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The Possibilities of New Perspectives for Social Sciences: An Analysis Based on Ibn Khaldun's Theory of *Umrân**

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Abstract

The major obstacle in reinterpreting and reconstructing the cultural accumulation of the Civilisation of Islam is not only the unawareness of Muslim scholars of their heritage, but also their willingness to employ western perspectives to utilise this heritage. In order to overcome this tragedy, social sciences should be criticised through vivid and constructive analyses; and Islamic scientific tradition should be reinterpreted in a comprehensive manner. Instead of basic model transfers from the west, the original sources should be re-analysed. Ibn Khaldun and his *Muqaddimah* present an invaluable opportunity in that respect. However, modern scholarship contextualises Ibn Khaldun in anachronic ways, which in turn preclude the possibility of reproducing new scientific traditions. Indeed, Ibn Khaldun's conception of science rises on three pillars, complementing one another that are a comprehensive perception of universe, a historical consciousness, and a metaphysics of society. These three factors are interrelatedly systematised in the ʿilm al-umrân whose main theme of reference is *tawhid* in the traditional Islamic thought. Different stages of knowledge overlap in the epistemology of *The Muqaddimah*. The basic principles of Islamic thought are systematised in the framework of Qurʾanic ontological presumptions. Hence, the principles of common origin of the existence, *tawhid*, and the hierarchical absolution of Allah were continued. Therefore, this article will offer the *Umrân* (scienza nouva) of Ibn Khaldun as an opportunity to release the social sciences from its ontological dilemmas.

Keywords

Muqaddimah, Ibn Khaldun, ʿilm al-umrân, anachronism, social sciences, civilisational differences, westernisation of knowledge

Modernity and Modern Social Sciences

Despite the heavy concentration on post-modern discourse, which is primarily a critical reaction to positivism, the structure of contemporary modern social sciences has been largely positivist. The positivist outlook reduced 'science' to a simple level of factual reality and deduced reality only to a physical dimension. In the course of history, positivist outlook had considerable social, economic and political consequences in the memories of Western and Islamic Societies. This article will offer the *scienza nouva* of Ibn Khaldun as an opportunity to release the social sciences from its ontological dilemmas.

Modernity, whose roots go back to Renaissance, indicates a new era in the world history. Due to the overwhelming dominance of Europe in the world through power politics, modernity had emerged as a consequence of the sophisticated combination of new forms of production, political culture, and socio-economic order (Berman, 2000; Coşkun, 2003:45–71; Elias, 2004). This formation paved the way for the formation of a new mentality called 'modernism' refuting some basic propositions of the classical scientific system and offering a peculiar outlook for the existence. Hence, the mode of relations between Human-Human, Human-Nature and Human-God has begun to change. It is obvious that this change was correspondingly the reason behind the changes in modern society and individual. The best summary of this transformation of perceptions can be found in the response of Kant (1983:41), one of the intellectual founders of modernism, to the question of "What is enlightenment?": "Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's understanding without guidance from another. This immaturity is self-imposed when its cause lies not in lack of understanding, but in lack of resolve and courage to use it without guidance from another".

Thus, according to Kant, the childhood of humanity ended and the maturity began with the Enlightenment. The discourse of enlightenment rests upon three pillars: (i) the idea of society and history that is centrally based on progressivism; (ii) one dimensional understanding of truth which can be revealed through science and reason; (iii) and the understanding of a 'rational individual' who is the essential subject of history.

Religion seemed to be the major benchmark of discrepancy between Modern and Middle Ages. Faith and the rules of religion began to take different meanings in the very lives of people by the transformation of mentalities from religious to a secular one. Human became the measure of all things and defined the place of God and Nature in the life. According to this anthropocentric view, the old role of the Church was given to the new faith, namely to

the science, in governing people's lives.[1] It might seem surprising enough to see the use of religious practices in the earlier application of the scientific knowledge. However, modern science was claiming for the function of the religion, whence scientists charged for the position of clergy. This helps us to understand how the modern science emerged as a pagan religion proposing a godless *weltanschauung*.[2] Science replaced religion as the main source of reference: "A science which is deemed to answer all questions; untie all the knots; tell the unique truth; and show the righteous way, would only be a *religion*" (Kara, 2001).

However, there aroused suspicions both for the modern physic's mechanical imagination of the cosmos and subsequent social constructions. Critiques on modernity in the framework of post-modernity — by relying on intellectuals, such as Nietzsche and Heidegger — began to blame social sciences for their role in the disruption of traditional unity of societies with the purpose of controlling, disciplining, and engineering. The distinctive character of the postmodern critique was its approach to reality. Nevertheless, their cosmos was complex, anarchical, heterarchical, and ambiguous. Post-modern thinkers suggested the impossibility of representation of reality as oppose to the crisis of modernity which came out as a result of the will of controlling and redesigning reality. For them, the principle of objectivity lost its ground due to the incommensurability of reality. Hence, the facts of the social sciences were not independent from value judgments. Post-modern scientific paradigm countersigned the impulse of "anything goes!" leaving no room for truth. Thence, the passion of modernity for controlling the truth turned into destroying it in post-modernity.

Pursuits in Social Sciences: Reflection of Differentiation Based on Civilisation

The concept of 'social science' is the product of specific conditions that occurred in a specific time and space in Western Civilisation. For this reason, there is no 'social science' in other civilisations. This concept has always been associated with the natural sciences; and thus it is positivist.[3] The same matter had

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[1] In Christianity, God is defined as icons (in the forms of humans) because of the effect of old Roman beliefs. This is the basic form of *anthropocentrism* of Christianity.

[2] For defining the religious character of the notions of Enlightenment, Christopher Dawson (2001) says that important representatives, such as Mably, Condillac, Morelly, Raynal and Sieyes, were priests.

[3] For a detailed discussion, see Fay (1996).

been discussed in the Gulbenkian Commission, summoned under the leadership of Wallerstein, to be able to find solutions to the obstructions in social sciences. In the report of this commission entitled as *Open the Social Sciences*, it was stated that "…social science is an enterprise of the modern world. Its roots lie in the attempt, full-blown in the sixteenth century, and part and parcel of the construction of our modern world, to develop the systematic, secular knowledge about reality that is somehow validated empirically" (Wallerstein, 1996:2). This scientific background, which breeds the social science was modern and secular.

One of the major obstacles in finding appropriate solutions to misgivings of the social sciences is that modern innovators are trying to construct new epistemological bases without taking into account the necessity of a new and different ontology. It seems impossible to overcome the problem of ontology in the modern conception of science.[4] Thus, modern innovative attempts are failing in proposing alternative systems of kn1owledge; and their discussions cannot escape from being inconclusive. Likewise, the bravest propositions within the paradigm are from the third way options which are concurrently fruitless. Therefore, it has already become inevitable to look for different ontological outlooks.

