

## The Legacy of Ibn Khaldun in Iran

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This article attempts to demonstrate the legacy of Ibn Khaldun in Iran. We will show how his presence, thoughts, and works have left an influence on this country. Despite the fact that he lived in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, his thoughts are appropriate for discussion in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and have become sources of scientific and political judgments. In this article the evolution and importance of two intellectual traditions are examined: *Orientalism* and *the return to self*. In the first phase, the depiction of his thoughts arose from the rational and political paradigm and the tradition of Orientalism through an interaction with Western development. In other words, Ibn Khaldun's thoughts were created with regard to Western development. The thought of Ibn Khaldun is important for explaining why Iran has distanced itself from the historical perspective rather evolving, developing and achieving a better status. With regard to the rational tradition of return to self, it can be claimed that Ibn Khaldun's thoughts have been applied for reintroducing the historical past rather than moving toward the future.

**Key words:** Ibn Khaldun, Social Theory, Islamic Sociology, the Return to Self, and Orientalism

This article discusses the relationship of time, the kind of books used and the method of using them, as well as the works and rational viewpoints of those who study Ibn Khaldun in social sciences in Iran. The main theory of the author is that the people who set forth the thought of Ibn Khaldun in Iran are affected by the intellectual paradigms of Orientalism, Islamism and return to self,<sup>1</sup> with few recognizing him as a social philosopher belonging to the current time. Thus Ibn Khaldun has been introduced as a thinker who provi-

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<sup>1</sup> This concept has been introduced by African and Asian intellectuals after failure of the modernization in these societies. Frantz Fanon in Africa, Sayyed Jamaluddin and Ali Shariaty in Iran have focused on this concept and tried to criticize Westernization.

des a base for a return to Iranian culture, history and thought. Thus, the paradigms of Orientalism, Islamism and return to self have played two different roles: first, according to the Orientalists, Ibn Khaldun is a path that leads toward discussing Islamic civilization,<sup>2</sup> secondly, he provides a possibility for understanding cultural self-awareness and restoration.

In this article, the points mentioned with regard to the first and second roles are significant because of the science and knowledge introduced by Iranians and Muslims in history as well as Ibn Khaldun's assistance in comprehending Iranian society and culture. The main issue that is dominant in Iranian thought, which has arisen from a paradigm of awareness of regression, is the reason for Iranian underdevelopment and regression in comparison to the West. If we look at the second role of Ibn Khaldun, there are two schools of thought among Iranian thinkers and intellectuals. The first group believe in return to self through cultural amendment. The major figure in this group is Ali Shariaty<sup>3</sup> (1372/1994) who had published many books and given many lectures to large audiences from 1960 to 1976. The second group emphasizes cultural separation. Allameh Tabatabai is the main figure in this category. Although a cleric, he spent most of his time elaborating his ideas in modern ways. In one of his most influential books, *Principles of Islamic Philosophy*, he compares the ideas in Islam with those from other perspectives and shows how the Islamic ideas are strong and scientific.<sup>4</sup>

Tradition/ The Case	Time	The Issue	Type of Intellectuals	The Status of Ibn Khaldun's Thoughts
<b>1- Tradition of Orientalism</b>	From 17th century AD.	Attaining information on historical background	Tourists, travelogue writers, governmental intellectuals	Explicator for the reason for Islamic civilization falling into decadence
<b>2-Tradition of Return to Self</b>	Current century	Getting information on the possibility of return to self	Independent, free intellectuals who are aware of present crisis	Historians, sociologists, and theoreticians

<sup>2</sup> Sadegh Anvar, *Elme Tarikh dar Islam (The science of History in Islam)*, (Tehran: Ershad Publication, 1364/1986), p. 21-65.

<sup>3</sup> Ali Shariaty, *Jahanbini va ideology (Islamic View and Ideology)*, (Tehran: Sherkate sahami enteshar, 1372/1994).

<sup>4</sup> Seyyed Mohammad Hosain Tabatabaei, *Osole Falsafa va Raveshe Realism (The Principles of Philosophy and Realism Method)*, (Ghom: Sadra publisher, 1354/1976).

