



Ali Shariati's Reading of Ibn Khaldun

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Abstract: Ali Shariati has written extensively on various aspects of social theory and the history of religions, but very few have studied his views on Ibn Khaldun. In other words, my main concern in this article is focused squarely on Shariati's reading of Ibn Khaldun's discourses. My argument is not to be preoccupied by Eastern or Western Khaldunian studies or even how sociologists and social anthropologists such as Ahmad Ashraf construe him. On the contrary, I attempt to go through the 36 volumes of Ali Shariati's legacy in this article, delving into his reflections on Ibn Khaldun. Does he say anything substantial at all on Ibn Khaldun? What does Shariati think of Ibn Khaldun? How does Shariati read Ibn Khaldun? Has anybody else worked upon the type of Ibn Khaldun that Shariati has construed? As much as I have studied the literature in the Persian, English, Swedish, Russian, Arabic, and Turkish languages, no references are found regarding Shariati's interpretations of Ibn Khaldun. But, as Ali Shariati is one of the most pivotal contemporary non-Eurocentric social theorists in the world and his views on one of the most important classical social thinkers (i.e., Ibn Khaldun) should not go unheeded, this is why I have taken upon this challenge and inquired upon the question that is begged of what Shariati's approach toward Ibn Khaldun is.

Keywords: Ibn Khaldun, Ali Shariati, orientalism, philosophy of history, Montesquieu.

Öz: Ali Şeriatî sosyal kuram ve dinler tarihinin çeşitli yönleri üzerine derinlemesine yazılar yazmış, ancak çok az kişi onun İbn Haldun hakkındaki görüşlerini incelemiştir. Bu çalışmanın ana odağı ise, Şeriatî'nin İbn Haldun'un söylemlerine dair okumalarıdır. Bu durum, bu çalışmanın Doğu'da ya da Batı'da gerçekleştirilmiş olan İbn Haldun çalışmalarıyla ve hatta onun Ahmed Eşref gibi sosyologlar ve sosyal antropologlar tarafından nasıl yorumlandığıyla ilgili olmadığı anlamına gelir. Aksine, bu makalede Ali Şeriatî'nin 36 ciltlik mirası gözden geçirilmeye ve İbn Haldun ile ilgili düşünceleri incelenmeye çalışılmıştır. Şeriatî İbn Haldun hakkında önemli şeyler söylemiş midir? İbn Haldun hakkında ne düşünmektedir? Şeriatî İbn Haldun'u nasıl okumaktadır? Şeriatî'nin yorumladığı haliyle İbn Haldun üzerine çalışan başkaları olmuş mudur? Bu çalışma kapsamında incelenen Farsça, İngilizce, İsveççe, Rusça, Arapça ve Türkçe literatür göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, Şeriatî'nin İbn Haldun yorumuna dair hiçbir atıf bulunmamaktadır. Ancak Ali Şeriatî'nin bu dünyadaki en önemli Avrupa-merkezci olmayan çağdaş sosyal kuramcılardan biri olduğu ve en önemli klasik toplumsal düşünürlerden biri olan İbn Haldun hakkındaki görüşlerinin göz ardı edilmemesi gerektiği düşünüldüğünde, bu durum kabul edilebilir değildir. Bu nedenle mevcut çalışmada bu görev üstlenilmiş ve Şeriatî'nin İbn Haldun'a yaklaşımı tetkik edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İbn Haldun, Ali Şeriatî, oryantalizm, tarih felsefesi, Montesquieu.

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Introduction

Ibn Khaldun was born on May 27, 1332 and died March 17, 1406 in Cairo. Exactly 527 years had passed between when Ibn Khaldun had died and Ali Shariati was born in Iran. The first question one may pose is whether one can find any relation between these two renowned scholars who seem to share certain civilizational commonalities despite their apparent temporal distance. In other words, on what basis do we plan to study Ibn Khaldun in relation to Ali Shariati? I think this assumed relation can be conceived in four different fashions: The first type is to assume Shariati is a Khaldunian sociologist, the second is to assume a comparative approach that thus compares these two scholars, the third is to assume that Shariati wrote sporadically about Ibn Khaldun, and the last is to assume that Shariati referred to Ibn Khaldun across his 36 collected volumes but that requires reconstructing a Shariatian reading of Ibn Khaldun based on the fragmented references he made during his studies and lectures.

