ABSTRACT: This paper examines the extent to which Ibn Khaldun can legitimately be considered a founding father of sociology. To pursue this research, Khaldun’s theoretical framework is compared with two Western scholars: Auguste Comte and Emile Durkheim. After the introduction, we proceed to present a general overview of Khaldun’s work which includes his understandings of a cyclical pattern of social change, conflict theory, and his typological framework. Khaldun’s theoretical perspective is then compared and contrasted to that of Comte and Durkheim, illustrating their similarities and considering their differences. Finally, we put forth conclusions that consider the extent to which Khaldun can validly be considered a founding father of sociology.

Introduction

Akbar Ahmed, the Ibn Khaldun Chair of Islamic Studies at American University, noted:

Bin Laden is a household name in the West, where, unfortunately, the names of important Muslim scholars are less well known. When I talked of Ibn Khaldun, Americans usually ask: Who is he? An oil sheikh? An Arab minister? Another “terrorist”? Any links to Bin Laden? Even the scholars who have heard of Ibn Khaldun may well ask: How is he relevant to problems of the twenty-first century? (2003, p. 213).

Yet, earlier generations of social thinkers contended that Khaldun was a founder of sociology (Kremer, 1879; Flint, 1893: 158ff.; Gumplowicz, 1928: 90–114; Maunier, 1913; Oppenheimer, 1922–35, Vol. II: 173ff.; Vol. IV, 251ff.; Ortega y Gasset, 1976–8). Sorokin, Zimmerman, and Galphin believed Khaldun to be an historian, statesman, sociologist, and the “founder of sociology.” They noted that Khaldun described the transformation of Arabian society from Badawa (rural society) to Hadara (urban society), and analyzed this transition (Alatas, 2006). Harry Barnes and Howard Becker stated in their book Social Thought: From Lore to Science that “The first writer after Polybius (203–120 BC), then, to apply the equivalents of modern ideas in historical sociology was not a European” (1938, p. 266); they devoted substantial discussion to Khaldun’s ideas that are relevant to social science. By doing so, Barnes and Becker identified Khaldun as the first scholar who applied modern ideas to historical sociology and so, from their point of view, saw him as a founder of sociology. Unfortunately, until the nineteenth century, Khaldunian Sociology was unknown to Western scholars. From

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the middle of the nineteenth century, Western scholars commenced studying Khaldun and his social theories with astonishment and admiration. Khaldun developed numerous social theories treated a century later by Machiavelli, and some three or four centuries later by Giambattista Vico, Charles de Montesquieu, Adam Smith, and Auguste Comte. After discovering and studying Khaldun, Western scholars began considering him a philosopher, an historian of civilization, and a scholar of sociology and political economy (Enan, 1979).

Khaldun wrote the *Muqaddimah, Historical Prolegomenon* (1377) in the fourteenth century, centuries prior to the systematic development of Western sociology. In this prominent work, Khaldun discussed scientifically the fundamental problems of what would be called modern sociology: the evolution of less-developed societies to advanced societies. Significant portions of Khaldun’s work seem to be quite modern for his historical period (Sorokin, 1947). Historically, it has been acknowledged that Khaldun made contributions to modern sociology; however, both his concepts and methods need examination, analysis and placement in their proper context vis-à-vis contemporary social science.

This paper examines the extent to which Ibn Khaldun can legitimately be considered a founding father of sociology. To pursue this research, Khaldun’s theoretical framework is compared with two Western scholars: Auguste Comte and Emile Durkheim. After the introduction, we proceed to present a general overview of Khaldun’s work which includes his understandings of a cyclical pattern of social change, conflict theory, and his typological framework. Khaldun’s theoretical perspective is then compared and contrasted to that of Comte and Durkheim, illustrating their similarities and considering their differences. Finally, we put forth conclusions that consider the extent to which Khaldun can validly be considered a founding father of sociology.

**Overview of Ibn Khaldun’s Work**

Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) investigated theories of society, the basis of sovereignty or *asabiyah* (social solidarity), and the rise and fall of states. Born in Tunis, Tunisia, where his parents died of the plague in 1349, Khaldun spent most of his life in North Africa and Spain. His family’s Andalusian origin suggests that his Spanish background provided Khaldun a different perspective, and unique from the Muslim mainstream in Northwest Africa and the East (Alatas, 2006).

Khaldun is one of the most significant figures in the history of the Muslim World (Enan, 1979). The reputation of the *Muqaddimah* as a significant work has brought Khaldun much attention. Khaldun taught his theories on society, the basis of sovereignty or *asabiyah*, the rise and fall of states, and other subjects presented in the *Muqaddimah*. Khaldun described social phenomena and situated them in the flow and perspective of historical events (Enan, 1979).