## Two Intellectual Traditions on the Iranian World

The importance of referring to classic thinkers is something ingrained in Iranian society and the world of thought. Such references started in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and continued with the formation of social movements and the Constitutional Revolution over the subsequent centuries. In the beginning, the tradition of Orientalism and in the end the tradition of return to self led scholars to give importance and study the thoughts and works of well-known thinkers, in particular those of Ibn Khaldun. While explaining these two intellectual traditions, I will make suggestions of ideas and view points about Ibn Khaldun.

### 1. The Tradition of Orientalism

As part of both global and Iranian modernization, which has recently begun, the process of Orientalism has today been introduced into discussion in various guises. The main elements of this process include: Considering Iran's interaction or contradiction with Islam, offering a historical understanding of Iran, the importance of Iranian civilization and culture, in addition to other issues. There are two periods in this regard:

#### The First Phase

This phase is the beginning of state attempts for enlightenment and renovation in Iran. On the one hand, this phase started at the beginning of Safavid dynasty, which coincided with the formation of an international economic system and has continued up until now. On the other hand, some believe that modern Iran was accompanied by the formation of an enlightenment process.<sup>5</sup> This process was more affected by the conditions of the Constitutional Revolution, but the adoption of Orientalism process reaches almost 250 years back. In the first stage, the Iranian world was examined through the eyes of European thought, to begin with mostly French and English, and finally with German thought. The production of resources and the compilation of many books by Iranian intellectuals and politicians all go to support this tendency. Among these authors, three of them, such as Maraghei, the author of *Haji Baba-yeh*

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<sup>5</sup> Seyyed Javad Tabatabaei, *Ibn Khaldun va Olume Ejtemaei (Ibn Khaldun and Social Sciences)*, (Tehran: Tarhe No, 1374/1996), p. 12-13.

*Esfahani*, Edward Brown, the author of *Three Years in Iran*, and Montesqueu, who wrote the *Iranian Letters*, are the most important.<sup>6</sup>

In this period, the observation of the Iranian world through Western eyes was emphasized. With regard to comparative aspects, the Iranian world was called traditional and historic, while the Western world was seen as contemporary and modern. In short, the Iranian world was considered to be historical and one of the component elements of world civilization.

### **The Second Phase**

The second phase was a period of social and scientific classification. In this period the ideas from the thinkers of the first phase were conceptualized by universities and technological institutes. So here the discussion was on the relation between Western civilization and science as compared to Iranian and Islamic civilization and science. This aspect can be seen in the thoughts of many thinkers and authorities. Bahar and Foroughi are among the many compilers of scientific and philosophical histories in this group. If, in the first phase, the writings of tourists and biographers about the past of Iran and about Westerners' lives in the country were considered to be important, in this phase, the historians of science, civilizations and ideas were given priority, among whom were writers, poets, people who were acquainted with the West, curators of museums, people who were acquainted with the civilization, linguists, and many more, These were the people who were given great importance. For example, Bahar<sup>7</sup> and Foroughi<sup>8</sup> are two well-known authorities of this phase.

The founders of such discussions were philosophers. From the beginning of the Reza-Shah renovation period, from 1924 to 1941, some of the Iranian intellectuals and researchers tried to explore Iranian history of science, civilization and philosophy. The main belief was that the history of Iran had started from the beginning of the kingship of Reza-Shah, the first king of the Pahlavi dynasty. As a result, science of history became important. However,

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<sup>6</sup> Taghi Azadarmaki, *Elm va Modernite dar Iran (The Science and Modernity in Iran)*, (Tehran: Tahghighat va Tose Ensani, 1385/2006), p. 20-111.

<sup>7</sup> Mohammad Taghi Bahar, *Tarikhe Ahzab (The History of Parties)*, (Tehran: Mosavar publication, 1321/1943), p. 20-93.

