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### **Ibn Khaldūn and His “New Science”**

Ibn Khaldūn (1332–1406) claimed to have founded a brand new science, which never existed before him. What exactly was this science? And was it an accomplished science or but fragmentary beginnings of a whole range of sciences?

The works of the Arab scholar have attracted researchers’ attention for several centuries, and publications devoted to him are growing in numbers. Yet, the question up to now has not been answered. Moreover, while the studies are progressing, the hope to find common ground is diminishing. The time has come to study the studies on Ibn Khaldūn. F. Baali has analyzed about three hundred works on the Arab thinker.<sup>1</sup> We have no definite answer not only concerning what he was—a philosopher of history or a sociologist, an economist or a political scientist, or else an anthropologist; indeed there is no consensus on whether he was any of the above-listed at all.

Though there are fundamental works on various aspects of Ibn Khaldūn’s thinking, most scholars are analyzing his heritage “in parts,” taking up a certain aspect but ignoring the others. As a result, the principal thing comes to be lost, which is the methodology Ibn Khaldūn adheres to.

There is no consensus about this methodology either. Those who try to decry it are regarding either Ibn Khaldūn’s “sociological” or “economic” approach not as one of the aspects of his theory, but as the *only one* determining its whole architectonics. It results in reducing the comprehensive theory to only one of its possible interpretations. That is why, as it seems, a fair number of scholars are still speaking of an “encyclopaedic” (which means here “non-systematic”) character of Ibn Khaldūn’s theory whose individual aspects are irreducible to one another.

I suppose that the difficulty facing the scholars trying to define the character of Ibn Khaldūn’s theory is fundamentally methodological. Most of them are comparing Ibn Khaldūn’s views with chronologically later theories of European authors. Whoever was the Arab philosopher compared with! We may find here Montesquieu, Machiavelli, Comte, Weber, Marx, et al., et al. One may think that this seemingly ubiquitous approach reflects to this day the perplexity the European thinkers experienced after they descried Ibn Khaldūn’s theoretical constructions, and found in them astounding, sometimes inexplicable and nearly literal coincidences with formulations of later European scholars considered to be their own findings. And indeed, take for instance Ibn Khaldūn’s

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<sup>1</sup> *Baali, F.* The Science of Human Social Organization: Conflicting Views on Ibn Khaldun’s (1332–1406) *Ilm al-umran*. Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 2005.

statements like “earnings are equal to the value of human labour,”<sup>2</sup> or “gold and silver [measure] the value of everything that makes wealth (*mutammawwal*),” and are means of exchange and accumulation.<sup>3</sup> He says that the ways of life with different peoples may differ as much “as differ their ways of getting means of existence” (Chapt. II, § 1); that material and spiritual life of human beings are determined by geographical factors of their environment (Chapt. I, Introduction 3, 4). Surely, the similarities are so strikingly evident, that one cannot fail to think of parallelism. Consequently, Ibn Khaldūn appears to be a predecessor of the founders of sociology and political economy, an outstanding philosopher of culture and an anthropologist.

However, what we cannot find a parallel for is Ibn Khaldūn’s *comprehensive theory* as a whole. Only aspects of his views have found their reflection in the mirror of modern European sciences, but not its overall image. The fragmentary character of Ibn Khaldūn’s doctrine described by his researchers results from the very question they address to his texts. Comparing the Arab thinker with the founders or representatives of various European sciences, and regarding his ideas in the mirror of European thought, they fail to find in the latter what could *unify* the seemingly different and mutually independent trends of his thinking *into a whole*.

The situation looks rather strange: with studies in abundance and a sound textual base, why should we fail to find a consensus on the most important and, in all probability, not quite insolvable problem of what category of scientific knowledge Ibn Khaldūn’s theoretical constructions may belong to? The strangeness evidently lies in the *dissimilar similarity* between the Arab thinker and the many figures of European thought seemingly reflecting his theoretical constructions: taken separately, they look similar, but are quite dissimilar as a whole.

To my mind, the difficulty of interpretation is neither accidental nor technical. In other words, it is not that the scholars might have overlooked something in Ibn Khaldūn’s texts, so that a more scrupulous study could help in solving the problem. It is, in fact, the difficulty in understanding *the way* Ibn Khaldūn’s comprehensive science is constructed, his very vision of *unity*.

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<sup>2</sup> The statement appears in the title of § 1, Chapt. V (*Ibn Khaldūn*. Al-Muqaddima. Beirut: Dar al-fikr. P. 380. References here are to the Beirut edition, which I use as a textual base for the present study, though it deviates slightly from F. Rosenthal’s translation and—almost always exactly on the same points from Shaddādī’s critical edition of the *Muqaddima*).

We may add that Ibn Khaldūn develops the category of value (*qīma*) in its relation to the category of price (*si’r*), analyzing, besides labour (*‘amal*), the influence of various other components upon pricing (see Chapt. IV, § 12; Ibn Khaldūn. Al-Muqaddima. Beirut: Dar al-fikr. P. 364). He also regards the aspects of economic activities, which might be disadvantageous or adverse to society, and among them “holding the merchandise” (*iḥtikār*) (see Chapt. III, § 43; Ibn Khaldūn. Al-Muqaddima. Beirut: Dar al-fikr. P. 289).

<sup>3</sup> See Chapt. V, § 1 (Ibn Khaldūn. Al-Muqaddima. Beirut: Dar al-fikr. P. 381).

This is the core of the problem, and this is what I am going to discuss here.

First and foremost, I will try to determine what exactly is the new science that Ibn Khaldūn founded. Then my task will be to regard the basic categories his thinking proceeds from, giving a careful consideration to the logic of their interrelation. I will try to marshal my arguments so that Ibn Khaldūn's new science could be unveiled to us in its unity.

So then, what is it, that Ibn Khaldūn thought to be his own brainchild?

To answer the question, we have first to comprehend the relation between two notions: *ta'rīkh* and *'umrān*. The first of the two I will interpret, conventionally, as "history"; as to the second, it will remain for a while uninterpreted.

The *Muqaddima* starts with an explanation of the meaning of the word "history" (see Introduction to Book I of *Kitāb al-'ibar*). History, as Ibn Khaldūn claims, is a chain of "reports" about human life. The statement does not sound unusual or extraordinary, at least for Ibn Khaldūn's times. However, three questions need to be asked, and after finding answers to them, we will be able to grasp the core of Ibn Khaldūn's position, so definitely placing him out of the general run of Arab thinkers. First, what kinds of historical reports are there? Second, what makes the contents of historical reports or, in other words, what is the historical reality? Third, how is that historical reality constructed?

Answering the first question, Ibn Khaldūn states that historical reports may be either true or false. The point is not in that statement *per se*, but in the sentence that follows it: a report, as the author claims, may be false due to *its very nature*.

