible for Ibn Khaldūn a rationalism based on observation. Or, Ibn Khaldūn did not understand precisely what the philosophers call rational. We think that it is not possible for Ibn Khaldūn not to understand this contradiction, but possible for him to follow loyally the religious and mystical tradition that he has. Furthermore, it is a fact that the thoughts of Ghazzālī concerning the philosophers have been influential on Ibn Khaldūn. Hassan, *İbn Haldun: Metodu ve Siyaset Teorisi*, 118; Ibn Khaldūn, *Mukaddime*, 789 (fn.3); Korkut, "es-Siyâsetü'l-Medeniyye Eleştirisi", 182-191; Kamil Sarıtaş, "Gazzâlî'nin Akıl Tasavvurunun İbn Haldûn'da Yansıması Sorunu", *Marife* (Yaz 2014), 43-62.

As for the matter of knowledge, he puts forward some critiques against the method of the philosophers. Whether his claims are right or not is a problem of another study. But, while he criticizes the philosophers' way on the matter of reaching the knowledge of metaphysics and physics, Ibn Khaldūn follows a very similar method not in philosophy and logic, but in sociology, politics, and history. The disciplines are different, but the methods of Ibn Khaldūn and the philosophers are similar very much. This point also is another weakness in the approach of Ibn Khaldūn.

To sum up, we know that Ibn Khaldūn undoubtedly is one of the most significant thinkers in Islamic thought. Especially his work, *Muqaddima*, is full of enlightening explanations. On the other hand, although Ibn Khaldūn has enormous success in interpreting social, historical, and political events and changes, he does not show the same persuasiveness in philosophy. It is probably because of his loyalty to the religious tradition that he follows.

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