Mentalities of different civilisations produce their peculiar attitudes and manners for the societies which share common mentalities. For the fact that whence the 'scientific' knowledge which has a certain duty and function in a civilisation is transferred to another one, thence looses its both capability of explaining factual conditions and virtue of being scientific due to the deviation from its ontological and epistemological bases (Şentürk, 1996:33–34). Hence, Muslim scholars should consult to the heritage of their civilisation and reinterpret their sources in order to produce moderate and sustainable responses to the challenges that they are facing with in the realm of social reality. This is due to the fact that "…behavioural differentiation is connected with civilisational differentiation; thus every civilisation has their idiosyncratic manners for explaining and settling their social problems" (Şentürk, 1996:41).[5]

In the context of this article, Ibn Khaldun is one of the primary sources that needed to be incessantly revisited. Yet, the main obstacle in reinterpreting

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[4] For the possible civilisational elongations of *weltanschauung*, see Davutoğlu (1997).

[5] According to Şentürk this deviance emerged from: (1) philosophical/theoretical infrastructures (paradigm): ontology, epistemology, methodology; (2) scientific validity at social intellectual level of knowledge; (3) organisation of knowledge in itself; (4) relevance to social life; (5) change and continuity; and (6) differences in specialisations (Şentürk, 1996:41).

and reconstructing the cultural accumulation of Islamic Civilisation is not only the unawareness of Muslim scholars from their heritage, but also their willingness to employ western secular schemes and methods to utilise this heritage. In order to overcome this tragedy, social sciences should be criticised with vivid and constructive analyses; and Islamic scientific tradition should be inherited in a comprehensive manner. In the following part of the article, we are going to explain some examples from the traumatic experiences of westernisation in the Muslim scientific tradition.

Scientific Rupture in the Muslim Scholarship: Expansion of Western Science or the Westernisation of Knowledge

Modern Western Thought created an illusion, which disregarded alternative perceptions of reality and convinced the rest of the world that there was only one valid epistemology. Indeed, the illusion was depending on the political, economic, military and cultural dominance of the Western world. Modern conception of science gave birth to changes which were not only contented with the disruption of its maternal civilisation's ontological presumptions, but also its *constructive destruction* brought about inescapable authority, irresistible control, and devastating imperialism over the rest of the world. Western civilisation paved the way for the elimination and destruction of other civilisations since its modern representatives retired the God, refused the divine, and created its own reference of justifiability.

Non-Western societies will continue to fluctuate in a world where "…diverse modes of relations are becoming uniform as if shaped in the same mould, unless they realise what is penetrating behind the visibly innocent science and technology" (Tuna, 1993:82). The remarkable contradiction should not be overlooked that "…while the Western power-holders are possessing the monopoly of the world supremacy and refusing to share the benefits of this monopoly, somehow, they are ardently willing to universalise the knowledge which was regarded as the source of this massive supremacy" (Tuna, 1993:85). This attempt was not worthless since the universalisation of the Western science and knowledge legitimises their supremacy. Modern scientific worldview has been annihilating the efforts of Muslim scholars who were contradictorily both striving to retain their liberty and utilise modern scientific methods. In this process, impotently suspicious outlooks disregarded the peculiar characteristics of the Western knowledge.

"Today, Muslim scholars have two types of knowledge: Functional and non-functional. The functional one is the knowledge of Western science system. This type of

knowledge is established upon some basic and practical scientific models through either directly receiving from the institutions of the West or from the Western institutions in their own countries. Their non-functional knowledge is relevant to Islamic values. Muslim scholars are a part of western science system and socio-philosophical worldview.... This overarching system hinders them to comprehend the idea of an alternative science model, which enables them to integrate science and technology with the Islamic values." (Tuna, 1993:82–83)

In this process, it was one of the recurrent facts that Muslim scholars systematically analysed their traditional classical works in the light of the current discourse and the modern scientific understanding. Consequently, those attempts unintentionally colonised their past and endangered the possibility of producing projections and alternatives based upon those classics. The solution could be reached through establishing firm connections with the heritage. Thus, non-Western societies could have the accumulation to surmount the fragmented understanding of truth in the social sciences. As Şentürk denotes "In order to overcome the depressions in our modern scholarly experiences, which came out in the process of social and scientific westernisation, we need to understand the process and analyse the reasons and consequences" (Şentürk, 1996:21). At this moment, it is compulsory to generate a new scientific understanding which has peculiar methods and distinct sources. Therefore, the current question is not only about how to produce science but also about how different civilisations will create a knowledge which will provide both their maintenance and self-reproduction.

Anachronic Delusions: Modern Ironic Readings of Ibn Khaldun

Understanding Ibn Khaldun with reference to the values of Islamic scientific paradigm is crucially important. Since one of the foremost fallacies of modern scholars is articulating the brilliant works of non-Western scholars and employing them as decorative components in ascertaining the foundations of modern conception of science. In connection with the current hegemony relations, teleological ends were drawn for the non-modern knowledge which has been reduced to an anterior through hierarchical categorisation and staging. Yet, ironically enough, the anterior was heralding the forthcoming glory of modernity. As Hentsch stated, it was the matter of using the oriental sciences and discoveries as raw materials in the modern scientific system (Hentsch, 1991), although it antecedes and feeds the modern Western science (Hobson, 2004:51).

A glimpse over the immense Ibn Khaldun literature ensures the modern researcher that: "Ibn Khaldun has almost become an intellectual household

name. In different ways, sociologists, economists, philosophers of history, as well as liberals, Marxists, Arab nationalists, and fascists have all claimed him as their own" (al-Azmeh, 1981:v). Making comparative studies about Ibn Khaldun became traditional in the literature. Ibn Khaldun was compared to the forthcoming intellectuals of the West; and his ideas and arguments were connected with the Western sciences. Those comparisons complemented for understanding the ideas, models and theories in *The Muqaddimah*. However, they also brought about some problems. The most important of these problems is the anachronic readings of *The Muqaddimah*.

Yves Lacoste stated that, "…the rediscovery and the translation of *The Muqaddimah* in the nineteenth century coincided with the rise of historical science and sociology in Western Europe. Many authors were struck by the similarity between Ibn Khaldun's work and their own preoccupations. Accordingly, they drew comparisons between the work of the Maghrebian historian and that of the modern historians and sociologists" (Lacoste, 1984:135). Indeed, there were some scholars who had an endeavour of modernising Ibn Khaldun, such as Zeki Velidi Togan, a leading scholar in Turkey in the first half of the twentieth century. According to him, Ibn Khaldun was the pioneer of the Italian philosopher Vico,[6] the German expressionist Oswald Spengler, and the British statesman and historian Arnold Toynbee, by establishing the cyclical philosophy of history. Likewise, Ibn Khaldun was argued to be the predecessor of Montesquieu by expressing the influence of the geographical factors and the society; and of the August Comte by founding of the basis of modern sociology through studying the laws governing the changes in society. Moreover, for Togan (1985:161–162), Ibn Khaldun was "…the forerunner of the contemporary materialist theory by attributing the primary agency to the economic factors in explaining the development of societies". Besides, Togan (1985:163) introduced Ibn Khaldun to the modern reader as a secular historian "…who could achieve to distinguish between religious and worldly affairs, though Ibn Khaldun himself was personally a religious Muslim". This last attempt was both due to the political struggles of his time and to his misinterpretation of the relations between *assabiyya*, religion and sovereignty in *The Muqaddimah*. Undoubtedly, his benevolent efforts were to honour the Muslim scholar, however, he decontextualised the cultural and civilisation framework into which Ibn Khaldun was born, grew up, and reproduced.