**Khaldun’s “New Science”**

Ibn Khaldun’s “New Science” is interpreted as the science of human social organization, commonly interpreted as sociology. Khaldun stated that this science has “its own
peculiar object — that is, human civilization and social organization. It also has its own peculiar problems — that is, explaining the conditions that attach themselves to the essence of civilization, one after the other” (Muqaddimah, 1958, p. 77).

From Khaldun’s perspective, civilization is the product of human interaction. Indeed, culture is not a thing in itself. The essential ability of human beings is their reflective and deliberative competence; furthermore, human beings have the capabilities to arrange their relationships with other fellow human beings (Muhammad, 1998).

The fundamental principles of the new science are: “(1) the subject matter of the new science is human association, (2) its problems are the essential modes of culture, (3) its method is demonstration, and (4) its end is making of truth from falsehood in historical reports” (Mahdi, 2006, p. 167). Khaldun maintained that he was presenting a new science that consisted of the following areas: human civilization, primitive societies, the states, the cities, the crafts, the occupations, and the sciences (Muqaddimah, 1958).

Khaldun’s Typology
Khaldun classified societies into a dualist typology which includes Badawa (rural) and Hadara (urban) societies as understood by Western sociologists. Defined briefly, nomadic or rural means “inhabitant of the desert” or “the desert dweller,” whereas urban refers to “inhabitants of cities” (Muqaddimah, 1958, p. 250).

Rural society (Badawa Ummran). To explain the concept of Badawa in his typology, Khaldun argued that primitive people are tied to the desert because of their agricultural lifestyle. Since settled areas do not provide wide fields and pastures for animals, their social organization is organized upon bare subsistence (Muqaddimah, 1958).

Urban society (Hadara Ummran). The notion of urban society implies a secondary phase of social organization. People live clustered in cities that constitute countries. The economic arrangement of society is centered upon commerce and crafts, in addition to agriculture and husbandry. There is a higher level of life observed in terms of comfort and luxury as opposed to rural society (Muqaddimah, 1958).

Khaldun’s Conflict Theory
Khaldun explained that social solidarity (Asabiyah) plays a fundamental role in the rise and fall of societies and civilizations. Therefore, social solidarity functions “constructively” or “destructively.” Khaldun’s concept of conflict theory was based upon social solidarity (asabiyah). On the one hand, social solidarity results in consequences causing an increase in social group adaptation. On the other hand, social solidarity (asabiyah) generates negative dynamics which destroy social groups.

Khaldun’s social solidarity (asabiyah). Khaldun asserted that social solidarity (asabiyah) is a vital function in explaining the cyclical theory of social change. He extended this term to indicate a universal theoretical framework concerned with examining human social organization. Khaldun mentioned the following features while describing the essentials of asabiyah: “associative sentiments, unity of purpose, community of social
and economic interests, and oneness of feelings and emotions” (Ali, 1977, p. 118). Given these characteristics, he put forth a new essential idea that served a major role in the transformation of society, relating a new dynamic driving force. Each society transforms from primitive stages to advanced stages of civilization, from rural to urban. Social solidarity (asabiyyah) plays a major role in the rise and fall of human civilization which is intrinsic in the sense that he talks about the society’s birth, growth, maturity, decadence, senility and demise (Ali, 1977) that structure “the transformations of physical nature and seem somehow to reflect the ceaseless motion of material, finite being in its restless striving and constant failing to reach changelessness and perfection” (Goodman, 1972, p. 262).

Khaldun’s Cyclical Pattern
Khaldun analyzed society empirically. Moreover, he explained social phenomena by an evolutionary principle of social development. He conceptualized societal development as being parallel to the life stages of an individual: birth, maturity, and death. From this, Khaldun developed a spiral theory of social evolution which depicted a transformation from primitive life to civilized urban life (Bogardus, 1960). Khaldun believed that the dynastic cycle is as “a self-destroying but ever-rebuilt bridge between two worlds” (Arnason & Stauth, 2004, p. 36).