The omnipresent *natural* causality independent of human will and underlying the laws that govern the Universe makes the motif of Ibn Khaldūn's thought. He seems to discover for himself, as well as for his reader, the surprisingly simple and self-evident *nature* of things, manifesting itself in all their actions, which previously for some reason went merely unnoticed. This is why Ibn Khaldūn is undoubtedly a post-medieval thinker. The tradition he came from is still alive, it had not yet become a thing of the past, but the scholar nonetheless manages to leave it behind. He looks upon it as a man belonging elsewhere. For him, the classical medieval period is an accomplished whole, regarded as something to be summed up. So Ibn Khaldūn did in the concluding chapters of his *Muqaddima*, where he presents his views on sciences and crafts of the classical Islamic civilization. This generalizing view not only allowed him to remain "above the battle" of the trends of thought that raged in the classical era, and regard them objectively as an outsider, but it also made his *Muqaddima* quite attractive for researchers: here we find assessments and classifications some of which are still in use in the science of today.

Thus, falsity (as well as truth) is inherent in the nature of reports comprising human history. Ibn Khaldūn's goal is to define the cause of falsity inherent *in the nature of the reports*. According to him, that would give us a possibility to distinguish between the true reports and the false ones, and also help a historian to find a reliable criterion for selecting correct reports, casting off the fabulous packs of nonsense history books are swarming with (see some instances in Introduction to Book I).

There are two kinds of causes of falsity in historical reports. Causes of the first kind listed by Ibn Khaldūn, are those that we would call “subjective.” Though described in great detail (see Introduction to Book I), they are not of great interest to the Arab thinker. The main thing for him is the objective cause, which is ignorance as to the nature of historical reality. That is what Ibn Khaldūn is going to fight against, and for this end he is creating his new science, the science of ‘*umrān*’.

So this is the relation of *ta’rīkh* (history) to the science of ‘*umrān*’. The latter provides a historian with a reliable criterion for selecting true historical reports. As to the question of how the criterion works, and in what way the problem of the relation of the general laws of human history to the unicity of a historical fact is solved, I am going to discuss it at the end of this article.

Now let us address the second question: what is historical reality; what should a historical report be like, so as to correspond with the criterion of truth Ibn Khaldūn suggested?

The answer may be found in the definition of “history” mentioned above (see Introduction to Book I). A historical report, according to Ibn Khaldūn, tells of the “states” (*aḥwāl*, sing. *ḥāl*), i.e., the states produced by the nature of what is denoted by the term ‘*umrān*’.<sup>4</sup>

Let us dwell upon this subject for a while.

I render ‘*umrān*’ into English as “building-up” (in the sense of “developing” the world and making it suitable for human life) and “buildup.” The interpretation of the term as “civilization” or “culture,” quite common in European languages, is, to my mind, not quite accurate; this has been pointed out more than once by some researchers and translators of Ibn Khaldūn. These two terms cannot in any case escape value connotations (civilization is opposed to savagery, culture to barbarity), and thus each of them covers but one of the two semantic poles, while ‘*umrān*’ is neutral in principle, and denotes any condition of humanity living in the world and making it suitable to live in. The stem of ‘*umrān*’ is ‘-M-R, whose derivatives denote, in one way or another, construction and habitation, which is close to the meaning of buildup. It is no less important that the

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<sup>4</sup> Ibn Khaldūn uses two terms in his definition, saying that “history” is a report on human assembly (*ijtimā’ insānī*), i.e., the developing of the world (‘*umrān al-‘ālam*’), with both expressions placed as if they were synonymous. And yet, examination of the *Muqaddima* contexts in which these terms are used proves that the relationship between them is not synonymic, but co-ordinative: the term ‘*umrān*’ appears to be the principal one, explained, in particular, through *ijtimā’* (it will be discussed later on). In the context under consideration, concluding the definition, Ibn Khaldūn uses only ‘*umrān*’, not *ijtimā’*. This inaccuracy in using basic categories is really perplexing. Yet it is not an exceptional instance for Ibn Khaldūn. In Chapt. II, § 1, he uses the terms *ḥāja* and *ḍarūra* as interchangeable, though a few lines earlier he describes them as an opposition, which is the basic meaning of those terms in the *Muqaddima*. A possible reason for such inaccuracy may be that the terminology was just being coined, it had no opportunity to have gone through the test of time or the brush-off of critics.

content of the notion *'umrān* can by no means be reduced to the categories of civilization or culture, as used in European philosophy and science. This is why it is preferable to coin a brand new term to avoid unnecessary connotations while interpreting *'umrān*.

Proceeding from Ibn Khaldūn's definition, historical reality is represented by "states of building up the world." Then what is the "state" (*ḥāl*)?

"State" (*ḥāl*) is widely used in various fields of theoretical knowledge of the classical Islamic civilization, including philosophy. Appearing at the very dawn of its development (the term was actively used already by the Mu'tazila), it absorbed manifold connotations in various spheres of thought. And yet, there is something unvarying and repeating in all the variations.

Let us try to grasp it through notions of "the individual" and "the general," having in mind, first and foremost, the relation between an individual fact and the general law. This opposition seems to set up a universal framework for any interpretation of a term describing determination and causation. Will it work in our case, explaining the term "state" as pointing to some sort of definiteness?

The term "state" (*ḥāl*) denotes something individual, or even singular, as it points to a concrete qualitative characteristic of a concrete thing at a concrete moment of time; the qualitative characteristic depends on external circumstances and, generally speaking, has no inherent, inner reason to stay. Therefore, "state" may refer to a certain period of time, a minimal one as well, e.g., to a single moment, and may change in an instant.

This basically temporal, and consequently subject to permanent change character of "state" seems to place the term at the pole of the individual, the incidental. However, that would be an erroneous conclusion. According to Ibn Khaldūn, "states" are determined by the very nature of *'umrān*, and *'umrān* undergoes them "in itself." In other words, the conditions are not occasional, they are brought to life by the nature of building up the world by humankind.

Hence it appears that "state" is neither general, standing above the flow of temporal changes, nor at the same time it can be said to be incidental and depending on the external circumstances. It is not "innate" or "essential," as it "occurs" (*yaṭra' 'alā*) in the nature of *'umrān*, says Ibn Khaldūn, and, at the same time, "state" is regular (Ibn Khaldūn is in quest for that very regularity as the criterion of truth)—nonetheless, "state" is simultaneously individual, it does not belong in the sphere of the general, as a general law would.

Having discovered this seemingly inconsistent character of *ḥāl* ("state"), behaving not as we would expect it to, let us turn to other sources. Ibn Manẓūr explains *ḥāl* through two terms: *kayfiyya* "quality," and *hay'a* "figure," or "structure," using them as synonyms. The qualitative characteristics and structural arrangement of a thing, seemingly referring to different poles (qualities are changeable, structure is permanent), are placed here in a single perspective. *Ḥāl* has the same stem as *taḥawwul* "transformation." Transformation as a transition from one state to another emphasizes the instability of the latter.

The paradoxical character of the notion *ḥāl* arises from its lying outside the frame of reference constructed by the intersection of “general–individual,” “regular–occasional” axes. And the point is not in some insignificant displacement that could be easily corrected. *Ḥāl* in principle lies outside this frame, as if belonging to a different dimension; it requires another system of coordinates, not just modified, but newly built on a different foundation.

We will get down to the task, reconstructing the system of Ibn Khaldūn’s basic categories while focusing on the logics of their interconnection. Thus we will answer the third of the posed questions: how is the historical reality, presented in the “states of building up the world,” constructed?

