

Ibn Khaldūn and Contemporary Sociology

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Introduction

This review is focused on a central question: why should a social thinker like Ibn Khaldūn be excluded from the serious study of the history of sociology, sociological theory or historical sociology? A quick review of contemporary histories of social thought and social theory will reveal that very little attention is given to non-western precursors of sociology or non-western social thinkers who were contemporaneous with the European founders of the discipline. Nineteenth- and early 20th-century western sociologists, on the other hand, were more aware of the role of non-western thought in the development of western sociology as a discipline. This interest will be found to have waned in the last century.

Nineteenth-century European founders of sociology such as Marx, Weber and Durkheim had such an impact on the development of sociology and the other social sciences that many theories and models derived from their works were applied to areas outside Europe, that is, to the non-western world. The same attitude was not applied to non-western social thinkers. Without suggesting that European or western ideas have no relevance to non-European realities, this article suggests that multicultural sources of sociological thought and theory should be considered. Ibn Khaldūn died 600 years ago, but his ideas have endured. Nevertheless, there is a way in which he has been appropriated, resulting in his somewhat marginal status in contemporary sociology. This review provides an overview of Ibn Khaldūn's work and thought, discusses

reasons for his marginality, and suggests ways to bring Ibn Khaldūn into the mainstream.

A Brief Biography

Walī al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Khaldūn al-Tūnisī al-Ḥaḍramī (732–808 AH/1332–1406 AD) is probably the most well-known among Muslims scholars both in the Muslim world and the West as far as the social sciences are concerned. Born in Tunis, he traces his descent to a South Arabian clan, the Kinda, that originate in the Hadhramaut, Yemen. His ancestors had settled in Seville, Andalusia, in the early period of the Arab conquest of the Iberian Peninsula. They left Andalusia for the Maghrib (North Africa) after the Reconquista, settling in Tunis in the 7th/13th century. One of the more prominent of Ibn Khaldūn’s ancestors was one Kurayb, who is said to have revolted against the Umayyads towards the end of the 9th century and established a quasi-independent state in Seville (Rosenthal, 1967: xxxiii–xxxiv). It is known that the Banū Khaldūn played an important role in the political leadership of Seville. This predilection for office continued in the family after they had left Andalusia for North Africa. In fact, Ibn Khaldūn himself was a judge, and held posts in many of the courts of the Maghrib and Andalusia. Much is known about Ibn Khaldūn’s life because of his autobiography, which accounts for his life up to the year 1405, about a year before he died.

Ibn Khaldūn is best known for his *Muqaddimah*, a prolegomena or introduction to the scientific study of history, a work which provides a method for the study of society. It is in this work that Ibn Khaldūn claims to have discovered a new science, that he refers to as both ‘*ilm al-‘umrān al-basharī*’ (the science of human social organization) and ‘*ilm al-ijtimā’ al-insānī*’ (the science of human society).¹

There are numerous works on Ibn Khaldūn’s life and thought, apart from his own autobiography (Ibn Khaldūn, 1979).² There are not many modern biographies of Ibn Khaldūn but a well-known one was authored by an early Egyptian sociologist, Muhammad Abdullah Enan [Muḥammad ‘Abd Allah ‘Inān] and is available in both the Arabic original and English translation (Enan, 1941; ‘Inān [Enan], 1953). Apart from biographies, many works that present overviews of the thought of Ibn Khaldūn do so in the context of bestowing a precursor status to Ibn Khaldūn. At least two generations of sociologists in the Arab and Muslim world wrote on Ibn Khaldūn as a precursor of modern sociology. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ‘Izzat wrote a thesis in 1932 titled ‘Ibn Khaldun et sa science sociale’ (Ibn Khaldūn and his Social Science) under the direction of Fauconnier and René Maunier in France (Roussillon, 1992: 56, n. 48) and another work comparing Ibn Khaldūn and Emile Durkheim (‘Izzat, 1952).

'Ali 'Abd al-Wāḥid Wāfi, also of that generation, did a comparative study of Ibn Khaldūn and Auguste Comte (Wāfi, 1951) and wrote a well-known piece on Ibn Khaldūn as the founder of sociology (Wāfi, 1962). Syed Hussein Alatas from Malaysia also referred to Ibn Khaldūn as having established the principles of modern sociology (S. H. Alatas, 1954: 2). It is interesting to note that the famed Egyptian novelist and social thinker Taha Hussein, who himself wrote a doctoral dissertation on Ibn Khaldūn, regarded claims that Ibn Khaldūn was a sociologist as an exaggeration (Hussein, 1918: 75).