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[6] Since both of them has defined their scientific effort as discovering a 'new science', this comparison is used often.

This psychology was an encompassing irony, which absorbed even the modern scholars who realised and criticised the anachronic delusion. Umit Hassan, for instance, tried to expose this contradictory situation in the Ibn Khaldun literature; and pointed out the absence of an all-embracing perspective in the analyses of *The Muqaddimah*. However, Hassan (1998:20), himself, ironically reproduced the delusion by stating that, "...the modern historians will appraise Ibn Khaldun as the real founder of the science of history, who had performed a basic stage in liberating science from theology in an age where science was perceived not as classification but rather as accumulation". Hassan assumed that Ibn Khaldun made a sharp distinction between theology and science, and thus he himself showed the necessity of an all-embracing approach.

The major difficulty in the anachronic readings of Ibn Khaldun appears to be the misinterpretations in Ibn Khaldun's comprehension of religion. One of the pioneering sociologists in Turkey, Ziyaeddin Fahri Fındıkoğlu (1951:69–71) states that there are two dominant opinions in the orientalist literature about Ibn Khaldun's understanding of science and religion. According to the first opinion, every single social phenomenon that Ibn Khaldun discusses is connected with the Holy Qur'an and consequently connected with the will of God. On the other hand, the defenders of the second opinion argue that Ibn Khaldun, though carried the good manners of Islamic education as a sincere Muslim, interpreted the social phenomena in a realist way depending on reason and experiment. Accordingly, he used the verses of the Qur'an as justificatory tools for escaping from possible bigoted reactions. The primary representatives of the first group in the modern scholarship were H.A.R. Gibb and G. Richter; while the representatives of the second group were Gumplovicz and A. Von Kremer.

Indeed, the tone of classification maintains its validity in the late twentieth century scholarship. According to Bruce Lawrence, Ibn Khaldun was an 'agnostic relativist'. Lawrence (1984:8) states that, "...since faith is seen to be continuously and necessarily dependent on other parts of the Islamic world view, it seems to a theological positivist, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, that Ibn Khaldun has become an agnostic relativist, constructing Islam as but one of the several historical modalities in a cyclical pattern of recurrent change". Furthermore, Lawrence (1984:8) claimed that Ibn Khaldun was an Islamic positivist: "Islam, to him, was the historical articulation of a divine plan that was rational and, therefore, could be interpreted by those who had eyes to see and patience to examine all that had been revealed". Similarly, yet in a much more properly stated manner in harmony with Islamic terminology, Zeki Velidi Togan emphasised the importance of the efforts to understand

the place of religious doctrine in rationalising the cause and effect relations in history. Referencing to the dominant sects of Islam, Togan (1985:145–146) has argued that, "...though entire existence is the consequence of the will of God, God himself invented a tradition of doing things in accordance with a specific law. Although, this is the result of His will, yet God is unlikely to change His tradition".

Conversely, Fuad Baali (1988:16) who supports the second opinion says that, "...he [Ibn Khaldun] did not appeal to God, as an explanatory principle underlying the whole of history". According to him, Ibn Khaldun is a sincere Muslim; however, his religious beliefs have no determining effect on his scholarly works. Moreover, "...he [Ibn Khaldun] used The Koran as a source of information; and the different Koranic verse with which he ended each chapter may be thought of purely as a ritual aside. It was a customary way of writing at his time" (Baali, 1988:21). Zeki Velidi Togan[7] (1985:137) ranges the spectrum and states that, "...religion was not the principal factor for the Muslim scholars such as al-Birunî, Ibn al-Miskaveyh, Shams al-Iji, and Ibn Khaldun. For them, religion meant spirituality".

Both opinions are the products of orientalist outlook. However, arguments of the defenders of the first opinion are important for their attempts to correlate between Ibn Khaldun's relation with Islam and his interpretation of cause and effect relations in-between historical events. Possible elongations of the opinions aside, Muhsin Mahdi (1964:137) underlined that, "...Islamic historical thought developed parallel to Islamic philosophy". Fındıkoğlu warned the readers of the modern literature for the danger of misinterpretations. When Ibn Khaldun's vision in explaining social events in accordance with the will of God is considered, "...this should consequently have an influence on the judgments done through modern methodological doctrines" (Fındıkoğlu, 1951:69). According to him, Ibn Khaldun's conception of history and society falls into the framework of Islamic religion and civilisation (Fındıkoğlu, 1951:67).

Comparative studies in the literature aimed to praise the vividness and the genius of Ibn Khaldun. In this fashion, those comparisons accordingly denominated the 14th century Muslim scholar as the father, founder or the forerunner of modern social sciences. Franz Rosenthal (1984:14–15) termed this nostalgic, semi-romantic and sometimes reactionary tendency as 'forerunner syndrome'. Because of that, methodological critique of the literature

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[7] Presenting Togan in both categories is not a contradiction. This shows the confusion of contemporary scholars. So their situation is, occasionally, very ironic.

is important to understand the reasons behind this tendency of modern scholarship. Ibn Khaldun literature is a broad field which consists of many compartments and sections and sometimes contradicting one another. Nevertheless, the leverage of those studies is orientalist point of view. Because of that, orientalism precludes the understanding of the text, namely *The Muqaddimah*. The orientalist outlook cannot be confined to the foreigners, but it also includes the scholars of the Islamic civilisation who were alienated to their cultures.

In the example of Ibn Khaldun and Muqaddimah, 'secret and internalized orientalist outlook' ruptured the text from its authentic cultural context and turned into a subject in modern social sciences. Consequently, the broad literature, which was produced through the methods of social sciences, presents a problematic reading of the text. Although, there are some similarities between the methods of Ibn Khaldun and the modern disciplines in explaining the social phenomena, Ibn Khaldun's method includes peculiar characteristics of the Islamic civilization (Toku, 1999:16).

The major problem of the Ibn Khaldun literature coincides with the impasse of the modern social sciences. Minutely growing compartmentalization in social sciences created idiosyncratic realms of reality, which is not mutually referencing to each other. This led to the fragmentation of different aspects of the subject matter into pieces and deprived of the possibility of an overarching understanding. As a result, the proclamation of Ibn Khaldun as the forerunner of modern disciplines retrospectively justified the universality of social sciences. Al-Azmeh has rightly pointed out one of the reasons behind the anachronic delusion. However, this assertion should be evaluated in two layers, namely socio-psychological and civilisational. Socio-psychological analyses discusses the silent acceptance of perceiving modern social sciences as the perfect tools of producing knowledge that the reason of mankind could ever reach; whereas civilisational analyses discusses the consequences of neglecting inter-contextual incommensurability in speculative theoretical studies. There is a common social and intellectual background for this delusion which Muslim scholars are familiar with, namely 'inferiority complex'. This overwhelming feeling led the Muslim scholars to compare Ibn Khaldun with brilliant Western thinkers such as Montesquieu, Comte, Machiavelli, etc.; likewise led them to declare Ibn Khaldun as forerunner or superior to those of compared.