Khaldun contended that “dynasties have a natural life span like individuals” (Muqaddimah, 1958, p. 343). According to astrologers and physicians, the natural life span of human beings is 120 years, which is the maximum time period for states as well (Azmeh, 1982). Khaldun believed that a dynasty lasts no longer than three generations. The life span of a generation matches the life of an individual, which is forty years. This time period allows one to achieve maturity and growth (Muqaddimah, 1958). Araki (1983) summarized that Khaldun perceived that the cycle lasts three generations and took place over the five stages of: (1) the overthrow of opposition (stage of success), (2) the ruler’s attainment of complete control over his people (full control), (3) the stage of leisure and tranquility (4) the stage of contentment and peacefulness, and (5) the stage of waste, squandering, and disintegration (Muqaddimah, 1958, p. 353-5). (See Figure 1).

A Comparison of the Works of Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) and Auguste Comte (1798–1857)
Auguste Comte, whose main theoretical frameworks consisted of the hierarchy of sciences and the law of the three stages of social change, is often acknowledged as the founder of modern sociology. Yet, some scholars consider Khaldun as the first sociologist. Gumplovicz forcefully asserted: “I wanted to show that long before not only Auguste Comte, but also Vico, whom the Italians wanted forcibly to consider as the first European sociologist, a pious Muslim studied with perspicacity the social phenomena, and expressed profound ideas on this subject. What he wrote is what we term today as ‘Sociology’” (Enan, 1979, p. 125). In addition, Cohen (1959) stated that
Khaldun “discovered and mastered the fundamentals of sociology some five centuries before Auguste Comte coined the word” (p. 81). Moreover, the originality of Comte’s theories has been critiqued. Some theorists contend that “Comte made very few original contributions: almost all of his ideas can be traced back to numerous predecessors” (Timasheff, 1955, p. 29). Arguably, Comte’s major accomplishment was to systematically synthesize and abridge several of the disparate, inarticulate doctrines of his time. Furthermore, Comte can be seen as “greatly behind the scientific achievements of his age in many ways and quite failed to absorb many of the most important developments of the period which have since entered into sociological thought” (Becker and Barnes, 1952, p. 565).

**Similarities Between the Perspectives of Khaldun and Comte**

Each scholar undoubtedly believed that his outlook was unique. Khaldun termed his perspective *ilm al-umran* (science of human social organization), while Comte named his sociology. Furthermore, Khaldun constantly emphasized that his science of human social organization was novel (Baali, 1988).

Another similarity between the two theorists appears in their theories of social transformation. Khaldun stated that societies rise and fall in three stages, and the cycle recurs from primary stage and settlement to senility. Comte asserted that social progress is classified human knowledge which passes through three stages: the theological, the metaphysical, and the positivistic stages. Both Khaldun and Comte discovered social

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**Figure 1: The Dynastic Stages and Development of Civilization**

A. Magid Al-Araki 1983

Growth and development of civilization
(three generations=40 years each)
phenomena according to principles of social development. Both scholars also acknowledged the material aspects of civilization such as, literature, art, and commerce. Khaldun argued that these features are the unavoidable consequence of urbanization and urbanism (Baali, 1988).

A third similarity between Khaldun and Comte is illustrated in their explanation of historical-empirical method. Comte maintained that the most important aspect of human development would come through observation, experimentation and comparison accurate enough to give explanation to all experiences in terms of natural cause and effect (Comte, 1896). Like Comte, Khaldun had a similar historical-empirical method to analyze the society during his time. (Baali, 1988).

Both Comte and Khaldun discussed specialization, occupations and professions, focusing on inequality (Baali, 1988). Khaldun stated, “Differences of conditions among people are the result of the different ways in which they make their livings” (Muqaddimah, 1958, p. 249). Comparable to Khaldun’s idea regarding the division of labor, Comte believed in principle that the division of labor fostered the development of individual gifts and capacities; at the same time, it contributed to human solidarity by creating in each individual a sense of his dependence on others. Thus, Comte focused on the principle of cooperation: the division of labor in society. The division of labor creates interdependence among members of the society. Society ultimately benefits from a properly functioning division of labor. As societies become more complex, the division of labor is the only means to properly adjust to that complexity (Comte, 1866).

Another similarity is that Khaldun and Comte shared the belief on the intervention of religion in the creation of civilization. Comte asserted that religion provides energy and power, and helps people to accomplish their life objectives (Faghirzadeh, 1982). He established a secular religion, the “Religion of Humanity,” and a secular worship system. Moreover, he developed a 13-month calendar which included special festival days celebrating his understanding of religion (Comte, 1866). In Comte’s perspective, “religion was to be divorced from super-nationalism and transformed into a collective emotion-building force supporting secular reforms and social justice” (Becker and Barnes, 1952, p. 503). Khaldun perceived religion as the utilitarian foundation in the establishment of asabiyah (social solidarity). In addition, religion acts as a tremendously dominant factor in socialization and enables unity among members of its society (Mohammad, 1998).