<sup>8</sup> Mohammad Ali Foroughi, *Sayre Hekmat dar Orupa (The Nature of Philosophy in Europe)*, (Tehran: Zavar publisher, 1344/1966).

there was an extremist Iranian nationalism political movement that objected to Islam; a new intellectual and political belief was formed. This belief gained later major cultural and intellectual support. New concepts, new discussions, training of new social manpower, compilation of various books, establishment of many research centres, and many other activities were the outcome of this belief in contemporary Iran. Supporters of this intellectual tradition had no way to express their concerns unless they first propounded thought and philosophical history in the world. In other words, they had to describe Iranian civilization and the cultural situation in relation with the world of thought on the whole. Books were compiled in this regard. This kind of attitude also existed in other Islamic and Arabic countries. Han al-Fakhori and al-Jar wrote in this connection:

From the definition which has been presented in the first chapter of this book, it is obvious that philosophy in its prevalent meaning belongs to Greece. And that which they were using in Greece had no usage in Indochina, Egypt or other ancient Eastern civilizations; if there was any these ideas had been adopted from Greece. So the historian of Eastern philosophy uses a more common name for this discipline and instead of saying "ancient Eastern philosophy" says: "Eastern thought" or "Eastern spiritual life."<sup>9</sup>

One of the main elements in referring to Islamic and Iranian civilization has been a comparative look between the East and West. This comparative look exists in most compilations. For example al-Fakhori and al-Jar have compared and explained the differences between the East and West:

...and the reason is that the historian of philosophy comes across definitions in Eastern civilizations that do not exist in Western ones. Also while studying the West, he comes across definitions which the Eastern philosopher never thought about. The great importance that Westerners attach to the mind in solving problems, which Emil Berhieh calls "mind worship", has no precedence in the East. In justifying his statement, Berhieh points out the problematic relation between mind and divine revelations, especially in the West, which became clear after Christianity and Islam came to the West. There was no such an issue for the East. This issue was raised in the West when Christianity and Islam, and before them, Judaism, found their way to the West, and encountered a philosophy which had been created and formed in Greek lands.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Han al-Fakhori and Khalil al-Jar, *Tarikhe Falsaphe dar Islam (The History of Philosophy in Islam)*, translated by Abdolhamid Ayati (Tehran: Ketabe Zaman publisher, second edition, 1358/1980), p. 11.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

At this period, *al-'Ibar* of Ibn Khaldun was used as a reference to express the background and situation of Islamic civilization. The consideration of Ibn Khaldun as a historian has its roots in the kind of attention foreign thinkers gave to him:

For decades Europeans have been acquainted with Ibn Khaldun's works and have discussed his thoughts and view points. However, in Iran and even in other Islamic countries, except for a few groups, those who are interested in philosophy have only recently become acquainted with and attached importance to "The Introduction of Ibn Khaldun", a Western work.<sup>11</sup>

*The Introduction* was translated into Farsi a few years ago and still, except for an unpublished PhD thesis and a few short articles, there is no material available with regard to this thinker in Iran.

As a result, the translation of "Ibn Khaldun's World View" should be looked on as a positive step, especially as it is one of the best ways for taking a new look at this man and his works.<sup>12</sup>

Those who talk about the science of history in Islam have used resources related to Ibn Khaldun in this regard:

In discussing the introduction of the science of history, most Islamic scholars have arrived at a consensus that the rise of the science of history was accompanied by the rise of Islam and, in fact, the fact that Islamic history has been compiled is thanks to pious thinkers who tried to bring together the historical aspects of Islam: "The existence, goal and the method of the science of history in Islam dates back to the beginning of the rise of Islam and we can find it in the Holy Qur'an and the Prophetic sayings. These indications are, unavoidably, general and brief, and are focused around the relationship between God and human history, with an emphasis on the instability of the human life in this world, as well as an emphasis on the religious, moral and practical profits of history; these are presented in a frame that offers advice and gives examples and suggests patterns. Moslems are ordered to think about the transformations of terrestrial life, about the rise and fall of kings, God's punishments and rewards to ancient nations, apparent in their fortunes and misfortunes."<sup>13</sup>

Researchers such as Ayinehvand have called Ibn Khaldun an Islamic historian because he started from history and the science of history in *al-'Ibar* and *An Introduction to al-'Ibar*.