Indeed, understanding Ibn Khaldun in the current context of modern social sciences creates a vital challenge. It is the challenge related to how to understand a Muslim scholar, unquestionably a part of classical Muslim scientific tradition, in modern social sciences which encountered with a serious

ontological crisis of comprehending truth in a fragmented state. It should not be forgotten that undoubtedly there were many common points between the methods of Ibn Khaldun and modern social sciences due to the similarity of their subject matters, which are basically society and the structures of social occurrences. Nevertheless, highlighting the differences is as essential as emphasising the similarities in revealing the distinguishing features. The inferiority complex in modern Muslim scholarship created a precluding standpoint for understanding their heritage. In this context, emphasising the peculiarity and dissimilarities as much as similarities is a source of strength and renovation for both Muslim and Western scientific traditions. The purpose of the following parts is an attempt to understand Ibn Khaldun's vision of science in a comprehensive manner and to offer his conception of science as a cure for the ontological crisis of modern social sciences.

ʿ*Ilm al-Umrân* and Ibn Khaldun's Conception of Science

The most outstanding characteristic of Ibn Khaldun's new science is the extensive use of reason in explaining the dynamics of social change and the stress upon material conditions governing the physical world. Nevertheless, they are not the unique sources of Ibn Khaldun's scientific conception since he utilised the understanding of *tawhid*, which represents the omnipotence of Allah in the traditional Islamic thought, as an ontological foundation for his new science. Positivist and secular readings of ʿ*ilm al-umrân* focused solely on the physical aspect of his conception of science. Those readings disregarded the importance of the agency of the metaphysical, which is the prior cause of things. The agency of the metaphysical inherently exists in the text and sometimes exposed directly. Ibn Khaldun's conception of science rises on three pillars, which are: (i) a comprehensive perception of universe; (ii) historical consciousness; and (iii) metaphysics of society. These three factors are interrelatedly systematised in the ʿ*ilm al-umrân*, whose main theme of reference is *tawhid* in the traditional Islamic thought.

The tripartite root of the word *umrân* is 'عمر'. This verb can be derived from any of its first, second and fourth conjugations. Its infinitives, عمار, عمارة, عمْر عُمر, mean 'to live long', 'to be longevous', 'duration of life', 'construction of houses', 'inhabitedness', 'populousness', etc. (Ibn Manzur, 1970:881–884; Wehr, 2007). The main subject matter of ʿ*ilm al-umrân* is human social organisation whose experiences can be learned through history which "…deals with such conditions affecting the nature of civilisation as, for instance, savagery and sociability, group feelings, and the different ways by

which one group of human beings achieves superiority over another. It deals with royal authority and the dynasties that result (in this manner) and with the various ranks that exist within them. (It further) deals with the different kind of gainful occupations and ways of making a living, with the sciences and crafts that human beings pursue as part of their activities and efforts, and with all the other institutions that originate in civilisation through its very nature" (Ibn Khaldun, 1980:71).[8] Philosophers before Ibn Khaldun got closer to ʿilm al-umrân in terms of dealing with a similar subject matter. However, they could not form it as an independent 'science'. The principles and the method of ʿilm al-umrân are different than those of exegesis of the Qur'an, Islamic Jurisprudence, rhetoric, and politics of city. According to Ibn Khaldun, this 'science' is original for both its subject matter as well as for its method and principles. Ibn Khaldun claims it as his own contribution (Ibn Khaldun, 1980:77–78).

According to Ibn Khaldun, ʿilm al-umrân analyses every social phenomenon from the least basic to the most complicated and complex ones (Arslan, 1997:87–88). For him, the term 'nature of *umrân*' means that every single social phenomenon taking place in the *umrân* has an explainable reason. Furthermore, those reasons have particular courses, which can be comprehended. In this context, the nature of social reality resembles to the nature of material substance, which is the subject matter of physic or chemistry. Therefore, the subject of ʿilm al-umrân is to examine the changes accidental and the nature essential to *umrân*.

ʿIlm al-umrân is a kind of "…social metaphysics; and it is a kind of ontology in terms of discussing the essential symptoms of the society. This ontology is different than the ontology which deals with the existent from the point of view of the existence due to the fact that it examines a socio-historical realm as a unit of analysis that has never been realised before by the metaphysicians" (Görgün, 2005:543–44). The essential symptoms of *umrân* that are both its cause and consequence can be acquired through history. While giving information about the conditions of *umrân*, which means human social organisation, it functions as a reagent, which helps to distinguish between true and false information. With reference to its internal meaning, *umrân* is a comprehensive science, which explains the reasons of beings and dissolutions that take place in the world of occurrences.

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[8] In this article, three different translations of *The Muqaddimah* have been used. We offered Rosenthal's translation when it matched well with the others. On some occasions, we translated from Uludag's translation to Turkish and, to present the classical understanding of *The Muqaddimah*, we offered Pirizade's translation. This last one is very difficult to translate due to its complex and lofty language. In the text, it can be differentiated from the publication dates.

ʿ*Ilm al-umrân* is different than history which means the transmission of past events from its external aspect. *Umrân* represents the internal aspect of history, which contains every single meaningful data belongs to the past. Consequently, *umrân* becomes the purpose of the history. That is why, ʿ*ilm al-umrân* should be accounted in the category of philosophical sciences when a classification is made among them. It functions both as a model for understanding the social realm of existence throughout human history and as a historico-philosophical analysis to resolve the relations between the absolute will and the particular will. Therefore, ʿ*ilm al-umrân* is beyond either history or sociology, yet it is a "…social metaphysics which is expressed in the classical scientific tradition" (Görgün, 2005:545).

Umrân *and Cosmology*

According to Ibn Khaldun, there are two basic factors, which lead to the change of stages in *the umrân*: (i) the true nature of created beings; and (ii) geographical facts (Ibn Khaldun, 1980:173). Here, "the created beings" refers to two things, which are first the abstract assets of the fiduciary world that develops in the socio-historical realm of reality and second the concrete assets of the perceptible and sensible material world. The principle of *tawhid* implies that all assets in the world have similar courses since the true possessor of all the creation is one and unique who is Allah. Then the question comes that might Allah have arranged similar natures both to *the world of occurrences* as he did to *the world of things*? The connection of traditional understanding of cosmology with the ʿ*ilm al-umrân* should give an answer about such a supposed relation.

Ibn Khaldun makes a cosmological explanation to put forward how the *umrân* rises in the material world, which is not independent from the will of Allah. According to him, all the elements in the world are in a perfect harmony. "This world with all the created things in it has a certain order and solid construction. It shows nexuses between causes and things caused, combinations of some parts of creation with others, in a pattern that is both remarkable and endless" (Ibn Khaldun, 1980:194). There is a distinction between the two realms of existence for better explaining these regularities. They are the *world of things* (*âlem al-anâsır*) and the *world of occurrences* (*âlem al-havâdis*) (Görgün, 2005:544). The world of things is composed of four elements, which are earth, water, air and fire.