In doing this we may be prompted by the following thesis:

Assembly (*ijtimāʿ*) and solidarity<sup>5</sup> (*ʿaṣabiyya*) are the same as a mixture (*mizāj*) for a being made of elements (Chapt. II, § 11)<sup>6</sup>.

Two terms are used here: *ijtimāʿ* and *ʿaṣabiyya*. I think they are key notions for understanding what *ʿumrān* means. Let us analyze them at first as they are, and then examine their correlation with *ʿumrān*.

I render *ijtimāʿ* as “assembly.”<sup>7</sup> This interpretation is close to the direct meaning of *ijtimāʿ*—“meeting,” “reunion,” and it fits well the terminological content of

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<sup>5</sup> Using this term as a translation for *ʿaṣabiyya*, I have its etymology in mind. It is derived from Latin *solidare* which means “fasten together,” and this is the exact meaning of *ʿaṣabiyya*: it is a psychological energy which fastens the members of any “assembly” together, making them act as a single whole. It has nothing to do with solidarity of individuals, who, basically disconnected and independent, only *then* and *on that basis* express their solidarity as a sort of common feeling and/or action. With Ibn Khaldūn, *ʿaṣabiyya* is the basic level ruling out any individualization; for this reason *ʿaṣabiyya*, characteristic of pre-Islamic epoch, was severely criticized and opposed within Islamic perspective which requires from a human being an initially individual choice and action.

<sup>6</sup> This paragraph is left out in F. Rosenthal’s translation and in Shaddādī’s edition of the *Muqaddima*. Leaving aside the question of authenticity—for today we still lack a critical edition of the *Muqaddima* and the tasks outlined by N. Schmidt almost a century ago (see *Schmidt N. The Manuscripts of Ibn Khaldun // Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 46 (1926), pp. 171–176) have not yet been fulfilled—I can say that the cited statement expresses the core of Ibn Khaldūn’s understanding of those two basic categories of his theory.

<sup>7</sup> F. Rosental translates *ijtimāʿ* as “human social organization,” and such interpretation has become quite common. Yet that would be too quick a transition to the familiar category of “society,” “social organization,” dimming the logic-and-meaning gist of Ibn Khaldūn’s theory. For him, *ijtimāʿ* is but one of the two components of what he calls *ʿumrān*, “the buildup.” What is the logic of its connection with the second component, how are the two components of the buildup interconnected to produce *ʿumrān*? Such questions are usually lost to view.

*ijtimā'* in Ibn Khaldūn's theory. He considers "human assembly" (*ijtimā' insānī*) to be a "necessity" (*darūra*) conditioned by two factors: a lone man is able neither to feed himself nor to defend himself from wild beasts. The both things may be done only jointly, in cooperation: assembly makes it possible to preserve human life.

Thus, the impossibility for a lone man to stay alive makes assembly "necessary" (*darūrī*). It should be noted (it will come in useful later on) that the point here is a purely logical but not ontological necessity: otherwise the latter would have been rendered as *wujūb*, not *darūra*. In other words, it is true that human life cannot be preserved without assembly, but the very impossibility to preserve human life single-handedly is not sufficient to create assembly.

Let us get down to the term *'aṣabiyya*. A number of interpretations were suggested, among them "group feeling," "tribal spirit," "social solidarity," and the like. Some researchers leave the term untranslated, as if unable to find a fair equivalent in Western languages. I suppose that in this case one should act differently: giving a conventional translation of the term, i.e., approaching it as an ordinary word, and not trying to find its equivalent in Western terminological vocabulary, to fill it further on with the content meant by the author himself.

I translate *'aṣabiyya* as "solidarity." As to its terminological content, it may be summarized as follows.

Kinship is a natural foundation of solidarity; according to Ibn Khaldūn, it is in human nature to suffer their kin's losses and failures, or threat to their kin's lives, as their own. Therefore solidarity may naturally diminish along with the diminishing of kinship. Consequently, solidarity has no other cause aside from human nature: it is as natural for human beings as assembly.

Elucidating the content of the term "solidarity," Ibn Khaldūn makes use of the traditional meaning of the term. However, for him it is but a starting point: he considerably broadens the meaning of the notion and, besides, as considerably changes its assessment.

In classical Arab dictionaries, "solidarity" is interpreted as a kind of common touch, "fellowship" in regard to *'aṣāba* (the same stem as *'aṣabiyya*—'-Ṣ-B), i.e., a group of agnates constantly surrounding a person, always ready to stand squarely for each other, and thus forming, so to speak, "a clenched fist," "a striking force." Hence *'aṣabiyya* means also "wrath" flaring up instantly and unthinkingly within a man, if his *'aṣāba* (the group he belongs to) is threatened, which makes him fight for the life of other members of the group, and for their interests, as if for his own. For his *'aṣāba* he *yata'aṣṣab* (another word of the same stem), i.e., stands up staunchly, without hesitation, and even at the risk of his own life.

Therefore it would be easy to understand, why classical Islam bluntly and dramatically disapproves of *'aṣabiyya*. The principal accent of Islamic legal and ethical thought is made on "intention" (*niyya*) which is to be concurrent with person's action. Intention is to be thought over and formulated by the individual himself, and besides, it should be rationalized: the goals and interests the action is aimed at should be good and

always beneficial to the human being. *‘Aṣabiyya* is supposed to act in an opposite direction, depriving man of ability to think over the goal of his action, and making him sacrifice his life (i.e., the most valuable of his possessions) for the sake of some unpremeditated and probably meaningless, or even harmful, purpose.

In the texts of the classical period of Islam, *‘aṣabiyya* is either identified or associated with *jāhiliyya* “[pre-Islamic] ignorance” (insomuch as Islam is praised as an era of knowledge); with *ẓulm* “oppression” (while Islam, with *‘adāla* “justice”); with *ittibā’ al-hawā* “indulgence of the passions” (Islam, with action thought over and beneficial, while passions are apt to bring harm); with *bāṭil* “hollow” and “false” (whereas Islam, with *al-ḥaqq* “the truth”). As we may see, the opposition is most clearly expressed; the rule of bluntly negative attitude to *‘aṣabiyya* evidently has no exceptions of whatever importance.<sup>8</sup> *‘Aṣabiyya* is associated with the past, with what has already been overcome by Islam, and what should not come back. Therefore the term itself is very rarely used in the texts of classical period: it is discussed rather as a recollection than a reality.<sup>9</sup>

Against that background, Ibn Khaldūn’s arguments, their tone, and even the frequency of his using the term *‘aṣabiyya* in the *Muqaddima*, look quite revolutionary. And indeed, if solidarity is natural for human beings, the whole project of classical Islam, intended to overwhelm it, proves to be pointless, and Ibn Khaldūn’s position, though implicitly, cannot but launch a challenge against the classical outlook.<sup>10</sup> That, in my opinion, is another piece of evidence of the post-classical character of Ibn Khaldūn’s thinking.

Let us go back a little and recall that it is natural for man to need food and to be capable to satisfy the need—but not alone (Chapt. I, Introd. I). That natural (i.e., initial,

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<sup>8</sup> I was able to find but a few cases where *‘aṣabiyya* is used in a positive sense, meaning something like “devotion” or “loyalty.” The traditions never present *‘aṣabiyya* positively, while in other sources the usage of the word in its negative meaning occurs several times as many as the opposite.