Finally, Khaldun and Comte both observed the dissolution of the old social order. They were eager to find a stable state that could sustain needed social control. The role of social cohesion in the maintenance of the social group can be seen in Khaldun’s emphasis on the role of social solidarity in fortifying the social group, and in Comte’s analysis of society as “an organism where the whole is better known and more important than the part” (Baali, 1988, p. 66).

**Khaldun’s Contributions Overlooked by Comte**

Khaldun applied social change theory to a society and to a state. Khaldun argued that the social system can be classified into two types of social life, the rural and the urban
society; Comte only applied his theory to the human mindset in its progress from the theological stage to the positive stage. (Baali, 1988).

In contrast to Comte’s strong materialist and positivist view, excessive dependence upon a materialistic position was marginalized in Khaldun’s understanding of the cyclic theories of civilizations in which Khaldun took a hostile position towards materialism (Dhaouadi, 2006).

Khaldun stated that societal progress is not unidirectional; rather, it circulates. Comte held the opposite position: historical progress moves in a single direction. Comte insisted that the positive stage is the final phase of this linear process; society will employ human reasoning to organize itself when the proper time arrives (Comte, 1896). Moreover, this process occurs not by a revolution but through a gradual transition, which has to be assisted by the scientific class of society (Comte, 1896). In the positive stage, both temporal and spiritual power would unite “to keep up the idea of the whole, and the feeling of the common interconnection” (Comte, 1896).

To some extent, Khaldun differed from Comte regarding the natural character of human ability. Khaldun asserted that distinctions in the attributes of primitive and advanced civilized people persist because of differences in habit rather than differences of natural character. He believed that there is not progress in human ability, only that change is cyclical (Lana, 1987).

**Comte’s Contributions Overlooked by Khaldun**

Khaldun’s conceptualization of the social system differed from Comte. Comte’s theory of social dynamics was founded on the law of the three stages, i.e., societal evolution is based on the evolution of mind through the theological, metaphysical, and positivist stages. Comte understood social dynamics as a process of progressive evolution in which people become cumulatively more intelligent and in which altruism eventually triumphs over egoism. This process is one that people can modify or accelerate, but in the end the laws of progressive development dictate the development of society (Comte, 1896).

Unlike Khaldun’s perspective, Comte’s theory of the three stages of societal progress was idealistic because Comte’s basic principle extended from ideas, rather than economic dynamics. Therefore, according to Comte, society evolved from theological phases to philosophical phases, and finally to positivist phases in mental orientation (Faghirzadeh, 1982).

The subject matter of Comte’s new science became human society: his sociological goal was the improvement of human society. Conversely, Khaldun was interested in describing human society (Baali, 1988). In his historical framework, Comte asserted that social progress throughout history can be classified under three stages.

**Theological Stage** (The “Infantile” Stage): People have a primitive, supernatural world-view and believe in God or gods. In this stage, men, manipulated by their
imagination, seek out justification of all social phenomena in the will of supernatural beings (Comte, 1896).

Metaphysical Stage (The “Adolescent” Stage): There is an acknowledgement of unseen natural causes, “essences,” and de-personalized forces; the key terms here are mind and reason. In this stage, intellect masters imagination. Metaphysics then displaces religion, and man seeks a justification of phenomenon in the forces of nature (Comte, 1896).

Positive stage: In this “mature” period, only logical explanation is sanctioned; all evidence other than the material world will be refused. The laws of nature are not “justifications,” but “descriptions” of nature. There are no ultimate causes. The question asked should not be “why?” but “what?”. There are no absolutes or universals. The only absolute is that “Everything is subject to change and is relative.” In this stage, science achieves dominance over philosophy. Furthermore, Comte believed that positivism could both advance science and social change. He argued that the upper classes of his time were far too conservative to advance to the positive stage (Comte, 1896).

Comte applied science to explain sociology from a positivist perspective. On this issue, Comte departed from Khaldun. Each scientific field depends on the deterministic chain, but in this process some sciences precede others. Astronomy, the most general and simple of all natural sciences, developed first. In time, it was followed by physics, chemistry, biology, and finally, sociology (Comte, 1896). Each science in this series depended for its emergence upon the prior developments of its predecessors in a hierarchy marked by the law of increasing complexity and decreasing generality. The social sciences, the most complex and the most dependent for their emergence on the development of the others, were highest in the hierarchy (Comte, 1896).