> "Beginning with the world of the body and sensual perception, and therein first the world of visible elements, (one notices) how these elements are arranged gradually and continually in an ascending order from earth to water, (from water) to air, and

(from air) to fire. Each one of the elements is prepared to be transformed into the next higher or lower one, and sometimes is transformed. The higher one is always finer than the one preceding it." (Ibn Khaldun, 1980:194)

There is a similar case in the world of occurrences meaning "the world of creation" and an ascending order from minerals to plants, (from plants) to animals, (from animals) to humankind, and (from humankind) to angels (Ibn Khaldun, 1980:195–96). In both worlds, there is an outstanding preparedness to transform from one level of creation to another.

One can find many examples of the theory of four elements (*anâsır-ı arbaaʿ*)[9] and the three kingdoms of nature (*mevâlid-i selâse*) in Aristotle, tractates of Ihvan-ı Safa, Ibn Maskaveyh's *Tehzib-ül Ahlak*, Iranian geographer and astronomer Kazvînî's *Acâib-ül Mahlûkat*, and Ibn Tufeyl's *Hay İbn Yekzan*. Here, Ibn Khaldun follows the classical cosmological teaching (Ibn Haldun, 2005:284). However, what is striking here is that Ibn Khaldun borrowed the logic of contiguousness between the elements and their willingness and preparedness for transformation from one element to another, and then applies to his *ilm al-umrân* which is a grand theory to explain the complex patterns of human social organisations throughout history.

There is a similar logic in the dynamic relations, which are continually taking place in *the world of things*. It can also be seen in *the world of occurrences*, which is shaped, by human will and human social activities. Individuals, due to their given creation, are incapable of living by themselves and consequently tend to live in cooperation with one other. The necessity of providing the basic needs for their pre-eminence produces society. Therefore, an individual is contiguous to Bedouin society as the preliminary form of human social organisation; and besides has the willingness and preparedness to change his life in accordance with the necessities of this more pleasant life. Solidarity is powerful in the Bedouin society. People who live in such a society face with various difficulties since it is the primitive form of society. However, as a virtue, they acquire strong and brave characters under hard conditions. Those features help them to be victorious over others. In the end, Bedouin society achieves wealth and the state. Indeed, the purpose of *assabiyya* is wealth and state, whereas the purpose of Bedouin society is sedentary civilisation.

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[9] In the classical scientific tradition, these elements are perceived not only as physical materials, but also as metaphysical entities. For instance, water is not perceived as something which came out as a result of cohesion between two hydrogen atoms and one oxygen atom; rather, it was perceived as a principal material which gives life to existence.

(Ibn Khaldun, 1980:[II]291–292) The Bedouin society's achievement of reaching sedentary civilisation is the result of its nature just as the natural condition of the transformation from minerals to the plants and than to the animals in *the world of things*. In fact, Bedouin society is the preceding step for sedentary civilisation; and latter born out of the former. Thus, a human social organisation passes from one stage to another in *the world of occurrences*. In this new and more pleasant stage, people supplies their basic needs and even more they began to accumulate for the future. The ways of earning livelihood differentiate and profits increase; high buildings are constructed; aesthetic arts are performed; and people's characters loose their braveness. Right at this point, a rupture and transformation begins because of the nature of sedentary civilisation. In a society where enjoyment and pleasure is dominant, *assabiyya* (group feeling) begins to be lost. Canons break the steadiness of people. Hence, they loose their endurance and power for resistance. They cannot defend themselves against the external threats. And due to its nature, sedentary civilisation faces with corruption and decline. Therefore, human social organisations follow a pattern in the world of occurrences transforming from one stage to another, acting in accordance with their nature just as in the world of things.

The relations between elements, which constitute the world in the traditional cosmological thought, share the same frequency with the relation that Ibn Khaldun proposes for explaining the social change. The characters of different stages of human social organisations are "discordant and contrary to each other" just as in the world of things, yet contiguous in any case. There is an organic relation between stages like in the minerals and plants. In addition, human social organisations incline and desire transformation in an ascending order to a more pleasant and comfortable stage. This parallel between the world of things and the world of occurrences is a natural outcome of a vision, which envisages human and society as an immanent result of the universe that was created by Allah. Thus, one of the most important peculiar features of the *ilm al-umrân* comes out that it is the reflection of an ontology that perceives the existence as a whole and in a unity.

History and Social Metaphysics

The relation between history and ʿ*ilm al-umrân* resembles to the relation between the Aristotelian notions of material and the final cause. History is the material cause of ʿ*ilm al-umrân*, while ʿ*ilm al-umrân* is the final cause of history. In this context, ʿ*ilm al-umrân* is an independent science as well as its relation to history is fundamental. According to Mahdi, historical knowledge is prior to understanding *umrân* whereas *umrân* is prior in the hierarchy of

existence (Ibn Haldun, 1868:[II]168). ʿ*Ilm al-umrân* aims to discover the wisdom in the similarities of single historical events and opens the doors of grasping the nature of things. Hence, it constructs a historical consciousness in philosophical sense. Ibn Khaldun reaches *Umrân* by means of history. Ibn Khaldun says that, "…while considering the history and past events carefully, writing an original work came to my mind. Thence, I put the historical events in an order and attested the causes and reasons for the beginnings of the states and the *umrân*" (Fındıkoğlu, 1951:42).

ʿ*Ilm al-umrân* aims to reveal the truth beyond realities. It is the historical information, which keeps the fragments of realities inside. This information is processed in the methods of history and then realities are constructed. After that, it becomes possible to understand the conditions of *umrân* through discovering regularities, continuities, and coherencies among the realities of different times and spaces. However, history lost its prestige because of the historians who are deprived of the ability of reasoning, and further it became the composition and transmission of fantastic stories in the society (Ibn Khaldun, 1980:15). The major reasons of committing erroneous information in transmissions of the past events are historians' deliberate desire to mix some false information to make their stories more fascinating; their unawareness from the purpose of that information; consequently their inability to satisfactorily judge between the events; and more importantly their unawareness of conditions of the *umrân*. Fortunately, *umrân* functions as a touchstone since there is a nature of the social reality and enables us to distinguish between the past events which may possibly happen in the past and which may not (Ibn Khaldun, 1980:16). If one grasps the conditions of the *umrân*, then he grasps the nature of the historical events as well. Hence, it becomes possible to reach the true information by applying this method to history.[10]

According to Ibn Khaldun (1980:17), "…the past resembles the future more than one (drop of) water resembles another". In this sentence, the word 'present' does not exist visibly, but it has a very important position in terms of meaning. Present, here, is the mainstay, which connects the past and the present. What we have is a harmonious conciliation between discrete historical realities and the truth. Both the discrete historical realities, which are constructed through accumulation of past information and the realities of the

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[10] Contemporary Ibn Khaldun scholars thought that ʿ*ilm al umrân* was generated only for the verification of historical events and accused him for establishing a science whose benefits are very few. Indeed, this new science was more than history since it gives information about the condition of human social organisation and general patterns governing their social practices (Ibn Haldun, 1868:5).

present that are grasped through observation, converge with the truth in the notion of *present*, since the truth is over all other realities and continues to manifest itself as the result of *sunnetullah*. It is the only time that the scholar could able to think. This relation between past, present, and future denotes the fact that history is the composition of continuity and discontinuities. The possibility of the occurrence of a past event is similar to the possibility of the occurrence of a present event since the nature of social formations is similar to one another.