My reading of Shariati in reference to Ibn Khaldun has only revealed a sparse relation for the fourth type being fragments references to Ibn Khaldun. To be more accurate, we can find long and short references to Ibn Khaldun in the following volumes of his *Collected Works (CW)*:

- Re-Turn CW: p. 4
- History of Civilization 1&2 CW: pp. 11–12
- Islamology 1&2 CW: pp. 16–17
- Human Being CW: p. 24
- Alienated Man CW: p. 25
- Reconstructing the Iranian-Islamic Identity CW: p. 27
- Method of Knowing Islam CW: p. 28
- Covenant with Abraham CW: p. 29

These are the works where we can find references to Ibn Khaldun; however, Shariati is found to have made no distinct study on Ibn Khaldun's thoughts or social theory. However, this neither sidelines the importance of Ibn Khaldun in the Shariatian frame of reference nor minimizes the importance of Shariati's reading of Ibn Khaldun. This is to argue that, if we take a reconstructive approach to Shariati and how he understood Ibn Khaldun, then we can draw the contours of Shariati's interpretation of Ibn Khaldun in the context of non-Western social theory. However, I should make clear that this is not a comparative study between Ibn Khaldun and Shariati but a tentative engagement with Shariati's reading of Ibn Khaldun. Of course, professional Khaldun experts can raise many objections that the Ibn

Khaldun I reconstruct as the one Shariati has interpreted does not reference the authentic Ibn Khaldun as represented in his *Prolegomena*. Nevertheless, one should bear in mind that what I am interested in is not Ibn Khaldun as he was; what has relevance for me is the Ibn Khaldun as interpreted by Shariati.

Undoubtedly, traces of Ibn Khaldun as such are found, but this is ultimately a Shariatian interpretation of Ibn Khaldun that, while disputable, does exist and is worth being studied within the global context of social theory as Shariati is one of the most pioneering non-Western classics in the post-colonial existentialist social theory, which is undertheorized and in need of more global sociological engagements. Some may argue that we should have a literature review on this topic, but if one reflects carefully upon the kind of question that is at the heart of this research, then one would realize no worthy studies are found that examine the Shariatian interpretation of Ibn Khaldun. I am solely concerned with the Shariatian approach on Ibn Khaldun and would like to find out how he construes Ibn Khaldun; in regard to this specific problematic, nothing in the literature is available as far as I know. As I have stated clearly, I am not interested in Ibn Khaldun as such; my question is about Ali Shariati's interpretation of Ibn Khaldun, which as a question differs from what Ibn Khaldun says or what Khaldunian researchers state about the Khaldunian intellectual legacy. If the point of my departure is understood in its own fashion, then one will realize that this research is not on Ibn Khaldun but is part of a Shariatian sociological enterprise.

On Ibn Khaldun: The Founding Father of the Philosophy of History

How does Shariati view Ibn Khaldun within the course of the history of ideas? As we already know, a controversial debate exists among sociologists interested in the history of the discipline of sociology, whose historical roots are traceable back to Ibn Khaldun. For instance, F. A. Al-Sulaim (2010) argued the existence of a widespread but mistaken assumption in contemporary intellectual production where the science of culture and society is assumed to have originated solely in Europe; the proponents of this assumption need to realize that Ibn Khaldun is the true founder of sociology. Shariati also appears conscious of Ibn Khaldun's importance in the context of the historiography of social sciences, as French scholarship's pivotal significance concerns just as much the revival of Ibn Khaldun in the 20th century.

In other words, we cannot read the Shariatian conception of Ibn Khaldun without a meaningful reference to the French school of Orientalism and the intellectual

as well as sentimental fervor among scholars of Muslim background both in France and in the North African colonized regions in the previous century. Shariati argues in his collected works (i.e., *Bazgasht*) that:

... we cannot talk about the founder as far as the natural sciences are concerned ... as the beginning of these branches of knowledge seem to be lost in the dark and long history of ideas, philosophy, religion and human civilization ... But ... whenever we reflect upon human sciences ... in the particular sense of this term ... then one can approximately find a kind of consensus that sociology is founded by August Comte ... and philosophy of history (and not the science of history which does not exist yet) ... is founded by Ibn Khaldun. (CW, Vol. 4, 2010 p. 313)