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<sup>11</sup> Eve Lacost, *Jahanbiniye Ibn Khaldun (Ibn Khaldun's World View)*, translated by Mahdi Mojafari (Tehran: The University of Tehran Publisher, 1355/1976), p. 11.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Anvar, *Elme Tarikh der Islam*, p. 13.

Some others, such as Georgi Zeidan in *The History of Islamic Civilization* have used information related to the characters of civilization like mosques, customs, the manner of state government, working from the aforementioned book, *al-'Ibar*.<sup>14</sup> Gustav Loubon also explains the Islamic and Arabic history of civilization to clarify the situation of Islamic civilization in particular and the civilization and culture of Arabs in general by referring to *al-'Ibar* of Ibn Khaldun;<sup>15</sup> however, Ibn Khaldun also discusses Iranian governments and in particular, the Barmakie dynasty.

## 2. The Tradition of Return to Self

Although this tradition has roots among the intellectuals of the Qajar period and mostly attained its significance at the time of the Constitutional Revolution, it was categorized in the Pahlavi dynasty. Many Iranian nationalist and religious intellectuals have conducted their studies based on this tradition. The clearest narration of this tradition started from the 1950's and continues today. Assuming that the Iranian world has been shaped in contrast to the Western one, with an emphasis on Iran's regression, in this phase the main intention is to explain the reason for this backwardness and its persistence. On the other hand, the main issue in this phase is to answer for Iran's with the formation of intellectuals of a new generation, many books, articles and historical research have been compiled and conducted.

There have been two parallel attempts to clarify the reasons for Iran's regression: (1) describing "backwardness", (2) putting the secrets and reasons for backwardness into plain words. The first one is the description of backwardness in a contemporary situation, supposing some of the societies are still in past time and the people of these societies have no sense of the modern. There are two indicators to explain the reasons for this: Iran's past situation and the West's new situation. Iran has moved backwards because it was the cradle of civilization in the past and in the new era, in comparison with the dominant Western civilization, it is fragile. Here various proofs of this regression have been presented.

The main attempt in this regard is to give an idea about positive historical characters. The works and thoughts of intellectuals such as Molavi means that

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<sup>14</sup> Jorgi Zaidan, *Tarikhe Tamaddon dar Islam (The History of Civilization in Islam)*, translated by Ali Javaher Kalam and Amir Kabir Pub (Tehran: Markaz Publisher, third edition, 1345/1965).

<sup>15</sup> Ghostav Lobon, *Islam va Tamaddone Arab (Islamic and Arab Civilization)*, translated by Seyyed Hashem Hossani (Tehran: Eslamiyeh Publisher, 1347/1968), p. 323.

there was a positive and fruitful past. This point of view has led to a comparison of thoughts and viewpoints of Iranian and Muslim intellectuals with others such as. (a comparison between Aboureyhan Bironi's and Ibn Khaldun's view points; and between Ibn Khaldun's and Teda Skocpoll's social theories.<sup>16</sup> Another attempt<sup>17</sup> emphasized the impossibility of renovation and argued that there were barriers to development and renovation rather than conditions for development and renovation.<sup>18</sup>

Table: Comparing Two Traditions<sup>19</sup>

Case/ Time Period	The First Phase of the Iranology Tradition	The Second Phase of the Orientalism Tradition	Return to Self Tradition
<b>Time</b>	800 A.H. up to now	From the 13th century A.H.	The Qajar Dynasty period, the Constitutional Revolution, contemporary period
<b>The Issue</b>	The Iranian world in comparison with the Western world	The Entity of the Iranian world: traditional and extremist Iranian nationalism	Iranians' backward move
<b>Political Period</b>	Safavids and the Europe in 15th and 16th centuries AD.	The First Pahlavi	The Constitutional Revolution and Four Contemporary Decades
<b>Books</b>	Haji Baba-yeh Esfahani	Historical studies	Inheritor of exploitation, Westernization
<b>Cultural Authorities</b>	Mourieh, Monteskiou Maragheii	Bahar, Froughi	Asad-Abai, Hedayat, Al-eh Ahmad, Shariati, and Motahhari