The division of society is divided into static and dynamic conditions. Social dynamics study progress and change in society grounded on the law of the three stages of society, the theological, the metaphysical, and the positive stages. Social statics study the structure of the social system in which people cooperate among each other (Comte, 1896). Comte divided society into two major conditions explicitly and more specifically than Khaldun did. Khaldun employed such a division implicitly in his discussion of the struggle between primitive society and advanced society (Baali, 1988). According to Comte, social science methodology was dependent upon observation of the static and dynamic laws of social phenomena. Comte extended the technique of observation of static and dynamic conditions from physical science to social science (Comte, 1896).

A Comparison of the Works of Ibn Khaldun and Emile Durkheim (1858-1917)
In some respects, Khaldun and Durkheim shared similar ideas. However, their perspectives differed on several points. Khaldun’s social theory emphasized a dualist typology. Moreover, Khaldun framed his social solidarity theory prior to Durkheim.
Debating the Origins of Sociology: Ibn Khaldun as a Founding Father of Sociology

Similarities between the Perspectives of Khaldun and Durkheim

Durkheim’s notion of “mechanical” and “organic solidarity” reflected Khaldun’s notion of Asabiyah or “social cohesion.” The Khaldunian understanding of society was based on asabiyah, which is identical to Durkheim’s notion of collective consciousness (Baali, 1988), the key factor for establishing social order within societies. By collective consciousness, Durkheim refers to the sum of feelings that are common to people in society; group consciousness is strengthened over time and unites the group (Durkheim, 1984). Ernest Gellner noted in Muslim Society (1981) that “Ibn Khaldun, like Emile Durkheim, is primarily a theorist of social cohesion” (p. 86).

Khaldun compared societies to individuals when he asserted that “dynasties have a natural life span like individuals” (Muqaddimah, 1958, p. 343). Like Khaldun, Durkheim applied biological metaphors and analogies to describe social changes. Both scholars conceptualized society as a social organism which evolves or develops from being simple and mechanical to being complex and organic (Durkheim, 1984).

Khaldun noted that “human beings cannot live and exist except through social organization and cooperation” (Muqaddimah, 1958, p. 33). This concept was similar to Durkheim’s notion that “society cannot exist if its parts are not solidary” (Durkheim, 1984, p. 332). Khaldun discussed the well-developed division of labor in urban areas, and proposed that division of labor occurred as a result of a transition in lifestyles from rural to urban society. This idea was quite similar to Durkheim’s for the rise of the division of labor, caused by a transition from mechanical solidarity to organic solidarity (Baali, 1988).

Khaldun closely examined how economical factors affect society. However, he did not ignore noneconomic factors like asabiyah (social solidarity) and religion. Khaldun, like Durkheim, treated religion as a culturally determined social fact; that is, civilizations can continue without “religious laws.” Khaldun preceded Durkheim with regard to emphasizing the positive role of religion in social control and group harmony. Religion fortifies social solidarity, an idea Durkheim highlighted some 500 years after Khaldun (Baali, 1988). Moreover, Khaldun’s analysis on religion is regarded as “the beginning of a sociology of religion” (Becker and Barnes, 1952, p. xiii). In Khaldun’s perspective, religion is the most significant player to solidify society, followed by kinship (Mohammad, 1998). Khaldun’s association of religion with primitive society presented the same idea as the function of religion in Durkheim’s mechanical solidarity which minimized individual differences signifying that “ideas and tendencies common to all the members of the society are greater in number and intensity than those which pertain personally to each member” (Durkheim, 1984, p. 332).

Both Khaldun and Durkheim discovered social phenomena according to principles of social change. Moreover, Khaldun recognized and laid down the law of causality in his new science (Baali, 1988). Furthermore, like Khaldun, Durkheim pointed out that “higher societies can maintain themselves in equilibrium only if labor is divided” (Durkheim, 1984, p. 397).
Khaldun’s Contributions Overlooked by Durkheim

Khaldun stated that rural societies can possess only mechanical solidarity, whereas more complex urban societies, characterized by greater division of labor, possess the potential to show signs of organic solidarity. However, Durkheim saw mechanical solidarity as an inferior form of social cohesion, compared to organic solidarity (Turchin, 2003).

Durkheim’s conception of social solidarity was developed by contrasting mechanical and organic solidarity, whereas Khaldun only identified mechanical solidarity. Khaldun was aware of ‘organic’ civilization, and he held it to be the necessary and essential requirement of civilization (Gellner, 1981).