Put another way, Shariati considers Ibn Khaldun as the true founder of the philosophy of history, and in this fashion he appears to differ from the general mode among non-Western scholars who consider Ibn Khaldun to be a sociologist. But how should we decipher this difference of views between Ali Shariati and scholars who view Ibn Khaldun as the true founder of sociology? I think this is a poignant question that requires very precise inquiry as this relates to the very crux of Shariati's sociology. In other words, by investigating this question, we may be able to understand what he means conceptually when he talks about sociology, as well as show how his conceptualization differs from other non-Western and Western sociologists and the reasons why these two groups do not consider Ali Shariati to be a sociologist. For instance, Iran has many academic sociologists (e.g., Bagher Sarokhani, Seyed Buik Mohamadi) who argue vehemently that Ali Shariati is not a sociologist, but when looking at their sociological practices, one can then discern that their conception of sociology is what could be termed a "quantitative/statistical" orientation in sociological schools, which may bear resemblance to the Chicago School of Sociology (Bulmer, 1984).

However a great distinction exists between the Chicago School of Sociology and the majority of Iranian sociologists, where the applied orientation of Chicago School sociologists attempt to apply their theories in a city laboratory while Iranian followers of the American style of sociology lack authenticity and practical application as far as Iranian cities are concerned.

Now let's turn to Ali Shariati's conceptualization of sociology that enabled him to uphold Ibn Khaldun as the founder of the philosophy of history instead of sociology yet at the same time arguing him to be the true founder of sociology. A contradiction here appears to exist between Ali Shariati and many non-Western scholars who on one hand argue Ibn Khaldun to be the true founder of sociology,

while on the other hand Shariati's understanding, even his views on Ibn Khaldun as the founder of philosophy of history (and not of sociology), at the same time upholds Ibn Khaldun as the founder of both. In the *Fourth Collected Works* (2010), Ali Shariati states that August Comte is the founder of sociology and Ibn Khaldun is the founder of the. In the *Sixteenth Collected Works* (2011) Shariati wrote on Islamology, he referred to Ibn Khaldun as the founder of the philosophy of history and of sociology. One could argue that this may have been a slip of the tongue, but this is textually not endorsable as Shariati argues Ibn Khaldun to be the founder of both the philosophy of history as well as of sociology“ in strictly scientific meaning of the term” (CW, Vol.16, 2011 p.171). So, how can we explain these contradictions in Volumes 4 and 16 of his *Collected Works*?

In the Shariatian reading, the discourse of Ibn Khaldun is premised upon a philosophy of history; this statement in the Shariatian frame of analysis is not derogatory but refers to the critical standpoint of Shariati as far as concerns the sociology of emancipation. In other words, sociology devoid of an intellectual apparatus for interpreting human history is not emancipative, rather it is an instrument for social stupefaction. This emphasizes that we need to re-discover Shariati's specific reading of Ibn Khaldun which is, as a matter of fact, a novel reading not of Ibn Khaldun alone but of the history of human sciences *par excellence*. In Shariati's approach, Ibn Khaldun is not a sociologist as conceptualized by academia but a sociologist in the very particular fashion that Shariati conceptualizes as the key for unlocking textual paradoxes, which we may find in his body of writings concerning Ibn Khaldun.

Society and History Re-Conceptualized

In Shariati's view, Ibn Khaldun is the founder of sociology, social philosophy, and the philosophy of history in the modern sense these concepts have in the world of social sciences. He argues:

Ibn Khaldun's philosophy of history ...is scientific in the modern sense of the knowledge pursuit. But his work suffers from a very serious infirmity ... and due to this very critical problem ... it has lost its value. But the question which needs to be asked is: what is that grave problem which has affected the relevance of Ibn Khaldun's scientific discourse? The biggest problem of Ibn Khaldun is that it belongs to us ... and belonging to [re]stern] (and not western) tradition is a dangerous crime which cannot be condoned. (CW, Vol.16, p. 171)

It seems Shariati is of the opinion that the negligence towards Ibn Khaldun in academic discourses does not have scientific origins but is instead related to the politics of identity. This is to argue that if Ibn Khaldun was of European origin and could fit in the Eurocentric frame of historiography of knowledge, then he would have surely been celebrated and recognized by Western scholars and also cherished by non-Western scholars as Western products are always better than non-Western ones. This says something about the inferiority complex among West-toxified scholars who suffer from the syndrome of the captive mind as elaborated by Syed Hussain Alatas. In the Shariatian reading, Ibn Khaldun:

... is the one who established ... for the first time ... sociology, social philosophy, and history of philosophy in the true sense of scientific analysis ... -in accordance to the meaning we today attach to these concepts ... - and in the same sense and based on the same method which history of philosophy and sociology ... during the 19th century were done and established ... and as these disciplines ... in the 20th century ... continued ... up to this very day. (CW, Vol.16, pp.171-173)

How does Shariati explain the politics of identity? He contends that:

... some of European Orientalists, Islamologists who are reasonably fair and did not allow their religious sentiments and anti-Islamic biases ... or their anti-Eastern nationalistic sentiments as well as their sense of racial superiority along with their pride as far as the West is concerned ... and their dedication towards Colonial powers ... interfere in their academic studies and researches ... in their works one can find ample references ... where they confess that sociology did not [come into] being either by Pierre-Joseph Proudhon or Plato -as Plato's ides and thought are social problems and social lore and cannot be weighed as scientific analysis- ... but this honor goes to Ibn Khaldun who transformed history from being a form of storytelling of past events into scientific form of analysis ... based on scientific causes. (CW, Vol.16,p. 172)

Shariati should be mentioned as not being a naïve fan of Ibn Khaldun; he does, however, attempts to establish this hypothesis that Ibn Khaldun is the one who established sociology, but this insistence is not based on a blind adherence. On the contrary, he argues that:

... I do not state that all theories and views of Ibn Khaldun are correct ... as my intention is not aimed at correctness or incorrectness of his position ... My main argument is on the notion of scientific methodology ... [which Ibn Khaldun had] ... this is what it counts as far as the study of human society is concerned. Ibn Khaldun studied human society as an objective and scientific phenomenon ... [whose] motions and movements are possible to study based on causality, interpretability, and diagnosability, as well as explainability ... It was Ibn Khaldun who established the science of society. The lan-

guage of Ibn Khaldun is novel and his perspective is dry, exact and scientific ... in him you can find both sociology and history ... Ibn Khaldun considers both of these disciplines as one form of knowledge. (CW, Vol.16, p.173)

Here one can see that Shariati seems to interpret Ibn Khaldun and his towering position within the disciplines of social sciences in a particular fashion that can differ from both non-Western and Western scholars who either exalt Ibn Khaldun to the height of the discipline or downgrade him to the periphery of the discipline of sociology and social sciences. What particular mode of interpretation does Ali Shariati have? He is of the opinion that sociology is a historical pursuit and history is a sociological form of imagination. But what does he really mean by this equivalency between the two disciplines of sociology and history? We know that these two disciplines have different objects of study and their disciplinary formations differ from each other, but why does Shariati insist that they are identical? One could argue that he may not be well-versed in the history of social sciences and that is why he equates these two disciplines as one united form of disciplinary study of human society; however, a cursory look at his works has defied the adversaries of Shariati in Iran from taking such a simplistic conclusion. Then how should we explain this epistemology of identity?

First of all, I should mention that Shariati takes sociology and history as identical disciplines in regard to Ibn Khaldun's form of episteme, and by so doing he appears to suggest the ideal type, to which he himself aspires to reach. Put differently, this is not only an interpretation from Ibn Khaldun as such but also a prescription of the type he is attempting to mold as well as the genre he himself is working through. If we look at the sociological and historical discourses in Iran at the time of Shariati (and even today), we can understand his critiques both toward Iranian sociologists who lack historical insight as well as Iranian historians who lack sociological imagination as far as the Iranian context is concerned. But Shariati focuses on Ibn Khaldun in Iran, and by so doing, he attempts to draw attention to a kind of sociology that is mandatory for a society that has ancient roots and a contemporary presence. This argues that one can discern a form of symbolic self-reference in Shariati's construction of Ibn Khaldun as though one is not solely reading about Ibn Khaldun as depicted by Shariati but is living an autoethnography of Ali Shariati in terms of the ideal scientific type based on a comprehensive understanding of humanity as a species. This is the key to understanding Shariati's construction of Ibn Khaldun, which is conceptualized by referring to the concept of the philosophy of history as a chain that connects history and sociology in a harmonic configuration through soteriological significance.