<sup>16</sup> Taghi Azadarmaki, "Moghayese bane edehaye ejtemaei Ibn Khaldun va Bironi (Comparison between Ibn Khaldun and Al-Birouni's social Ideas)", *Etteleate Siyasi*, 18 June 1987, (1366), p. 23-32.

<sup>17</sup> Lacost, *Jahanbiniye Ibn Khaldun*.

<sup>18</sup> Mohsen Mahdi, *Falsafeye Tarikhe, motaleye dar bonyanhaye falsafi elme Ibn-Khaldun (Philosophy of History, A study in the philosophic foundations of the science of Ibn-Khaldun's philosophy of culture)*, translated by Mazid Masoudi (Tehran: Bonghahe Tarjome va Nashere Ketab, 1360/1981).

<sup>19</sup> In order to understand such attempts, one should refer to research conducted in Iran: papers that have been presented, theoretical research, and master and PhD dissertations in human



## The Status of Ibn Khaldun in Two Intellectual Traditions

There are two different understandings of Ibn Khaldun's thoughts emanating from the two traditions described above; these are as follows:

### 1. Ibn Khaldun from the Perspective of the Orientalist Tradition

Affected by the Orientalist tradition, Ibn Khaldun's thoughts led to the compiling and publishing of various books and articles. The translation of the "Introduction" (the book) and then "the Philosophy of History", written by Mohsen Mahdi,<sup>20</sup> became a reference book for many other compilations and translations. In 1975, "The World View of Ibn Khaldun" by Lacost was translated. Afterwards, social science researchers and students started to make judgments about Ibn Khaldun based on these references. From 1961 on, the study of sociology has been established at universities in the country with the "Introduction" of Ibn Khaldun being one of the resource books in this field. Now the thought of Ibn Khaldun has become an indicator to reach back to the historical-cultural past of Iranians and Muslims. In this regard, Ibn Khaldun is a figure who raises awareness about the civilization albackground in Islamic and Arabic countries.

Practical uses that are derived from his thought include: 1) the fact that we have to face up to realities like "Islam", "the East" and civilization background has now gained attention. His thoughts have been also used to explain: 2) ethnic superiority, 3) the importance of geographical elements, and 4) the regression of Islamic civilization. We will talk about the fourth one. Ibn Khaldun is known as the theoretician for the degeneration of civilizations. Some see him as belonging to a situation of regression in Islamic civilization. Therefore, they try to present him as an intellectual to explain the process of the fall and degeneration of civilizations rather than as a supporter for the theory of change and development.

The extent to which he has been affected by his time, by a collapsing society, and by his strong emphasis on social and historical investigation in this society have caused him to be known as a degeneration theoretician more than as a theoretician for the establishment of society or government. Thinking along the lines of degeneration has caused him to find his utopia in tri-

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science fields. The most frequent titles and subjects refer to barriers to development and renovation in Iran rather than describing proper conditions for renovation. The author refers to this as "the paradigm of backwardness" in Iran.

<sup>20</sup> Mahdi, *Falsafeje Tarikhe*.

bal life. This is the outcome of his understanding of society as an institution and his belief in a lack of social movement. As a result, there is no concept of development in his thought. In other words, although Ibn Khaldun, by concentrating on the issue of history, has probably made a great discovery in the Islamic Arabic history of thought if the mind is considered in different periods, he can barely continue the discussion. His emphasis on a cognitive basis at the same time as expecting unconditional obedience of the rules of Shariah, became barriers for achieving a philosophy for human beings and a transformation of historical thought into philosophy:

“History and philosophy were not placed on the human axis. Although Ibn Khaldun attempts to present a scientific history and, although his sociological and anthropological scheme for historical investigation has a philosophical perspective, since history is an implemented philosophy and philosophy is a thoughtful history, his attempts were unable to lead to a historical philosophy.<sup>21</sup>

Nassar continues his analysis the doubts that have been created about whether the text of Ibn Khaldun's *Introduction* is historical or not:

Probably [he] objects that Ibn Khaldun's theory cannot inspire a political and social intellect, since his theory belongs to the past of history. It is not accidental that some reformist scholars prefer to adhere to the Ebn-eh Tamimeh' viewpoint...This almost prevalent objection is based on some misunderstandings. No one seeks to deny the medieval characteristics of Ibn Khaldun's thoughts; but at the same time it should be understood whether this medieval characteristic is completely divorced from the new world, as the Arabs insist. In fact, there is serious evidence that supports this idea, for example that socioeconomic, sociopolitical, and socio-cultural changes in the world of trade are strictly under the domain of material and thought structures, in which there have been no changes after the medieval period. Technical development is one thing while spiritual change is something else altogether. Ibn Khaldun's thoughts are interesting for the contemporary Arab thinker due to the fact that they belong to a social historical reality which still exists. From this aspect, Ibn Khaldun's thoughts cause such a person to be aware of a reality in which they live and deepens their historical thought, showing them the way. Sociological thought enlightens the Arab sociologist, thus making it maybe not more useful, but at least not less useful than other methods that are used to study societies other than the Arab communities.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Nâsîf Nassâr, *Endîşe-i Vâkıagirayî-i İbn Haldûn*, translated by Yûsuf Rahimlû (Tehran: Lou. Markaze Nashere Daneshghahi, 1366), p. 12-59.

<sup>22</sup> Nassâr, *Endîşe-i Vâkıagirayî*, p. 2.

As a result Ibn Khaldun's social theory is limited to the formation of civilizations and their disintegration. This belief has been mentioned in many works about him:

Ibn Khaldun knows civilization as a living creature, which is born, grows up, being fed, and reaches youth, blossoms, and step by step goes toward old age, becoming weak, and then dying.<sup>23</sup>

With this approach, by introducing elements and components of civilization, the government, religious or customary law, morals, vocation, technology, population, wealth, and their rise and decline have had great importance attached to them.<sup>24</sup>

## 2. Ibn Khaldun in the Return to Self Tradition

The second approach to Ibn Khaldun is through his *The Introduction, or Moghademeh*. At this phase, he has been introduced as an intellectual who can be considered to be a path to the cultural past and the formation of an independent scientific entity. Before, little attention was given to the thoughts and viewpoints of Ibn Khaldun. But here he is introduced as a historical scholar and sociologist.

### (1) Ibn Khaldun as a Historian

In order to map out the science of historical studies, some intellectuals and historians in Iran and Islamic countries have referred to what Ibn Khaldun calls "The History Science" and his critique on the ancients' historiography.<sup>25</sup> They have tried to show Ibn Khaldun as one of the main authorities among Muslim historiographers. The difference between Ibn Khaldun and his predecessors is his in-depth examination of history rather than merely making an emphasis on Islamic history. This is the reason why he is known as a scholar of the science of historical studies. Lacost claims that the text of *The Introduction* is more appropriate for discussion in the field of history:

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<sup>23</sup> Ezzattollahe Radmanesh, *Nazariyate Ibn Khaldun darbareye, Tarikhe va Tamaddon (The Ideas of Ibn Khaldun on Philosophy, History and Civilization)*, (Tehran: Ghalam Publisher, 1358/1980), p. 17.

<sup>24</sup> Radmanesh, *Nazariyate Ibn Khaldun*, p. 17.

<sup>25</sup> H. R. Gibb and M Halmi and Gholman Hovar and Sami Addahan, *Tarikhneghari dar Islam (Histography in Islam)*, translated by Yaghoub, (Tehran: Azand, Nasher Gostar Publisher, 1361/1984).