<sup>9</sup> I suppose the following consideration may be added. In pre-Islamic times, solidarity (*‘aṣabiyya*) ensured unity and cohesion, holding humans together and socializing them. Rejecting solidarity, Islam suggests a different foundation for social unity, expressed through the notion of *ḥaqq* (pl. *ḥuqūq*), a fundamental category of Islamic legal thought which may be rendered as “right-and-obligation.” *Huqūq* are designed as a network of “ties” (reciprocal rights-and-obligations) between individuals, as well as between individuals and social institutions: such ties cover the whole social space like a net, hold it together and ensure social stability. *Huqūq*, unlike *‘aṣabiyya*, are based on theoretical reflection and legal foundation. As to Ibn Khaldūn, he finds the basis of social unity only and entirely in *‘aṣabiyya*—the pre-Islamic “solidarity” rejected by Islam (See Chapt. II, § 7).

<sup>10</sup> If solidarity is inherent in man, as Ibn Khaldūn claims, if it is put into him by God himself, and makes a part of his inborn nature (*fiṭra*), which Islam has always considered to be correct and uncorrupted, then what is the position of the Islamic authors condemning solidarity?



predefined, inborn, undetermined by any external circumstances) disposition predetermines the necessity (*darūra*) of human assembly. I have already mentioned that the character of that necessity is logical: it is a necessary but insufficient condition. What makes it necessary and sufficient? What turns the logical necessity into an ontological one?

“Solidarity is necessary (*darūriyya*),” Ibn Khaldūn claims (Chapt. III, § 28); in this way, solidarity proves to have the same status of logical necessity, as assembly does. If, according to Ibn Khaldūn, assembly and solidarity, *ijtimā‘* and *‘aṣabiyya*, are comparable to the mixture of elements for any being consisting of them, then the “meeting,” the “cohesion” of the two sides (each of which has but a logical necessity) turns their logical necessity into an ontological one. And that gives birth to *‘umrān*—“the world’s buildup.”

Now I would like to give a more detailed consideration to the status of necessity characteristic of solidarity, and also to the process of interaction of assembly and solidarity.

Discussing assembly and solidarity, Ibn Khaldūn very often uses expressions like “in itself,” “in its being,” “by nature.” What do they signify?

The answer looks evident. Saying so, the scholar is seeking a self-sufficient, irreducible foundation for what he is going to describe: in other words, the foundation of “the states of the world’s buildup.” Therefore we may reformulate our question as follows: what makes that foundation?

But would it be so difficult to answer it? Let us go thoroughly through the *Muqaddima*. If “man is by nature a polis-creature” (Chapt. I, Introd. I); if “peoples’ histories differ in accordance with their ways of getting means of existence” (Chapt. II, § 1); if abundance or—otherwise—lack of food account for physical and spiritual differences in human beings (Chapt. I, Introd. 5), and the geographical conditions of human existence determine human mores (Chapt. I, Introd. 3–4)—then what? Then, if all these premises are true, is it not obvious that assembly, i.e., co-operation in getting means of existence and defending life, makes such a foundation as reveals itself differently depending on natural (geographical) conditions of environment? And, moreover, if at first it is inevitable to produce only most necessary things, while later on, in the course of evolution, there appears a possibility to start producing things additional, and that very evolution explains the transition from the initial stage of development (*badāwa*—“life in open spaces”) to the further, advanced stages of the world’s buildup (*ḥadāra*—“life in

enclosed spaces”<sup>11</sup> (Chapt. II, § 1, 3)—is it not evident then that the material side ensures the development of the forms of civilization and determines the course and order of its evolution?

Proceeding from the considerations mentioned above (while there are many more arguments of that sort to be found in the *Muqaddima*) and accepting the point of view prompted by them, which looks quite obvious, we shall reveal in Ibn Khaldūn a founder of political economy, as well as a propagator of materialistic explanation of history, and an anthropologist *sui generis*. The point of view—let me repeat—is based upon the statement that the material side of life is a self-sufficient ground for the development of civilization, and taking that ground into account would be sufficient for our analysis of its development.

Yet, just after getting convinced that we have taken up the right position in this respect, and finding its proofs in some paragraphs of Chapter I and the initial paragraphs of Chapter II, we—all of a sudden—stumble upon a new turn. Instead of elaborating the line so luckily found, and demonstrating how exactly the material factors of human life determine “the states of the world’s buildup,” Ibn Khaldūn abruptly changes the subject, starting to speak of solidarity.

Already in § 7, Chapter II, we come to know that it would be impossible to establish even the simplest initial forms of the world’s buildup, i.e., dwellings in the desert, without solidarity. Ibn Khaldūn will discuss the theme of solidarity up to the end of the second chapter, but from the very start he finds it necessary to make a general statement. Whatever action, says he, “people intend to undertake—to carry out a prophetic mission, to establish a kingdom, to launch a [religious] appeal”—it cannot be done without solidarity (Chapt. II, § 7). The foundation for the conclusion is quite in Ibn

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<sup>11</sup> I have to dwell a little longer on the translation of these terms.

The term *badāwa* (var. *bidāwa*, syn. *badw*) has the stem *B-D-W*, the same as *bādiya* “desert.” The basic semantic content here is “openness”; elucidating the meaning of the word *badw*, Ibn Manzūr states that it denotes the forms of life in *bādiya*, i.e., “in open spaces,” where people are not enclosed within walls. Therefore, as Ibn Khaldūn claims, *badw* may contain even such forms as agriculture, apiculture and the like, not only nomadic stock raising. Yet nomadism, quite understandably, is a prevailing form of “life in open spaces,” therefore “nomadism” has come to be specifically denoted by the word *badw*.

As to *ḥaḍāra* (var. *ḥiḍāra*, syn. *ḥaḍar*), the words with the stem *Ḥ-D-R* denote a kind of presence or availability. Ibn Manzūr suggests (in the way of etymology) the idea of staying (= being present) inside the walls of people’s homes, whereas in the way of the word’s semantic content he points at “life in towns (*mudun*), villages (*qurā*) and fertile places (*rīf*).” Thus, being encircled by a wall and the settled way of life are organically included in the semantic field of the term *ḥaḍāra*.

Last but not least, Ibn Manzūr insistently emphasizes the antinomy of *badāwa* and *ḥaḍāra*, defining the two words through one another as reciprocal opposition. He insists that the antinomy has a priority in comparison with any kind of etymology.

Khaldūn's style: it looks plain, unsophisticated and, at the same time, it is presented as a fundamental regularity referring to the order of nature. Any action, says Ibn Khaldūn, is to meet with people's stubborn rejection, as people will—by nature—oppose any initiative. Such opposition must be overcome, and to fight and win you need solidarity.