In *Islamology*, Shariati argues that:

... in Ibn Khaldun ... you can find both sociology and history ... and as a matter of fact ... he considers both as one and the same ... and they are actually one and the same. To be more accurate, sociology and history are two aspects and two faces of the same being ... due to this very fact that society is equivalent to static history ... and history is ... dynamic society. (CW, Vol.16,171–173).

Here one can see the two key concepts Shariati employs in depicting Ibn Khaldun's type of social theory: static history and dynamic society. What do these concepts really mean? How would the epistemological makeup of disciplinary knowledge in humanities change through this conceptual framework Shariati provides? Put differently; what does Shariati mean when he states that "Society is identical to static history and history is ... dynamic society" (CW, Vol.16, p. 173)? This could mean that we need to have a comprehensive view about the historical tapestries along the course of the history of a given society for understanding a given society; while for studying history, we can take a given society as a nutshell of historical transformations of a given history. Here Shariati seems to be talking about a dialectical understanding of *the social*, and this requires conceptualizing a deeper form of the social as it is not a one-dimensional entity but a dual reality that has both duration and density. However, something seems as yet unclear as far as Shariati's approach towards Ibn Khaldun is concerned, as he argues that Ibn Khaldun's social theory consists of both historical insight and sociological imagination. The tacit dimension of Shariati's approach towards Ibn Khaldun is the notion of the philosophy of history, and this is Shariati's major contribution to non-Western social sciences, as the academic sociologists in Iran have no historical insight and the historians pay no attention to the sociological vision of human history. But to state this is not a very novel critique, as this is only a reference to the state of the art as it is. Shariati's critique is important due to another input that he attempts to demonstrate when re-conceptualizing Ibn Khaldun, this being the argument he constructs by stating the complexity of Ibn Khaldun's discourse to be due to the vision of human history embedded in Ibn Khaldun's social theory.

In other words, Ibn Khaldun has a philosophy of history, and any social theorist who reflects upon the driving forces of human history would surely have a more inclusive understanding of both history and society because society is not divorced from the historical processes that give birth to a given society. History should be studied in the best fashion through its best form of historical relics (i.e., society). In Shariati's view, the dialectic between static history and dynamic society

could be solely achieved once one is equipped by a type of philosophy of history, which means having a general understanding of human action as a unique form of action in this world. Ibn Khaldun seems to possess these qualities in the Shariatian reading, but now a new question appears to arise: What is the key concept of Ibn Khaldun's philosophy of history in Shariati's outlook?

In other words, if we assume Shariati to have qualified Ibn Khaldun as one of the most significant social theorists in the context of social sciences and this qualification to be due to Ibn Khaldun's profound understanding of the *telos* of human history, then what is the engine behind colossal historical change? Shariati seems to have reflected upon this question in regard to Ibn Khaldun with regard to his studies on civilization. Said another way, Shariati considers the question of dialectics to be of serious importance in understanding the forces that bring change to human history and society in the colossal context of civilization. This is the context in which Shariati compares Ibn Khaldun with Arnold J. Toynbee, who was of the opinion that the history of nations can only be understood in the context of the broader civilization (Toynbee, 1948).

Ibn Khaldun and the Driving Forces of History

In the second volume of *Islamology* (CW: 17. 60-88) Shariati ponders upon the question of *driving factor of history*. It may not be an exaggeration to claim that this question was popularized by the Iranian Marxists (Tudeh Party) who brought up the issue of class struggle as defined in the Marxist tradition of social theory. In *Communist Manifesto* Marx sums his theory of driving forces up by writing the history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggles. (Marx, 2004) It is in this context that Shariati attempts to debate the concept of *driving force of history* in regard to Ibn Khaldun's social theory. Shariati in order to explain Ibn Khaldun's position in the context of the philosophy of history refers to the various positions and thinkers who could match Ibn Khaldun, and in this setting he mentions the following thinkers and positions as examples: Mulla Sadra (and the concept of substantial motion as the driving force of history), Fredrich Schiller (and love and hunger as the driving forces of history), Thomas Carlyle (and the concept of hero as the driving force of history), the Catholic school of history (and the concept of providence as the driving force of history), and Toynbee (and the concepts of offensive and defensive as the driving forces of history). He then presents Ibn Khaldun's position as the founder of the philosophy of history and sociology.