From Khaldun’s perspective, tribes were knit from within. While Khaldun perceived complex societies as undermined by their lack of common will, Durkheim perceived complex societies as fortified by their domestic interdependence. Indeed, Durkheim saw social solidarity as challenging for pre-modern people, tracing what simpler people have to common ideas; by contrast, Khaldun identified tribes as constant and united together by social solidarity (Spickard, 2001).

The collapse of collective consciousness generated a greater role for the institution of the State, whereas the breakdown of asabiyah (social solidarity) for Ibn Khaldun initiated the disintegration of the State. Therefore, the loss of social solidarity in both cases created two different forms of social changes (Mohammed, 1998).

In Khaldun’s theory, the nomadic and sedentary lives of cities were contrasted; through this comparison, the concept of social solidarity – *esprit de corps* – was developed. The nomadic lifestyle encompassed an explicitly strong social cohesion that decreased in intensity as the society urbanized. Khaldun’s frame developed concepts of cyclical theory and social dynamics over nomadic and sedentary society (Barnes and Becker, 1952). Bedouins survived with bare necessities, while sedentary people live more comfortably. Humans first pursued bare necessities. After fulfilling those needs, humans sought comfort. Nomadic people typically urbanized, the goal (*ghaya*) of rural society (Muqaddimah, 1958). Khaldun divided primitive “societal structure” (Al- Araki, 1983, p. 4) into the following: (1) Agricultural societies, “those who make their living through the cultivation of grain and through agriculture”; (2) Pastoral societies, “those who make their living from animals such as sheep and cattle, requiring pasturage”; and (3) Camel desert societies, “those who make their living by raising camels” (Muqaddimah, 1958, p. 251). In rural society, these three primitive social structures were the result of blood ties, alliance and clientship. Khaldun believed the first type, blood ties, embodied the most influential of the social structures and consisted of the strongest feelings of social solidarity: It took precedence over relationships from other ties. The meaning of clientship represented loyalty to religion or religious affiliation. In Khaldun’s perspective, religion was capable of generating prominent feelings of social solidarity (Rabi, 1967).

Khaldun believed that the negative influences of luxury and comfort in everyday life were experienced by sedentary people. On the other hand, Bedouins, who lived
with bare necessities, were closer to the natural and pure life preserved through a limited social life. Sedentary life imposed many opportunities which could produce harmful consequences. Hence, primitive people were prevented from engaging in activities with negative results without even being aware of it. The last stage of human civilization was represented by sedentary life; however, this peak point marked the beginning of degeneration and decay (Muqaddimah, 1958). To quote Khaldun, “Sedentary culture is the goal of civilization. It means the end of its life span and brings about its corruption” (Muqaddimah, 1958, p.291).

Baali (1988) demonstrated the summarized table that illustrates the characteristic of Khaldunian Typology which is rural and urban society. (See Table 1).

### Table 1
(Modified from [Baali, 1988, p. 100]): The Characteristics of Rural and Urban Societies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ibn Khaldun’s Typology</th>
<th>Rural Society</th>
<th>Urban Society</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preceded Urban society; it is the origin of civilization</td>
<td>Indebted to rural society for its origin (population).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small population with low density</td>
<td>Large population with high density</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupations are limited mainly to agriculture and animal husbandry</td>
<td>Occupations are varied but “secondary and subsequent” to rural people’s crafts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division of labor and specialization are simple</td>
<td>Complex division of labor necessitates specialization.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bare necessities of living; less comfortable living</td>
<td>Abundant and comfortable life.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More brave</td>
<td>Less brave</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong sense of social solidarity</td>
<td>Weak solidarity. Social solidarity may vanish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purity of lineage</td>
<td>Lineages are “mixed up.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closer to being good “more remote from the evil habits.”</td>
<td>More deviance and “blameworthy qualities.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little or no change in customs and habits.</td>
<td>Change is inevitable and expected.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis is on informal social control</td>
<td>Use of “restraining laws” by “authorities and the government.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevalence of illiteracy or minimal education</td>
<td>Learning is stressed; arts and sciences are cultivated.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generally, less clever</td>
<td>More clever as a result of scientific and related activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Durkheim’s Contributions Overlooked by Khaldun

The initial issue to be discussed is Durkheim’s evolutionary perspective on social change, which he conceptualized as changing in a linear form from one stage to another. As the division of labor increased in a society, members of society begin to perform more specialized tasks in professions. This indicated that a society evolved from being simple or “mechanical” to more complex or “organic” in nature. Societal development towards
modernization and industrialization was directed from a mechanical to an organic state. These changes could be observed through enlarged population density, increased communication between mechanical societies, specialization, and a division of labor (Durkheim, 1984). Moreover, Durkheim argued that social change is intrinsic to society; it was inherent in the nature of society. The main reason behind this change is the division of labor that stimulated the transition from mechanical solidarity to organic solidarity. (Durkheim, 1984).