Theories and ideas of Ibn Khaldun are interlinked with one another. According to Baali (1988:31), "To Ibn Khaldun, society is not a haphazard entity. He perceived the interdependence of the religious, political, economic, military, and cultural spheres of human society. They are inseparable and linked with one another; a change in one sphere or aspect affects others in one way or another". Thus, the order of society, in the Khaldunian conception, rests upon the will of God; and historical process is not free from his will. The will of God may reflect in the society both directly or indirectly. Allah directly shapes the ongoing socio-historical realm of existence by sending prophets. There are three things which should be distinguished: "the conditions that attach themselves to the essence of civilisation as required by its very nature; the things that are accidental (to civilisation) and can not be counted on; and the things that can not possibly attach themselves to it" (Ibn Khaldun, 1980:77). When this separation is considered, religion is something possible rather than being indispensable to occur in the *umrân*. In other words, religion is God's blessing and mercy over his servants. Indeed, there were *umrân*s without religions in the past societies. On the other hand, the will of God that is immanent in the historical processes can be understood through grasping the order of the both worlds, namely *world of things* and *world of occurrences*. This is because living beings are subjected to the orders of *the world of things* and the regularities there are the result of *sunnetullah*, which is God's habit to arrange things in an occasional course. Thus, "human is able to conceive the order in the creation of God through his power of reasoning" (el-Husri, 2001:353). In other words, Ibn Khaldun's metaphysics is the name of the effort to conceive the *sunnetullah* in the world of beings and dissolutions (Görgün, 2005:544). Gibb (1991:189) notes that, "Although Ibn Khaldun's continual recourse to *Qur'an* and *Sunna* is left aside, Islamic and moral foundations of his thought can implicitly be seen throughout his study". *Sunnetullah* can be comprehended through God-given reason that distinguishes man from animals and from other living beings. Thus, *ʿilm al-umrân* unravels the similarity and regularities of the divine language with which Allah has created the worlds.

Every occurrence, which takes place in certain possible stages of the *umrân* is directed towards an objective. Every realised occurrence loses its *raison d'être* and a consequent process of degeneration begins (Görgün, 2005:550). In this context, the Bedouin life is prior to the sedentary life and always attains to reach it. Bedouins can scarcely supply the basic necessities; and they mostly submit to the conditions of the nature. Whereas in the sedentary life wealth and richness largely increased; arts and sciences are refined; monumental buildings are constructed; and people do not worry for their future livelihoods. Because of those features of the sedentary life, Bedouins desire to live in the sedentary civilisation. Nevertheless, whenever they reach to the level of that civilisation, their good manners deteriorate; and their souls lose their sincerities as they covet to the worldly desires. They become discouraged. People who are living in the sedentary life rely upon laws, which break the firmness of their characters; and they lose their strength. Thus, times would have passed and the conditions of the *umrân* would have changed (Ibn Khaldun, 1980:249–267). Beings give their places to the dissolutions since conditions of the societies endure in the same course. Every occurrence corresponds to a stage whether rising or decaying. The line of 'Bedouinhood'-civilisation-and-decay follows one another. This is what is called 'the theory of stages'. For as much as noting is eternally fixed in the world. If that would be the case, then it would be contrary to the *sunnetullah*.

However, we need to point out the fact that Allah does not always wish the direct decline of the societies at all. Every stage in the *umrân* has its own particular characteristics. Furthermore, stages impose certain possibilities on the societies. In such a framework, individuals of the society incline to behave in similar ways in the similar conditions and consequently social change emerges as a whole. Although this irresistible inclination does not follow a predetermined course, however, it has been the actual practice throughout history. Hence, "For Ibn Khaldun no one mode of life attains the adequacy or moral stability to endure, let alone progress indefinitely. Presiding over the inevitable dying falls of history is an implacable but ultimately fair moral judgment, whose sentence is written in our characters, by our choices and human limitations. In the words of the Qur'an (48; 23; 33:62) repeatedly quoted by Ibn Khaldun, 'This is God's way, established of old. Thou wilt never find change in God's way'". (Goodman, 2003:210–211).

According to Ahmet Davutoğlu (1994:46), "...the basic principle of Islamic theocentric cosmology is the belief of *tawhid* (*Lâ ilâhe illa Allâh*) and its conception of Allah. The principle of *tawhid* is the main channel from theory to practice, from belief to life, and from ideal to reality in the holistic Islamic *Weltanschauung*". In our opinion, the Islamic belief of *tawhid* is also

central to Ibn Khaldun's method. According to Ibn Khaldun, Allah is the Lord of the order pertaining to the creation that was the beginning of *the world of things* and *the world of occurrences*. Such that one cannot think of existence without God, world without existence, human without world, society without human, and *umrân* without society. Ibn Khaldun says that:

> "God created and fashioned man in a form that can live and subsist only with the help of food. He guided man to a natural desire for food and instilled in him the power that enables him to obtain it. However, the power of the individual human being is not sufficient for him to obtain (the food) he needs, and does not provide him with as much food as he requires to live.... Likewise, each individual needs the help of his fellow beings for his defence, as well." (Ibn Khaldun, 1980:45)

Thus, solidarity becomes inevitable. Through solidarity, people create commonly shared environments. At the end, seeds of society are inseminated. Societies inhabit on the earth within certain conditions: those conditions characterise states, which encompass and embrace the wills of individuals. Those states are more than the sum of the individual wills. They are the stages that at some point govern the lives of very people. Stages are the embodiments of the *umrân* and represent its continually and constantly changing phases. This means that:

> "God's wise plan that mankind should subsist and the human species be preserved will be fulfilled. Consequently, social organisation is necessary to the human species. Without it, the existence of human beings would be incomplete. God's desire to settle the world with human beings and to leave them as His representatives on earth would not materialise." (Ibn Khaldun, 1980:46)

If *umrân* is emerging out of the existence of 'mutual cooperation' among humans and leading them 'to obtain their food and nourishment', therefore, he is the God who willed both the formation of society and the *umrân* which consequently came out of it.