Though Ibn Khaldūn is using the same term *'aṣabiyya* (which I interpret by the same English word “solidarity”), we shall now speak of things other than we discussed starting our excursus into the content of the term. In its first sense “solidarity” signifies a natural feeling of kinship, while then, in its second sense, it means something like eagerness, enthusiasm in the name of a common cause, the eagerness that has no natural foundation *of its own*.<sup>12</sup> In its first sense, solidarity is inherent in people, and therefore it is natural; in the second one, it may or may not exist. The both kinds of solidarity are needed—for natural reasons, though the reasons are of a different character. Finally, solidarity in its first sense is undoubtedly a collective feeling (an individual having no kin cannot experience solidarity), while in its second sense solidarity is individual in principle, and it only may, but not necessarily has to acquire a collective form. It is a prophet leading people ahead, who has got the individual *'aṣabiyya*, and an absolute ruler retains the individual *'aṣabiyya* only for himself, cutting off all the others (see Chapt. III, § 13, 14). In this sense the term *'aṣabiyya* should be interpreted as “ardour” or “fervour,” and I am using the same “solidarity” as an equivalent of *'aṣabiyya* everywhere only to keep up with the uniformity of Ibn Khaldūn's terminology.

Yet, in my view, it would be wrong to suppose that we have, in fact, come across two different meanings, two different notions, quite accidentally denoted with the same word.

As to the language side of the matter, in Arabic, *'aṣabiyya* renders the both meanings mentioned above in their fusion: it is a kind of “ardent solidarity” or “ardour-and-solidarity.”<sup>13</sup> Therefore, the Arab reader would not be so much confused by the author's using the same term *'aṣabiyya* in two contexts, as would the reader of an English translation: there we should rather speak of a shift of accents within one semantic cluster than of a different meaning.

As to the conceptual side, in the both cases the meaning may be rendered with such words as “invigoration” or “inspiration.” In any case, it is something immaterial in its very core and, moreover, having no material basis. In this connection, we should note that Ibn Khaldūn never discusses anything like *'aṣabiyya* in those paragraphs of the first chapter where he deals with people's “mores” (*akhlāq*) directly determined by geographical conditions of their habitation, that is, by the material factors of their existence.

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<sup>12</sup> We can not regard as such the necessity to overcome people's resistance to any initiative: were they unresisting, the necessity of solidarity would disappear.

<sup>13</sup> A good example of interchange and interlacing of the both semantic aspects may be found in Chapt. II, § 12.

That is why the term *‘aṣabiyya* means something like “social spirit.” Under the initial conditions of the world’s buildup, which Ibn Khaldūn denotes with the term *badāwa*, the social spirit, more or less, enfolds all the members of the assembly, with some insignificant exceptions (see Chapt. II, § 12, on clients and allies), whereas in the later periods, called *ḥaḍāra*, its sphere narrows, getting reduced finally to one individual only. Taking up the old term *‘aṣabiyya* and giving it a new ring, Ibn Khaldūn has managed to describe the realia of all the stages of the world’s buildup, the initial (*badāwa*) as well as the advanced (*ḥaḍāra*) ones.

Then what are these realia like? I suppose that the words, not once mentioned above and referring to the notion of “inspiration,” i.e., the uplift of soul (or the uplift of spirit—in this case we may speak equally of both), explain the point quite successfully. Ibn Khaldūn comprehends the notion *‘aṣabiyya* as something like a social “soul” that gives life to a social “body,” i.e., what is rendered by the notion *ijtimā‘* “assembly.”

Thus we have a social “body” and a social “soul,” which by their interaction (let us recall the formula “Assembly and solidarity are the same as a mixture for a being made of elements”) produce what might be called “life activities of society.” We have practically answered the questions posed in the present article, so now there remains only one step to make. We have to understand, *how exactly* the social body and the social soul—*ijtimā‘* and *‘aṣabiyya*—interact, and *what*, in fact, *comes out* of that interaction.

It might seem quite easy to answer this question too. The metaphor of body and soul explains things clearly enough: the matter under discussion is a society in which we discern the both sides—material and spiritual. If, at first, we revealed in Ibn Khaldūn a political economist and an anthropologist, now we can see that what came to the fore then were but separate aspects of the theory that should be considered sociological. I suppose that such, or nearly such, consideration lies behind the reasoning of those who regard Ibn Khaldūn as the founder of sociology or social psychology.

Any metaphor may at best give just an approximation to the essence of the matter. Let us try and conceptualize the metaphor.

The clue here will be the observation that both assembly (*ijtimā‘*) and solidarity (*‘aṣabiyya*), our metaphorical and, at the same time, hypothetical body and soul of society, have the status of *ḍarūra*, i.e., logical but not ontological necessity. That is prompted by the terminology itself: Ibn Khaldūn persistently avoids speaking of *wujūb*, which we could interpret as “self-dependence,” “self-sufficiency,” i.e., as ontological necessity: he speaks of *ḍarūra* “inevitability,” i.e., what must be present inevitably, but cannot alone provide stability for itself. And yet, the terminology may be inconsistent or the terms used in a different sense (the both things are not so rare with Ibn Khaldūn), therefore we should give these notions some more attention.

Assembly is necessary for people, because, according to Ibn Khaldūn, *without it* they would be unable to preserve their physical existence. Solidarity is necessary for them, because *without it* they would be unable to perform any action of social significance. In other words, *if* human beings preserved themselves physically, they must have lived together; *if* they performed actions of social significance, they must have been

united by solidarity. This is the meaning of the “necessity” of the both sides: it is the necessity revealed, so to speak, in retrospect, *post factum*. It may be discovered if the event has already taken place, yet it cannot ensure the fulfilment of conditions lying behind our hypothetical “ifs.”

That means that assembly does not appear due to the above need and necessity; all by itself, it does not bring about the common living of human beings. On the contrary, the common living must already exist so that this necessity could fully reveal itself. Likewise, socially significant actions do not get performed because they need solidarity for it, and solidarity does not appear because it is necessary for their performance. On the contrary, socially significant actions have to be already performed so that the above necessity could fully reveal itself.

So neither the material side of social life nor the spiritual one necessitate themselves. What is, then, the foundation of the world’s buildup; what makes the natural determination of its states that Ibn Khaldūn is in quest for?

The material and spiritual sides of social life determine neither themselves nor social life as a whole. Can it be that *the two of them together* make the basis of social life?

The conclusion seems to suggest itself. And yet, to make the social basis together, they have, at least, to *exist*: the parts of such a complex cause must be present so that the cause could accomplish its function. But as we have just seen, the material and spiritual sides contain no foundation of themselves, and Ibn Khaldūn does not point at any external foundation of the kind. The material and spiritual sides cannot fuse together like something already-present, already-existent in order to accomplish its function and become the joint cause of social development.<sup>14</sup>

Now we have come to a turning point in the present research. Let us try, looking through Ibn Khaldūn’s texts and following his logic of usage of the notions *ijtimā’* and *‘aṣabiyya*, to comprehend the character of their interrelation.