Durkheim explained the role of division of labor in a society. He stated that the division of labor accelerated both the reproductive capacity and skill of workmen. Consequently, this increase in both economic and material conditions has provided the necessary catalyst for intellectual societal development. However, the division of labor entailed a moral facet that was more important: it could create a feeling of solidarity between people. Durkheim used the example of a married couple to explain how the division of labor contributes to feelings of solidarity. That is, people working together towards a common goal, albeit performing different tasks, have “fellow feeling” or group cohesion. He asserted that the division of labor went beyond purely economic interests; it constituted the establishment of a social and moral order “sui generis.” Durkheim contended that “these great political societies cannot sustain their equilibrium save by the specialization of tasks; the division of labor is the source...of social solidarity.” The division of labor included a moral element because the integral components that it fulfilled for social solidarity, order, and harmony were moral needs (Durkheim, 1984, p. 23).

Durkheim held that the most visible symbol of social solidarity was law. Durkheim understood law as the form most representative of these types of organization, mechanical and organic societies. The first type was the repressive or punishing law, which delegated some form of punishment upon the offender. The second type was “restitutive,” which did not necessarily imply suffering on the part of the victim, but consisted of restoring the previous relationships that had been disturbed from their normal form (Durkheim, 1984). Durkheim claimed that repressive law created a society characterized by mechanical solidarity and that penal rules expressed the basic conditions for repressive law. Deviant acts “disturb[s] those feelings that in any one type of society are to be found in every healthy conscious” (Durkheim, 1984, p. 40). Penal law demonstrated the strength of collective reaction to a given action in a mechanical society. Durkheim defined an act as criminal when it offended the collective conscience. He stated, “It is actually public opinion and opposition which constitutes the crime” (Durkheim, 1984, p. 40). Durkheim claimed that, unlike repressive law, restitutory law focuses on restoring society. Moreover, restitutory law worked through more specialized bodies such as courts, magistrates, and lawyers, while repressive law tended to remain diffused throughout society (Durkheim, 1984).

Durkheim asserted that there are two types of solidarity. The first, mechanical solidarity, established a bond between the individual and society because of the similarities everyone shares. The second, organic solidarity generated social cohesion
because a type of cooperation existed between the various “parts” or functions of society (Durkheim, 1984). These relationships were partly organized by a division of labor. Each individual must have had a function and a unique set of relationships with other members. Individuality grew at the same time as the parts of society intensified in complexity. Society became more effective at managing its various functions as the elements increased their specific duties (Durkheim, 1984). Durkheim described a simple society as one where its members had quite similar attitudes, beliefs, and material living conditions. Yet, he recognized that mechanical societies could be placed on a continuum: some were more complex than others. In this discussion, he mentioned the “horde,” a social arrangement in which all its members live exactly the same ideal and material lives. Durkheim contrasted the horde with the clan, which is a more developed social group, which is established by several hordes coming together. Durkheim emphasized the level of uniting, fusing or “complete coalescence” of the society as the main criteria for classification of social types (Durkheim, 1984).

Religion
To conceptualize the term “religion,” Durkheim separated the concepts of “rites” and “beliefs.” Since rites involved actions motivated by beliefs, first he defined “beliefs.” Durkheim held that all religious beliefs shared one common characteristic: “they presuppose a classification of all the things real and ideal, of which men think, in two classes or opposed groups, ... [the] profane and sacred.” He defined religion as “a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, beliefs, and practices which unite into one single moral community called a church, all those who adhere to them” (Durkheim, 1976, p. 37).

Suicide
Durkheim asserted that the collapse of social solidarity led to abnormal behavior, a phenomenon he called anomie. While Khaldun did recognize how the breakdown of social solidarity resulted in pathological behavior during his time, his conceptualization of anomie was less systematic than that of Durkheim (Ahmed, 2003). Khaldun understood the causes of the breakdown of social solidarity leading to anomie in this fashion:

By its nature, kingdom demands peace. When people grow used to being at peace and at ease, such ways, like any habit, become part of their nature and character. The new generations grow up in comfort, in a life of tranquility and ease. The old savagery is transformed. The ways of the desert which made them rulers, their violence, rapacity, skill at finding their way in the desert and travelling across wastes, are lost. They now differ from city folk only in their manner and dress. Gradually their prowess is lost, their vigor is eroded, their power undermined.... As men adopt each new luxury and refinement, sinking deeper and deeper into comfort, softness, and peace, they grow more and more estranged from the life of the desert and the desert toughness. They forget the bravery which was their defense. Finally, they come to rely for their protection on some armed force other than their own. (Muqaddimah III, 1958, p. 341).
In Suicide, Durkheim explained the social causes of suicide. He proposed three different types of suicide, based on the degrees of imbalance between moral regulation and social integration. He introduced two important “extra social” causes that have direct effect on suicide rates: the “organic-psychic dispositions and the nature of physical environment” (Durkheim, 1951, p. 57).

He compared two different perspectives on suicide. The first perspective proposed that suicide is mental alienation, and a kind of insanity or disease of mind. The second perspective claimed that mental illness cannot explain suicide. Although suicide may be influenced by mental disorders, it cannot be generalized to all cases. Durkheim combined these two perspectives. He stated that in spite of existing psychological causes, all people who commit suicide are not insane. However, “suicide may occur in a state of insanity” (Durkheim, 1951, p. 62). He classified four types of insane suicides. The first type is maniacal suicide: “this is due to hallucinations or delirious conceptions” (Durkheim, 1951, p. 63). The motives of this type of suicide are not rational. The second type of insane suicide is melancholy suicide. This “type is connected with a general state of extreme depression and sadness” (Durkheim, 1951, p. 63). Chronic hopelessness and desperation are the most prominent characteristics of this type. The third type is obsessive suicide; for this type “suicide is caused by no motive, real or imaginary” (Durkheim, 1951, p. 64), but there is a solid fixed idea of death. Although there is not a clear reason, the patient possesses a desire to kill himself. The final type is impulsive or automatic suicide. This type is similar to the previous type in that there is not any real or unreal motivation. It is an unpredictable and automatic process; even the person who tried to commit suicide cannot explain or even remember the cause (Durkheim, 1951).

Conclusion

Having made this comparative analysis, there were significant similarities between Khaldun and the other scholars. Khaldun’s theoretical perspective coincided with these Western theorists in a two-fold fashion: on one hand, societal innovation and change proceeds from less advanced to advanced; on the other hand, the progress of change can be connected to and based on certain materialistic perspectives and forces in the transformation of societies (Dhaouadi, 2006). Moreover, each scholar explained social phenomenon in terms of principles of social change.

Khaldun based his argument on two claims. The first claim is that the rise and fall of civilization can be understood as the interruptible processes of evolution and transformation. The second claim is expounded in Khaldun’s historical-empirical studies where he analyzed the social behavior of the Arab world. The culmination for Khaldun is that no civilization lasts forever (Dhaouadi, 2006).

Khaldun and Comte’s conceptual frameworks are similar to the extent that they share almost the same approach on historical-empirical method regarding social progress. Furthermore, both created a “new science” to analyze their epoch. Khaldun anticipated some theories that were developed by Comte. That is, Khaldun discovered the essentials of sociology such as the systematic analysis of social structure and group
behavior and the evolution of less-developed societies to advanced societies some five centuries before Comte coined the word.

The similarities between Khaldun and Durkheim are so compelling that one can declare Khaldun’s theory of social system, a dualist typology, similar to Durkheim’s typology. Moreover, Khaldun’s concept of “Asabiyah” and Durkheim’s concept of “solidarity” are identical. It can be said that Khaldun’s theories on “Asabiyah,” “Division of labor,” and “Religion” were highlighted and developed by Durkheim some 500 years later.

One limitation to this paper lay in the difficulty to analyze these theorists in a structured way since each scholar has his own conceptual theoretical framework. Furthermore, a limitation in examining Khaldun’s work discloses that while he anticipated sociological theories such as conflict theories, social organization theories, and social change theories, the anticipated theories are not methodological and totally systematic. The question is how a researcher would test and operationalize empirically some of Khaldun’s concepts.

In conclusion, Khaldun’s theoretical framework demonstrates elements of the later theories of Comte and Durkheim. Because Khaldun anticipated theories developed by subsequent well-known theorists, he remains relevant to modern sociology. After comparing Khaldun’s theoretical framework with these later founding fathers of sociology, it appears reasonable to suggest that Khaldun was a founding father of sociology as well. This study provides insights to Khaldun’s sociological framework and vividly illustrates Khaldun’s relevance to sociological theory. However, it only provides a beginning to the integration of Khaldun’s theoretical framework within modern sociological curricula.

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