Ibn Khaldun does not envisage the socio-historical knowledge and the existential knowledge as separate from each other. One of the earlier thinkers who realised this relation was Pirizade Mehmet Sahip Efendi who translated *The Muqaddimah* into Turkish with a peculiar manner and style in the first half of the eighteenth century.[11] As a continuation of the traditional Islamic

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[11] Pirizade Mehmet Sahip Efendi began his translation in 1725 and completed in October 1730. Indeed, he translated two thirds of the *Muqaddimah*. He dedicated his work to Sultan Mahmut I (1730–1754) couple of weeks after his enthronement. (Ibn Khaldun, 1868:4) This

text production, he wrote an introductory formula (*hamdele*) in the begin-
ning of the translation. Indeed, this formula contains the main intention of
the whole work. Let us translate the beginning of the formula:

> "The unprecedented, the praised, and the elated harmony and praise-folding and dis-
> seminating holy order are both worthy and filling to the sublime magnificence based
> on the verse of the Qur'an "كل يوم هو في شأن" that manifold appearances on the mirror
> of the world in which thousands of signs covered in the internals and the externals,
> and manifestations from absence onto page of existence are the obvious evidences of
> the examples of His power and deity." (Ibn Haldun, 1868:[I]2)[12]

In this formula, Pirizade mentions the relation between the will of God and
the order of the world. The verse of the Qur'an highlighted above implies
that the manifold events taking place visibly are not independent of Allah.
Besides, he also implies that every appearance taking place on the mirror of
the world is happening by His will. This is what exposes the wisdom behind
the events occurring in the socio-historical realm of reality such as conven-
ience or inconvenience of the climate for the realisation of the *umrân*, passing
from one stage to another in the *umrân*, and the meaning of the continuous
line of 'Bedouinhood'-civilisation-and-decays. Indeed, Ibn Khaldun accounts
ʿilm al-umrân within the category of philosophical sciences. In our opinion,
this formula reflects the internal epistemological purpose of *The Muqaddimah*.

However, while explaining the relations between God and the socio-historical
realm of reality Ibn Khaldun does not equate the actions of man with the
purpose of God. In other words, "…his philosophy of history is not a theod-
icy as Hegel's" (Enan, 1975:166). In the various parts of *the Muqaddimah*, the
belief is reflected that *raison d'être* for the existence of the socio-historical
realm of reality and occurrences pertaining to it are not outside the informa-
tion and the will of Allah. Furthermore, he is the Allah who gives an order

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translation has been completed by another Ottoman scholar and statesman, Ahmet Cevdet
Pasha (1822–1895).
    [12] Here is the simplified version of the formula in Turkish. "Emsalsiz ve şükre layık bahtiyar
düzen ve hamd-ü senalar saçan yüce nizam dergâh-ı muallâ-yı kibriyâya layık ve şâyândır ki,
âlemin aynasında görünen türlü türlü suretler olayların bir yüce delil mealince, ki "O [Allah],
her daim bir iş bir yapış halindedir", gaybden varlık sayfasına zuhur eden belagatli hikmetin
meydana çıkan örnekleri kudretinin apaçık delilleri olup sahife-i enfüs ve afakta örtülü olan
binlerce ayet, kâinatın suretlerinde uluhiyyetinin kat'î delilleri olarak yükselen rabliğinin
kanıtlarıdır. O, bir numunesi ve örneği olmayan eşyanın ilk mucididir ki, fiilleri yakinen bilen
ve ilminin muhkem eserleri kuşattığı gayb ve şehadet âleminin Muhît'i olduğuna apaşikar delili
olup vucub-u vücudda inayet ve cömertliği emsalsizliğine ve tekliğine apaçık bir delildir." (İbn
Haldun, 1868:2).

and harmony both to *the world of things* and *the world of occurrences*. Ibn Khaldun does not say that God does minutely determine the conditions in the *umrân*, which can be seen as *the category of possibilities*. But it is the course of the world which functions in accordance with *sunnetullah*. Somehow, the qualities of people's behaviours in the stages that they live, have something to do with the meaning of their lives and influence their relations with God.

> "Still, it is not the naturalism alone (much as this may be prized by modern writers), nor even the moral vision that is distinctive in Ibn Khaldun. His most lasting value lies in his fusion of the two, his naturalisation of the scriptural vision, returning it to the experiential grounds that first gave rise to the prophetic claim that god acts in human history." (Goodman, 2003:206–207)

Modes of Epistemology

Umrân as a socio-historical realm of existence represents *the world of occurrences* shaped through regular actions. Here, we see the realm in which human will is mostly determinant. In the world of occurrences, some actions are orderly and regular as emanated from humans; and some others irregular and disorderly as emanated from animals (Ibn Khaldun, 1980:[II]413–414). Ability to think is peculiar to human; and enables him both to attain the consciousness of the sensible world and to grasp the world beyond human senses. This ability is the basic tool that renders the actions meaningful. For the fact that world of occurrences is shaped through the actions of humans who have ability to think (Ibn Khaldun, 1980:[II]412–413). In this context, human intellect is an adequate and sufficient source of knowledge to understand the conditions, which take place in the world of occurrences. Then the question comes as to whether the human intellect is capable of explaining everything in the universe. Right at this point, Ibn Khaldun makes use of another mode of knowledge.

With regard to its certainty, the transmitted sciences produce more objective and certain knowledge than the human intellect. However, the transmitted sciences are not the unique sources of knowledge in the Islamic thought. God-given human reason shares both the same timbre with the divine source of knowledge, in order to grasp its meaning, and enables to understand the actual occurrences taking place in the *umrân*. In fact, when Ibn Khaldun says that we can only believe if a miracle takes place in the course of history, he draws the limits of human reason. It is the exposition of the cognitive incapability of human intellect, rather than doing a secular separation between the human knowledge and divine knowledge. In other words, Ibn Khaldun changes the mode to understand an event beyond human senses. Therefore,

these two types of knowledge do not conflict but rather coexist in harmony with each other. As Muhsin Mahdi pointed out that, "…in short, there is only one order, but it is revealed to man in two ways: through divine revelation and through natural reason" (Mahdi, 1964:31). Such an approach might be reinterpreted in the social sciences as to provide the comprehensive outlook, which includes both the physical and the metaphysical aspects of knowledge.

Religion gives the knowledge of truth in philosophical sense. By this knowledge, humans realise the intention of God in creating the world and the human; they try to find the true of way of being a good servant of God by drawing lessons from the stories of past societies. In addition to this, God has ordered rules to humans through revelation for the easy and better perforation of these purposes. However, "…religion was not sent to explain all the aspects of the social lives" (el-Husri, 2001:353). At this point, human intellect comes forward. According to Ibn Khaldun, reason (*ʿakl*) is like a balance, which weights truly. Judgments of the intellect can be trusted. Unless, Ibn Khaldun, who explains the conditions of *umrân* and the natures of its conditions, claims that there are limits of the reason. Issues about the hereafter, prophethood, the true nature of divine attributes, and the things beyond the human intellect should not be measured with the sole human reason. According to Ibn Khaldun, "…the example of this looks like an ambitious man's desire to weight mountains in a precision balance which weights gold" (el-Husri, 2001:354). Therefore, Ibn Khaldun draws the limits of human intellect and assigns the relations between the transmitted knowledge and human knowledge within the axis of the principle of the *tawhid*.