...We can place the contents of The Introduction in contemporary points of view. It is Ibn Khaldun who gives us an idea about the major past events of lands which are known as "The Third World."<sup>26</sup>

## (2) Ibn Khaldun as a Sociologist

Some sociologists in Iran have attempted to introduce Ibn Khaldun as a sociologist. Such scholars differentiate between ideology and science and recognize each one as being related to their particular fields. This attitude is one reflected in the book of *Hamkari Hozeh va Daneshgah*. It has argued that Ibn Khaldun have tried to explain the nature of civilization and the way which the society has changed from the tribal to urban stage. It has mentioned that he discussed the roles of different social and political factors in the failure of a civilization.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, it is possible to use his thoughts to express particular group relations (tribals and urbanized ones). His theory can be used to justify many past socio-political events such as tribal relations and translate many undeveloped and non-technical events with a little reworking. Today governments, parties and armies are less based on kinship and tribal relations; however it seems that there is a kind of social relationship without which they cannot conduct their functions. Despite the fact that the compilers of the aforementioned book claim that it is possible to use Ibn Khaldun's theory to understand human societies, they have not done anything in this regard.

## (3) Ibn Khaldun as a Social Theoretician

From this perspective, Ibn Khaldun is known as a theoretician with an evolutionary approach. This has been presented in different texts in Iran:

This section is applicable to theories that in some way believe in diversity or have entered diversity into sociological issues. The starting point is Ibn Khaldun. At first, it should be explained that, concerning the importance of Ibn Khaldun's opinions about history and the philosophy of history, and his characteristic translation of diversity, his opinions can be used to justify diversity in sociology or in discussions and critiques of sociologists who adhere to diversity.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Lacost, *Johanbiniye Ibn Khaldun*, p. 15.

<sup>27</sup> Daftare Hamkari Hoze va Daneshgah, *Moghademei be Jameshenasi Islami (Introduction to Islamic Sociology)*, (Tehran: Samt Publication, 1373/1995).

<sup>28</sup> Gholamabbas Tavassoli, *Nazariyahe Jameshenasi (The Theories of Sociology)*, second edition (Tehran: Samt Publisher, 1370/1992), p. 23-34.

A kind of diversity theory can be found in Ibn Khaldun's works. It seems that Ibn Khaldun, in his analysis and his historical understanding, has reached a kind of diversity which Spencer mentioned in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In criticizing previous historians, Ibn Khaldun says:

One of the hidden mistakes of history is to forget the principle that the situations of nations and generations are changed by a transformation of circumstances. This is like a chronic illness which is hidden and covered; this change is not something that is carried out, but rather occurs with the passing of long centuries and only a few who are acquainted with the alternations of nature can understand this change. The reason why this occurs is due to the nature of the society, customs and traditions of nations, their styles and religion which do not sustain uniformity, and change with the passing of time and transformation from one situation to another.<sup>29</sup>

In his book, Tavassoli tries to prove that Ibn Khaldun believes in diversity; from his point of view the main elements for diversity in society range from traditional kinds (tribal life) to city life (development). His emphasis on prejudice is evident in this regard. In his evolutionary view, Ibn Khaldun emphasizes the main characters in social change from a traditional structure (primitive) to a modern one.<sup>30</sup> From this aspect, some claim Ibn Khaldun desired to change society from a traditional one to a modern one. The reason why he is called a sociologist is this concept of "prejudice". Right or wrong, researchers have tried to match this aspect with the Durkheim's theory of social union and to give it a sociological burden. Radmanesh says:

Arab researchers and scholars, and all who have studied and conducted research on the works of Ibn Khaldun's works and have analyzed his "Introduction" have interpreted "prejudice" differently. We have analyzed his main theories and conceptions in an interesting manner and define his pure theories and concepts at the end in order to clarify the goals of Ibn Khaldun unambiguously along the rules which he himself established.<sup>31</sup>

### **Disadvantages in Practicing Ibn Khaldun's Thoughts in Iran**

There are some disadvantages in using the social ideas of Ibn Khaldun among Islamic intellectuals, such as:

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<sup>29</sup> Tavassoli, *Nazariyahe Jameshenasi*, p. 202.