Assembly is an objective necessity for human beings, and if they feel a natural need to preserve their lives (and that is natural for all living creatures), they have to live and work together, putting into practice that which (as Ibn Khaldūn claims) was given to them by God, i.e., the ability to get food and to make tools of toil and battle. However, assembly will not be established if there is no solidarity among the people. It concerns the simplest forms of the world’s buildup—“life in open spaces” (*badāwa*). Without solidarity, says Ibn Khaldūn, such life cannot be established—it will be instantly destroyed (Chapt. II, § 3). Moreover, the description of characteristic features of those who live that life (see Chapt. II, § 16, on courage) allows us to make a conclusion that all such features are, in this or that way, connected with people’s solidarity, with their sense of togetherness and isolation from all the rest. That very sense makes it possible not only

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<sup>14</sup> Arguing that way, it will be easy to conclude that, strictly speaking, Ibn Khaldūn has not discovered anything new, has not shown any genuine cause of the development of society and civilization. This consideration, as I suppose, may be an objective reason for those pessimistic assessments, that from time to time appear regarding his works.

to preserve, but organize “life in open spaces,” which requires “austerity” (Chapt.II, § 3), adaptation to hardships, disinclination to luxury and muliebrity, eagerness for “mutual glory” (Chapt.III, § 13).

Assembly, in this way, depends on solidarity. In a certain sense, it is produced by solidarity, i.e., the presence of solidarity entails the presence of assembly. If we comprehend solidarity in its essential meaning—as “ardent-care-of-kin,” then its presence is natural in human beings. Being present, and due to its presence, it transfers the logical necessity of assembly onto an ontological level: assembly proves to be present as well. That facilitates the formation of the economic life of agriculturalists and herdsmen which the scholar describes in § 1, Chapter III. Next, if we take solidarity in its broader sense, as “ardour-for-exploits-and-enterprises,” then that feeling, retaining its natural foundation, predeterminedly (i.e., irrespective of any concrete individual will) ensures the emergence of “life in enclosed spaces (*ḥaḍāra*)” and its evolution (see Chapt. II, § 17; Chapt. III, § 14, 17). In both cases, the presence of solidarity seems to mean the presence of assembly, and at that, such an assembly, which corresponds with a certain type of solidarity. We may see now that it was not by accident that Ibn Khaldūn invested one term with two meanings—interconnected, though at the same time dissimilar ones. The two types, or the two levels of solidarity are characteristic of those two types, or levels of the world’s buildup, which he calls *badāwa* “life in open spaces” and *ḥaḍāra* “life in enclosed spaces.”

Consequently, we may draw the following conclusions.

Solidarity, due to its presence, transfers the logical necessity of assembly onto an ontological level, bringing the presence of assembly in its wake. Therewith the type, or level of the assembly, its organization, corresponds with the type, or level of solidarity. It is the reciprocal correspondence of the type of solidarity and the type of assembly that produces *‘umrān* (the world’s buildup). More broadly, we might speak of two types of the reciprocal correspondence of solidarity and assembly, i.e., the two types of the world’s buildup: “life in open spaces” (*badāwa*) and “life in enclosed spaces” (*ḥaḍāra*).

In the just described correspondence of solidarity and assembly, solidarity plays the leading role, yet not in the sense that solidarity *produces* assembly or *brings forth its being*: in that case solidarity might be understood as a kind of Aristotelian cause of assembly. Assembly, however, has a foundation of its own, independent of solidarity, the foundation that, as we have seen, is natural and inherent. But the matter is, that this foundation ensures a merely logical necessity of assembly:<sup>15</sup> it does not bring forth its existence in any sense. If there is no solidarity, there is no human assembly, therefore, people simply cannot exist, having no possibility to preserve their lives (which is a natural

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<sup>15</sup> As the Mu‘tazila would have said, it ensures its *thubūt* “fixity,” but not *wujūd* “existence.” Or, in Ibn Sīnā’s terms, assembly is possible (*mumkin*) by itself, due to its “self” (*dhāt*), though it is not “existent” (*mawjūd*). Or, as Ibn ‘Arabī would have put it, assembly is a “fixed entity” (*‘ayn thābita*), but not an “existent entity” (*‘ayn mawjūda*).

law, as we have seen). For the same reason, solidarity cannot be considered a cause actualizing assembly: there is no independent substratum that could be a bearer of potential assembly, so that solidarity would merely actualize the latter.

On the other hand, one might speak of solidarity only if people lived together, i.e., only in the case of existence of one or another type of their assembly. This is evident even as regards solidarity in its first sense, i.e., solidarity as a feeling of kinship: you cannot “stand up staunchly” for your kin if they do not live alongside with you, which means, if there is no material form of assembly present. The same refers to the second type of solidarity: without progressing forms of economic activity, the existence of the evolutionizing solidarity of a ruling elite would be impossible. However, solidarity is not at all produced by assembly: assembly is not the cause of solidarity in any of the senses we might regard as relevant, if we were directed by the European tradition of the philosophic interpretation of cause.

Therefore, though solidarity has an inborn biological foundation, it ensures merely its logical, but not ontological necessity. For the logical necessity of solidarity to become ontological, for solidarity to acquire existence, assembly must acquire existence as well. And it is quite evident that there is a correspondence between the type of assembly and the type of solidarity—that very correspondence we discussed considering the dependence of assembly on solidarity.

Solidarity and assembly appear to be two entities, quasi-independent of each other. Following Ibn Khaldūn, we may describe solidarity without mentioning assembly; or, vice versa, describe assembly without referring to solidarity. However, it would be impossible to carry out such an independent description of the two notions to the full; at some stage we shall have to take up the second notion to *complete* the description of the first one. It will not be erroneous to state that solidarity and assembly complete each other, i.e., that assembly is completed by solidarity, while solidarity is completed by assembly: we may speak of their *inter-transition*.

It is that specific kind of transition, which does not involve any “ousting,” “destruction,” “abandoning” or “annihilation” at the starting point of transition for the sake of the point sought for. Conversely, the transition is reciprocal, which means that solidarity and assembly are founding each other, being a necessary condition for each other’s existence. In this very special sense we may state that solidarity and assembly prove to be each other’s cause: in this way causality is reciprocal, but not lineal.

Thus, solidarity and assembly considered not separately, but in their inter-transition, through their reciprocal ontological founding of each other, remain irreducible to one another and, in that sense, entities external to each other. Their inter-transition does not mean, however, that one of the two *per se* turns into the other or becomes a part of it. Their inter-transition appears to be something *other* in relation to them both.

The third notion ensuring the inter-connection and reciprocal completion of solidarity and assembly extrinsic to each other, is *‘umrān* “the world’s buildup.” From this point of view, speaking of the world’s buildup, we mean the reciprocal correspondence of solidarity and assembly. To describe the world’s buildup means to

describe the concrete solidarity, its concrete appearance, showing, further on, the concrete type of assembly corresponding with it; which, in its turn, means to show the reciprocal correspondence of solidarity and assembly, thus completing each other.

It is this correspondence that Ibn Khaldūn calls “state” (*ḥāl*). He points at the states of the world’s buildup (but not at the states of anything else, e.g., solidarity or assembly) as the subject of his science, because the world’s buildup is the reciprocal correspondence, the inter-transition of solidarity and assembly. At the same time, any state of the world’s buildup is disclosed through a more or less detailed description of solidarity and assembly, which (taken as semantic entities) are extrinsic to each other. We may say that a state of the world’s buildup is a sample (a cross-section of sorts) of solidarity-and-assembly, if by this syntactic form we mean the described inter-transition, the reciprocal completion of solidarity and assembly.<sup>16</sup>

In this sense, the condition of the world’s buildup colligates solidarity and assembly. The colligation, though, is not such that the colligated elements become something partitive for it (making but a section of the whole), or something singular (not fully explicating it, or adding the transitory to the essential). It is not so. The colligating entity (the notion of “buildup”) is completely extrinsic to what it colligates. Neither solidarity, nor assembly are part of the “content” of the world’s buildup, though at the same time they disclose that content.