Now, one could ask about Shariati's reading of Ibn Khaldun's view on the question of what is the driving force in history? In other words, what is Ibn Khaldun's position on this question? Is his position similar to any of the aforementioned perspectives? Does he represent a different vista in terms of the driving force of history? In his *History of Civilization* (2012), Shariati holds that "A thorough study of civilization as a subject of study was commenced by Ibn Khaldun and currently is carried on by Toynbee ... the most sophisticated expert on civilizational studies ..." (CW, Vol.11, 2012 p.91). But when Shariati talks about Ibn Khaldun as the initiator of civilizational studies, he seems to suggest that one cannot study a smaller unit of civilization (i.e., society) without having a more comprehensive understanding of the larger units, and these larger units are parts of historical configurations; without a widespread conceptualization of them, our sociological theories would be barren and devoid of sociological imagination. Ibn Khaldun, as Shariati interpreted, has a philosophy of history in his analysis of civilizational changes in the course of history:

... Ibn Khaldun ... based on his geographicalism, ... is of the belief that the driving force of history ... is climate/environment... and the climatic conflicts between urban and tribal regions are the driving force of history... these climatic conflicts generate epochs, and each has its own respective philosophy of history –which is, in turn, based on cyclic patterns... (CW, Vol.17, pp.61–62).

In other words, in the Shariatian reading of Ibn Khaldun, the driving force of history is not dominated by the principles of offensiveness or defensiveness that Toynbee depicts in the colossal civilizational transformations throughout the course of history. On the contrary, the Khaldunian philosophy of history in the Shariatian frame of interpretation is based on the principle of climate that arises from the division between sedentary and tribal lifestyles. Within the Khaldunian studies is a debate on the Orientalism of translations, which refers to the imperialism of orientalist categories and concepts in academic studies concerning Ibn Khaldun. This argues that Western or non-Western scholars interpret *The Muqaddimah* through occidental concepts and categories that empty out the original concepts embedded in the text Ibn Khaldun provided in order to depict the intellectual vista through which he views historical processes in human society. For instance, Ibn Khaldun employed two concepts, *Umran Badawi* and *Umran Hadhari*, but these concepts have been twisted and lost in translations in the hands of Western scholars (in the disciplines of Orientalism and Arab Studies) and even in the hands of non-Western scholars (who suffer from the syndrome of the captive mind) who

interpreted the Khaldunian concepts in accordance with European historical categories (i.e., the conflict between countryside versus town).

Here the key concepts of *Umran Badawi* and *Umran Hadhari* are argued as not able to be translated into the conflicts between *countryside* and *town*, and hence any interpretation of Ibn Khaldun that reads the conflicts of feudalism versus capitalism into Khaldunian concepts are profoundly irrelevant. If we translate the concepts proposed by Ibn Khaldun outside the frame of Orientalism, then we should talk about nomadic civility and sedentary civility, and these fundamentally differ from the conflicts between country and town, both of which have settled styles of social organizations. Now the question is whether Shariati read Ibn Khaldun in an Orientalist fashion or if his interpretation was freed from Eurocentric biases. Shariati employed two concepts, *Shahr* and *Il*, in describing Ibn Khaldun's key concept and the conflicts between nomadic civility and sedentary civility. In English, the two concepts of *town* and *city* are distinguishable, each referring to a distinct form of social organization and mode of production throughout the course of European history, but only one word exists in Persian for these two English concepts: *Shahr*.

In other words, when Shariati interprets Ibn Khaldun, he appears to not explain the key concepts in Khaldunian social theory by referencing the Orientalist mode of interpretation, but at the same time and due to the Persian frame of linguistics, whether Shariati is referring to town or city when he uses the term *Shahr* is unclear. However, the concept of *Il* is etymologically of Turkish origin and means tribe; in Persian *Il* refers to the lifestyle of the nomad who follows an unsettled form of social organization. Said differently, one can conclude the two concepts Shariati employed in explaining Ibn Khaldun's social theory to not be premised upon the conflicts between country and town but to rather be based on *Il* versus *Shahr* (i.e., nomad versus town, possibly city). The reason we cannot decide whether Shariati meant town or city is not solely due to the *Orientalist translation* in his interpretation but also to the lack of conceptual sophistication in the Persian language. To be more accurate, this lack itself is not lingual in nature but rather has to do with intellectual lag, which is beyond the scope of the discussion here.