Another example of this comprehensive approach can also be seen in Ibn Khaldun's description of the statecraft. According to Ibn Khaldun, "…if the laws are made by the people whose foresights and reasons can be trusted, this is called as the politics of reason (*siyasa ʿakliyya*). If the laws are put by God through *Şeria*, this is called the politics of religion (*siyasa diniyya*)" (Arslan, 1983:56). The politics of reason is divided into two: the one which protects the advantage of the ruler, and the other one which protects the advantage of the people. There are also differences between politics of reason and the politics of religion. The former one aims to attain the happiness in this world; while the latter aims to attain the happiness in both this world and the hereafter. In this context, politics based on the knowledge produced by *Şeria* does not necessarily exclude the politics of reason, but rather becomes contiguous and complements it.

The classical philosophers tried to prove the existence of prophethood depending on the idea that a ruling authority is necessary to keep people away from the evil activities that they may commit due to the bestial aspect

of his nature. However, according to Ibn Khaldun, the prophethood cannot be perceived by the human senses like the dynasties or the states. It is the mercy of Allah for his subjects and can be understood through *Şeria* rather than reason. However, what is principally important in the epistemological structure of *The Muqaddimah* is not the discussion of the possibility or impossibility of the occurrence of society or a state without the *Şeria*. Yet, it is rather the will of Allah who wanted human to be his representatives in the world through giving him a nature that entails him to live in a society. From this point of view, the readers of *The Muqaddimah* faces with the inherent form of *tawhid* reflect into the existence and nature of human social organisations (Ibn Khaldun, 1980:91–93).

Similarly, *assabiyya* (group feeling) is the natural manifestation of the human nature. The *assabiyya* in a society might mean something positive or negative. The negative one can be exemplified with the arrogance of the Arabs in the period of ignorance; the positive one, on the other hand, is the use of the power of *assabiyya* in the service of Allah. The second example is the desirable one (el-Husri, 2001:357–358). According to Ibn Khaldun, "*Şeria* does not blame the *assabiyya* due to its nature which is not bad at all. Indeed, it criticises the abuse of *assabiyya*. Otherwise, it is such a thing that if it is assumed to be futile then the laws of *Şeria* should have been accounted to be futile as well. There is no doubt in it" (el-Husri, 2001:357). Therefore, transmitted knowledge and the knowledge of reason have different sources in respect to their ontological roots. However, they intersect because the interlocutor of the both knowledge is human.

We have roughly tried to expose Ibn Khaldun's view of existence and of knowledge that he did not himself directly write about. It was because as a scholar who lived in the 14th century traditional system of education, Ibn Khaldun was not a part of the ontological and epistemological crisis of modern-day Islamic scholarship. Therefore, the attempt should be meaningful to reveal the inherent structure of *The Muqaddimah* and his approach to different sources of knowledge. In short, the main purpose to introduce Ibn Khaldun's conception of science was to analyse his ontological and epistemological understanding that he unintentionally utilised while writing *The Muqaddimah*. The purpose of the *umrân* would not be truly grasped with such an attempt. There is a leverage point in his ideas, which enables the comprehensive outlook. This leverage point is the principle of *tawhid* in the Islamic thought. It is what Ibn Khaldun based upon his social metaphysics and historical conception. There is a close and coherent relation between his vision of universe, conception of history, and the social metaphysics.

Bequest from Ibn Khaldun: The Possibility of Innovation in Social Sciences

Today, although there are various methods and paradigms in the current Western epistemology, they are largely one-dimensional. This one-dimensional approach has long been creating a vicious circle, which can only be overcome through critical analyses. The time for considering a new ontological outlook and subsequent epistemologies has already come.

As people who live in an age of crisis of the Islamic civilisation, we had better create an overarching paradigm that centres upon both the historical experiences and the peculiar ontological values based on the accumulation of discussions done by the scholars in different times and spaces. Otherwise, those discussions might face the danger of remaining as a useless bulk of information. Their originality can only be exposed in a value system whose characteristics are suitable to their contexts. In that sense, modern western epistemology still keeps its dynamism and productivity. But the modernity as a historical phenomenon is incidental. Consequently, when it was thought in the long-term historical durations, modernity seems undeniably provisional. Therefore, there is an opportunity for Islamic scholars to produce a civilisational sprinkle that is based upon their ontological outlooks and consider their historical heritage as a hope for the rest of the humanity. They can realise this purpose, unless they refrain themselves from the alienation to their past and civilisation; abstain from squeezing their heritage into narrow frames; avoid from retrospectively apologetic or exaggeratedly epic readings of history; and get the inferiority complex out of their minds. Only after then, they can benefit from the classical sources within their authentic contexts. At this point, *ʿilm al-umrân* has a leading character.

Taking Ibn Khaldun as an opportunity for discussing the possibility of innovation of the social sciences would have no further meaning other than taking one of his contemporary scholars. Besides, the conception of science in *The Muqaddimah* is not unique. In various books, which are systematised in the framework of Islamic thought, there are similar epistemological introductions. The epistemology of Ibn Khaldun had inherited the conceptual framework, which depends on a comprehensive consideration of the world put forward by the *Meşşai* and *Eşari* metaphysics. This also refers to the foundations of the peculiar perception of ontology, epistemology, and the world in the traditional Islamic thought. The aforementioned conceptual framework comes into open in the epistemology, which denotes the reason-sense-revelation and in the ontology that is expressed through the distinctions of incumbent-possible, and ancient-contemporary. Consequently, an attempt for innovation in social sciences presumes an accompaniment to the atmosphere in which the classical Islamic scholars were breathing.

The common ground suggests the comprehensive approach in the traditional Islamic thought as a solution to the crisis mentioned in the first part of the article. This comprehensive approach wins recognition due to its virtue of considering different layers of reality within the idea of stages. If it is taken into account that knowledge is subjected to existence, then the idea of stages do not exclude various layers of reality but rather assigns them a proper and moderate order within the given scientific framework. In such a way that the truth is thought in four categories such as rational (*aklî*), lingual (*lugavî*), customary (*örfî*) and sensual (*sem'î*). The rational, lingual, and customary realities can be thought in harmony with each other on the given (*mevhub*) level of sensual reality. When this framework is lost, subsequently the aforementioned stages also loose their reciprocity. In such a circumstance, epistemological crisis occur due to the loss of truth as it is seen in the modern social sciences.

Different stages of knowledge overlap in the epistemology of *The Muqaddimah*. The comprehensive perception of universe, historical consciousness, and metaphysics of society complements one another. The basic principles of Islamic thought are systematised in the framework of Qur'anic ontological presumptions. Hence, the principles of common origin of the existence, *tawhid*, and the hierarchical absolution of Allah were continued. "Ibn Khaldun, too, as the most sophisticated and productive scholar of the post-Ghazzâlî period, preserved this stability of the systematisation of the paradigm rather than discuss it" (Davutoğlu, 1994:76). Such an outlook presents a comprehensive approach giving the opportunity to overcome the ontological and epistemological fragmentation in the modern social sciences. Therefore, today, *'ilm al-umrân* should be utilised in a comprehensive manner; reinterpreted in accordance with up-to-date circumstances; and improved. It is the only way to inherit and reproduce a scientific tradition. Societies which don't have their scientific traditions are only the consumers of knowledge produced by other societies.

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