The notion “buildup” is quite *simple*, it expresses the very fact of the inter-transition, inter-dependence of solidarity and assembly. It is because solidarity and assembly are completely extrinsic to each other, and the notion colligating them is also extrinsic to them. As the fact of their inter-transition is simple, non-complex, so similarly simple, non-complex is the notion “buildup,” which may disclose itself in any complex and detailed description of solidarity and assembly in their reciprocal correspondence.

The reciprocal correspondence, the inter-transition of solidarity and assembly impose on them, if we may put it so, certain bounds, they enforce certain requirements: they must be such as to make the transition feasible. In this sense, the inter-transition is not accidental, it cannot connect any type of solidarity with any type of assembly. A concrete, singular type of solidarity corresponds with a concrete, singular type of assembly, and the very fact of correspondence appears to be as singular, as unique, though not at all accidental. Determined, as Ibn Khaldūn claims, by the very nature of the two corresponding entities—solidarity and assembly—the inter-transition is a regularity, though it does not represent a general law formulated in general terms.

This reciprocal correspondence of solidarity and assembly in its manifoldness makes the “states” (*ḥālāt*, sing. *ḥāl*) of the world’s buildup. Now it becomes clear why the scholar speaks of “states” and not of, e.g., “events” or “phenomena.” It is *essence* that *appears*, and if Ibn Khaldūn’s states were in fact “appearances,” one should see behind them some essence explaining their genesis. Yet Ibn Khaldūn’s science is constructed in a

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<sup>16</sup> Yet in no way is it to mean a “sum” of solidarity and assembly, in any of the senses of “summing” characteristic of European thought.



different way, the scholar is not in quest for the essence of phenomena. For him, it is important to describe—in as much detail as he deems necessary—the types of solidarity and those of assembly corresponding with the former. Establishing their correspondence with each other, he therewith describes the world’s buildup in its different states. Therefore, speaking of states, he says that they are “incoming” (*yaṭra* ‘*alā*) in the world’s buildup. If we had been considering a science constructed as a quest for phenomena’s essence, then the word “incoming,” used at the very beginning of the *Muqaddima* and defining the character of the science of the world’s buildup, would have meant that its author intended to seek something accidental, as it is accidents that are “incoming” (that is to say, are “circumstantial”) into the substance. However, solidarity and assembly, with all their characteristic features, do not relate to the world’s buildup as accidents relate to substance: the word “incoming” denoting singularity, unicity, at the same time implies regularity but not accidentality.

It has already been mentioned that there exist two basically different types of the world’s buildup: “life in open spaces” (*badāwa*) and “life in enclosed spaces” (*ḥadāra*). These are actually the types of the world’s buildup, not those of assembly or solidarity.

However, the buildup is disclosed through solidarity and assembly in their reciprocal correspondence and exactly *as* their reciprocal correspondence. For each type of the world’s buildup Ibn Khaldūn defines its type of solidarity and the type of assembly corresponding with it. For life in open spaces it is the direct kinship type of solidarity, and production of items necessary for physical existence as the type of assembly. For life in enclosed spaces it is the solidarity of the ruling elite, developing from kinship ties to non-kinship ones and, in the long run, to the usurpation of solidarity by an absolute ruler, while the type of assembly is represented by producing things above the necessary, developing towards an ever greater abundance exceeding direct physical needs.

A detailed description of the evolution of solidarity, characteristic of the second type of the world’s buildup, offers us stages of the evolution of state (*dawla*). Since the evolution of solidarity is a regular process independent from the will of individuals, the evolution of state forms is regular as well (see Chapt. II, § 18; Chapt. III, § 15, 17). In no less (if not more) detail does Ibn Khaldūn describe the assembly characteristic of the second type of the world’s buildup, in its evolution and with its specific features. All that is no more than a description of the world’s buildup *per se*, comprehended as a reciprocal correspondence of the two sides, solidarity and assembly.

Consequently, the historical reality, which the science of the world’s buildup is able to reveal to us *a priori*, is represented by the states of that buildup, created by the correspondence of solidarity and assembly, more or less in detail disclosed by Ibn Khaldūn himself, or which, as he supposes, might be disclosed by those following the path he has paved.<sup>17</sup> A comparison of a historical report with such knowledge makes it possible either to reject the report as false (if it is incompatible with that knowledge), or

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<sup>17</sup> See the next-to-last paragraph of Introduction to Book I.

accept it as a true one (if the report agrees with it) and therefore *possible*. The discovery of a way to establish the truthfulness of historical reports which could prove their possibility—that is where Ibn Khaldūn sees the “fruit” (*thamar*) of his science (see Introduction to Book I).<sup>18</sup>

I have just a few words left to say about the foundations constituting the unity of Ibn Khaldūn’s science and the correlation between its unity and multiplicity.

The relation between assembly and solidarity may well be described by *zāhir–bāṭin* “apparent–hidden” categories. It is one of the two (along with the ‘*aṣl–far*’ “root–branch” pair) fundamental categorial pairs in Arab theoretical thought. Assembly being the material, bodily side, is the apparent (*zāhir*), while solidarity, as the immaterial, spiritual side, is the hidden (*bāṭin*). Those two categories, as well as their application to the analysis of terminological clusters in various field of Islamic thought, were discussed at length in my other works.<sup>19</sup>

The ‘*aṣl–far*’ “root–branch” pair is also directly related to Ibn Khaldūn’s science. The correlation between the two stages of the world’s buildup—*badāwa* “life in open spaces,” and *ḥaḍāra* “life in enclosed spaces”—is constructed as the correlation between ‘*aṣl*’ “root” and *far*’ “branch.”

Since the relation between *badāwa* and *ḥaḍāra* in Ibn Khaldūn’s theory is a relation between ‘*aṣl*’ “root” and *far*’ “branch,” the general understanding of those categories in Arab thought is of essential importance for understanding the relation between the two stages of the world’s buildup.

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<sup>18</sup> A separate and most important theme (which cannot be discussed here because of its vastness) is the meaning of the “possibility” (*imkān*). This notion, elaborated as an ontological category by the *falāsifa* (mostly by Ibn Sīnā), is far from being equal to possibility in Aristotelian understanding. I suppose that Ibn Khaldūn’s comprehension of the possibility of an event at least resembles Avicennan ontology: the possible *as such* is neither existent nor nonexistent, and in the same way a possible event might, but does not necessarily, exist.