Conclusion

Ali Shariati's collected works are composed of 36 volumes, 14 of which include Ibn Khaldun. Of course, we cannot find any direct reference by page number to Ibn Khaldun in Shariati's books, but he undoubtedly studied *The Muqaddimah* in Ara-

bic, as a copy of this was found in his father's library in the city of Mashhad before he got a scholarship to go to France in 1959. Another issue that needs to be mentioned is that Ibn Khaldun's *The Muqaddimah* was translated into Persian in the early 1950s by Mohammad Parvin Gonabadi, who himself was a Marxist thinker who in 1943 was elected as a member of parliament representing the Tudeh Fraction (i.e., Iranian Communist Party). Shariati also had access to this translation of *The Muqaddimah* before going to France in 1959. However, when Shariati arrived in Paris, he seems to have learned about the French school of Orientalism that categorized Ibn Khaldun as one of the forerunners of sociology who explained the conditions of human life in reference to climatic effects and geographic terms. For instance, the French school of social theory was deeply interested in Ibn Khaldun and the similarities they found between Khaldun's and Montesquieu's climatic orientations in the 19th century. As Demircioglu rightly notes:

There is a significant similarity between Ibn Khaldun, having lived in the Northern Africa in the fourteenth century and Montesquieu in terms of their ideas concerning the direct effect of geographical conditions and climate on human life. According to Ibn Khaldun, who divided the world into seven climatic regions from the south to the north, the fourth climatic zone located just in the centre is the most suitable place to live. The moralities and personality features of the people living in these regions are more moderate compared to other regions. Similarly, Montesquieu indicated that climate has an effect on the personalities, behavioral forms of people and the laws they enact. According to him, those living in the cold climatic zones are coldblooded, proud and keen on their security and freedom. As for the ones living in temperate zones, this changes. (2014, p.725)

In the French academic context of the 20th century, the ideas of these two thinkers who suggested that natural conditions have an effect on people and communities were ferociously compared, and Shariati appears to have been exposed to these wide-ranging debates in Paris. In *Alienated Human Being* (2012), Shariati refers to Ibn Khaldun and the 19th-century sociological tradition (CW, Vol.25, pp.152–153), and prior to his studies in France, he is known for a fact to not have written on various schools of sociological traditions.

In other words, any reference to Ibn Khaldun in the context of 19th-century sociology evidently is deeply related to his French academic exposure, as prior to this academic experience we can find no meaningful debate on Ibn Khaldun and the European traditions of sociology in Shariati's works or writings. As held by another Iranian-American sociologist, Ahmad Ashraf (2014), sociologists such as Ludwig Gumplowicz and Franz Oppenheimer were evidently deeply engaged with Ibn Khaldun in the 19th century. These intellectual engagements shaped sociological debates

in various academic corners of Europe. In other words, traces appear to exist of Ibn Khaldun's European reading in Shariati's work as far as concerns the contemporary application of Khaldunian concepts. This argues that Ibn Khaldun seems to have had a very significant position in the Shariatian frame of analysis on one hand, but on the other, one can find references where Ibn Khaldun is considered *passé* in terms of his sociological school. In *Alienated Human Being*, Shariati states that:

... Climatism, in the way that Ibn Khaldun was talking about ... namely the idea that each society lives in accordance to the contingencies which are designed by its geographical limitations ... -and he was right- and that's why Ibn Khaldun was important in the 19th century sociology; ... but today this is not the case, ...” (CW, Vol. 25, pp. 152–153).

In *Applying Ibn Khaldun*, Syed Farid Alatas (2014) discusses the way in which sociologists might apply Khaldunian concepts within the context of sociological studies, but this dimension appears to be missing in Shariati's works. Ibn Khaldun has great significance in meta-theoretical realm, but Shariati does not delve into Khaldunian sociology from a contemporary concern; this is something upon which research is needed, as Shariati is not the only one in Iran with no interest in applying Ibn Khaldun; it seems Iranian scholars are also negligent towards Ibn Khaldun and his contemporary significance.

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