<sup>30</sup> Nasar, *Vagheyatgharaei va Ibn Khaldun*, p. 12-59.

<sup>31</sup> Radmanesh, *Nazariyate Ibn Khaldun*, p. 20.

1 – His ideas were introduced when Western thinkers, such as Sorokin and others talked about him. Therefore, Ibn Khaldunian thinkers are dependent on Western thinkers. Whatever has been said about his ideas in Islamic societies is also dependent on the West.

2 – I think that what has been introduced about Ibn Khaldun that has been taken from *The Introduction* is not consistent with his entire work, in which should be included his history, *al-'Ibar*.

3– The ideas of Ibn Khaldun should be presented from an aspect of Islamic culture and he should be presented as the follower of Al-Farabi and others.

4 – Society needs to know more about Ibn Khaldun's ideas. Therefore, we should introduce his ideas in a way that is appropriate for a wider audience.

5 – We need to have greater clarification about some of Ibn Khaldun's concepts, such as *asabiayh*, *omran*, and so on.

6 – A lack of attention to historical analysis has caused problems: There have been hardly any researchers who tried to prove or disprove Ibn Khaldun's theory of historical changes. As a result even *Al-'Ibar* was translated after 1989. *The Introduction* is the most applied resource book for reference to Ibn Khaldun's thoughts. There have been few cases where Ibn Khaldun has been considered as a sociologist. Since the basis of his works is historical investigations, social researchers in Iran are less inclined to conduct historical studies; rather they tend to look for conceptual topics. Consequently, Ibn Khaldun has been referred to in Iran mostly in order to discuss the meaning of prejudice, the change from tribal life to city life, the importance of economics and religious and social relations. On the other hand, most attempts by followers of Ibn Khaldun in Iran have been focused on teaching his thoughts and theories taken from his *The Introduction*, rather than practicing his intellectual system during social and cultural analyses and investigations.

## Conclusion

As we have pointed out above, Ibn Khaldun, as a social intellectual, has been considered from the perspective of the Orientalist paradigm, with an emphasis on understanding the reasons for Iranian's backwardness for the last four decades; this is something that has continued up until now. In this

regard, he is for the most part an intellectual who reports on Islamic civilization and the decline of culture and his theory is capable of explaining Muslim backwardness. Although there have been many attempts to set forward his theory of social change, there has been no serious research carried out about his thoughts for amending the developmental process of the country.

Discussing the thoughts of Ibn Khaldun in a frame work of the Orientalist paradigm not only provides a possibility to explain the reasons for Iranian backwardness - as part of Islamic civilization - but also emphasizes those elements that are related to the civilization and culture. Also his thoughts, while they emphasize the reasons for Iran's move backward, explain the civilizational and cultural background of Muslims and Iranians.

Ibn Khaldun is also discussed from a perspective of return to self in Iran. Emphasizing the importance of Islamic and Iranian history, the history of science and thought, sociology and social theories to clarify social and intellectual change is the main component of return to self. Concerning this, some have tried to bring his name forward while discussing Islamic thought in science, philosophy and sociology. In such a situation, the Iranian sociologists Tavassoli<sup>32</sup> and Azadarmaki<sup>33</sup> have also called him the founder of the world and Islamic sociology.

We can see a new future for Ibn Khaldun's ideas. In this era of postmodern ideas and multiculturalism, there is a chance for Muslim thinkers to return to Ibn Khaldun's ideas to critically analyze and explain the social and political situation of their society. Hence, in this direction, it might enable us to get a new sense of social ideas in contrast to the present perspectives.

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<sup>32</sup> Tavassoli, *Nazariyahe Jameshenasi*.

<sup>33</sup> Taghi Azadarmaki, *Jameshenasie Ibn Khaldun (Sociology of Ibn Khaldun)*, (Tehran: Tabyan 1375/1995), p. 153-80.