<sup>19</sup> For a general discussion, see Chapters I and II of my “Logic os Sense” published in *Ishraq: A Yearbook of Islamic Philosophy*. No. 2 / Ed.: Yanis Eschots. Moscow: Vostochnaya Literatura, 2011, pp. 306–343 and *Ishraq: A Yearbook of Islamic Philosophy*. No. 3 / Ed.: Yanis Eschots. Moscow: Vostochnaya Literatura, 2012, pp. 514–546. Discussion of ‘*imān*’ category through the methodology of *zāhir–bāṭin*-analysis is found in: *Smirnov A. Cultural Diversity as Logic-and-Meaning Otherness: The Case of Knowledge and Faith // Knowledge and Belief in the Dialogue of Cultures*. Washington, D.C., © 2011, pp. 129–133. *Zāhir–bāṭin*-thinking as a common trait of Ibn ‘Arabī’s thought and Islamic ornament is discussed in: *Smirnov A. La Ḥayra [perplexità] Ṣūfī e l’Arte islamica: La contemplazione della decorazione attraverso i *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* // Atrium: Centro Studi Metafisici e Tradizionali*. Lavarone: Anno X (2008), No. 2, pp. 110–123 (this paper was translated also into Persian and Bulgarian). Much more was published in Russian.

The relation between *'aṣl* and *far'* is a relation of precedence: the root always precedes the branch, and the precedence is, as a rule, treated as chronological. Transition from root to branch may take place; that may be either a logical transition, or logical and genetic simultaneously. It does not mean that root necessarily generates branch, bringing it into existence (though this is not excluded), but if two objects are correlated as a “root–branch” pair, transition from one of them to the other and back is possible. The transition is either followed by some additional semantic content (“root  $\Rightarrow$  branch” transition) or, on the contrary, by some loss of it (“branch  $\Rightarrow$  root” transition). Branch is always *richer* in its meaning than root. The increase in this richness provides a foundation for a transition from root to branch (while the loss of it, for a transition from branch to root), the foundation to which the authors usually point.

The root has an undeniable advantage over the branch. Preceding it, it is more stable: the branch may disappear, while the root stays, never vice versa. One root may have many branches, and from its “branching” state the thing may return to the “rooted” one (i.e., to the earlier and simpler state); afterwards it may branch out again, in the same or in some other form.

These observations may help to understand the tone of Ibn Khaldūn's consideration of *ḥaḍāra* as a branch and *badāwa* as its root. In § 3, Chapter II, he presents a general statement describing life in open spaces as the “root” in relation to the consecutive form, life in enclosed spaces. According to the rules of the “root–branch” correlation, *ḥaḍāra* (branch) must be richer than its root, *badāwa*. Since *badāwa* and *ḥaḍāra* are root and branch of the *'umrān* (world's buildup), this enrichment of meaning will be disclosed in both *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin* sides of the relation between assembly and solidarity which produces *'umrān*. As to the apparent (*ẓāhir*) side of the “assembly–solidarity” correlation resulting in the world's buildup, the extending of the branch in comparison with the root is evident. Most briefly, it may be characterized as producing things above the necessary, exceeding bodily needs and, in a broader form, by describing all those material improvements of human existence that are concurrent with the transition from life in open spaces to life in towns and cities. As to the hidden (*bāṭin*) side of the correlation, i.e., solidarity, we can trace it here too. Solidarity, from its direct kinship hypostasis, is developing towards uniting people due to other attributes, first and foremost due to common work or a common cause, as it has already been mentioned above.

Root is more stable than its branch, as if the former were “stronger” than the latter. In their rivalry, *badāwa* always overwhelms *ḥaḍāra*. The root is always present, while the branch may exist or may cease to be, returning to its root. So it happens in the life of those states which, going through their stages of evolution, have completely exhausted the possibilities of *ḥaḍāra* and ceased to exist. Ibn Khaldūn's ideas of the fate of states are not only a result of contemporary political reality, and cannot be simply explained by his “pessimism,” as is sometimes supposed: in their very foundation, his ideas are shaped according to the logic of the *'aṣl–far'* “root–branch” relation.

Branch is less valuable in comparison with its root, though its appearance is predetermined and its content is richer than that of its root. This, to my mind, may explain

the fact that Ibn Khaldūn is discussing the material development characteristic of city life as if it were something not at all indispensable, happening if not in vain, then, in any case, without a *firm* purpose. It may be easily seen in those paragraphs of the *Muqaddima* where he describes improvements and refinements of cities and towns.

Branch has no stability in itself, it “leans” (*yastanid*) upon its root. This is explained by the fact that branch is equal to its root complemented with something else; having lost what it got from the root, the branch loses the very possibility of existence.

That is what happens in the life of any state. Actually it occurs not due to the apparent side (assembly), but strictly because of the hidden (solidarity) side of their correlation forming *‘umrān*. Ibn Khaldūn insists that the era of *ḥaḍāra* (= the state era) is the time of a gradual declining and dying out of solidarity in its form characteristic of *badāwa*. Consequently, the branch, i.e., *ḥaḍāra*, loses its *sine qua non*: it loses its root. Nonetheless, all is well with assembly: life is going on, surplus produce exceeds the needs, and so the branch here keeps that which is inherited from its root and develops it further.<sup>20</sup> Yet nothing like that happens to solidarity. When the root of solidarity is absolutely destroyed, when at the stage of *ḥaḍāra* the ruler and his retinue lose the solidarity characteristic of *badāwa*, then the state comes to perish, like a branch that has lost its root.

These are but the main points characterizing the *‘aṣl-far’* “root-branch” correlation as applied to Ibn Khaldūn’s theory; their full description is the goal of further research.

Concluding the present article, I would like to return to the question posed at its beginning. Properly speaking, all these considerations have been no more than an attempt to answer that question. The science founded by Ibn Khaldūn is indeed an accomplished and comprehensive science. The Arab scholar himself precisely defines its subject: *‘umrān al-‘ālam* “the world’s buildup.” The science is constituted not only by its subject, but by the methodology of its study as well. Ibn Khaldūn’s methodology is both general and specific. It is general, since it uses procedures characteristic of Arab thought for constructing oppositions and finding the unity of the opposed, as well as for relating the whole to its part. Those procedures were expressed through the categorial pairs *ẓāhir-bāṭin* “apparent-hidden” and *‘aṣl-far’* “root-branch.” The methodology is specific, since it suggests using the procedures universal within the culture to comprehend a specific subject, the world’s buildup. Before Ibn Khaldūn, this subject was never treated theoretically as a unity of the opposed assembly (*ijtimā’*) and solidarity (*‘aṣabiyya*). The world’s buildup in its evolution is shown by Ibn Khaldūn as “branching” (*tafrī’*), i.e., the process of *far’* “branch” stemming from *‘aṣl* “root”: in this way, *badāwa* “life in open spaces” leads to the emergence of *ḥaḍāra* “life in enclosed spaces.”

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<sup>20</sup> However, even in such cases exceptions are possible, and Ibn Khaldūn analyzes various unfortunate economic actions of the authorities destructive for the root of assembly.

It is in this basic point—in its methodology—that Ibn Khaldūn's science differs from any “analogue” we could presumably discover for it in European thought. It is based on the *zāhir–bāṭin* logic of opposition and the *'aṣl–far'* logic of relating the whole and the part. The closeness of Ibn Khaldūn's theoretical constructions to certain statements we find in European sciences proves to be disappointingly facile, for the similarity thus found is confirmed only by a number of theses taken separately, while the logic connecting them and, consequently, building up the whole of Ibn Khaldūn's “new science of *'umrān*,” is not paralleled. To understand Ibn Khaldūn's thought fully we need to approach it through its own logic and not by reducing it to later European sciences.