Major Substantive Contributions

What is not often known among non-specialists is that Ibn Khaldūn's *Muqaddimah*, completed in 1378, serves as an introduction to his larger empirical work on the history of the Arabs and Berbers, the *Kitāb al-'Ibar*. In the foreword to the *Muqaddimah*, Ibn Khaldūn gives us the rationale for this work. The discipline of history, if it is to be understood as mere information about dynasties and political events of the past, merely scratches the surface. This surface (*ẓāhir*) aspect of history is to be distinguished from the inner meaning (*bāṭin*) of history, which 'involves speculation and an attempt to get at the truth, subtle explanation of the causes and origins of existing things, and deep knowledge of the how and why of events' (Ibn Khaldūn, 1378/1981: 1 [1967: Vol. I, 6]).³

The *Kitāb al-'Ibar* in Ibn Khaldūn's terms, therefore, covers the surface phenomenon of history in that it details the history of the Arab and Berber dynasties of the Arab East (al-Mashriq) and Arab West (al-Maghrib). The inner meaning of history, on the other hand, is dealt with in the *Muqaddimah*, the prolegomena and the first book of Ibn Khaldūn's voluminous *Kitāb al-'Ibar*.

Ibn Khaldūn wrote the *Muqaddimah* in order to clarify the method that would enable the scholar to ascertain true events from false narratives. He considered that existing historical works were fraught with errors and unfounded assumptions. The *Muqaddimah* was conceived by Ibn Khaldūn to be an integral part of the larger *Kitāb al-'Ibar*, which comprises three books. The *Muqaddimah* is the First Book of the *Kitāb al-'Ibar* and deals with the merit of the new science of human society and its methods. Books Two and Three deal with the history and dynasties of the Arabs, Israelites, Persians, Greeks, Byzantines, Turks and Berbers (Ibn Khaldūn, 1378/1981: 6 [1967: Vol. I, 11–12]). Dealing with the subject-matter of Books Two and Three, however, is dependent on, as El-Azmeh (1979: 17) put it, a master science, that Ibn Khaldūn calls the science of human society. The effort to establish what was probable and possible among the events of history required an independent science that 'has its own peculiar object – that

is, human civilization and social organization' (Ibn Khaldūn, 1378/1981: 38 [1967: Vol. I, 77]). It was this effort, i.e. to distinguish between the more popular narrative history on the one hand, and history as a science that investigated the origins and development of society on the other, that resulted in his discovery of the science of human society, or what we may call sociology.

Ibn Khaldūn was very conscious of the uniqueness of his science of human society, noting that it did not belong to existing disciplines such as rhetoric or politics, although it shared some similarities with them (Ibn Khaldūn, 1378/1981: 38 [1967: Vol. I, 78]).⁴ The substantive interest of Ibn Khaldūn, in both the *Muqaddimah* and the *Kitāb al-'Ibar*, lies in the explanation of the formation and decline of Maghribian and Arab states. The bulk of the *Muqaddimah* is devoted to elaborating a theory of state formation and decline. This is presented in the course of three major sections (*faṣl*), i.e. Sections Two to Four.

Section Two deals with the nature of nomadic society, the superiority of tribal social solidarity (*'aṣabiyyah*) or group feeling, the role of kinship and blood ties in group feeling, and the natural inclination of nomadic society to attaining royal authority (*mulk*), establishing a dynasty. Section Three focuses on the development and decay of royal authority, the role of religion in this, the various groups and forces that figure in dynastic decline, and the mode of origin and disintegration of dynasties. Section Four highlights a number of aspects of the nature of sedentary civilization.

In these sections, Ibn Khaldūn theorizes the differences in social organization between nomadic (*al-'umrān al-badawī*) and sedentary societies (*al-'umrān al-ḥaḍarī*). Fundamental to his theory is the concept of *'aṣabiyyah*, or group feeling. Only a society with a strong *'aṣabiyyah* could establish domination over one with a weak *'aṣabiyyah* (Ibn Khaldūn, 1378/1981: 139, 154 [1967: Vol. I, 284, 313]). In this context, *'aṣabiyyah* refers to the feeling of solidarity among the members of a group that is derived from the knowledge that they share a common descent. As noted by El-Azmeh, *'aṣabiyyah* is 'that which makes a group a power group' (El-Azmeh, 1979: 19). Because of superior *'aṣabiyyah* among the Bedouin they could defeat sedentary people in urban areas and establish their own dynasties. The final manifestation of *'aṣabiyyah* was the dynasty or *al-dawlah* (El-Azmeh, 1979: 19). Having achieved this, the Bedouin became set in the urban ways of life and experienced great diminution in their *'aṣabiyyah*.⁵ With this went their military strength and they became vulnerable to attack and conquest by tribal groups from the outside. The cycle of rise and decline was estimated by Ibn Khaldūn to take approximately four generations (Ibn Khaldūn, 1378/1981: 170 [1967: Vol. I, 343]).

Relevance to Contemporary Sociology

Several western scholars in the 19th century recognized Ibn Khaldūn as a founder of sociology (von 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). Becker and Barnes, in their *Social Thought from Lore to Science*, first published in 1938, devote many pages to a discussion of the ideas of Ibn Khaldūn, recognizing that he was the first to apply modern-type ideas in historical sociology (Becker and Barnes, 1961: Vol. I: 266–79). Baali cites Sorokin, Gumplowicz, Barnes and Becker as being among those who recognize the Arabic contribution to the field of sociology (Baali, 1986: 17).

Ibn Khaldūn has been compared with many western scholars who lived after him but who were said to have originated similar ideas. Let us consider the parallels between Ibn Khaldūn and Auguste Comte (1798–1857), the founding father of sociology, as discussed by Baali (1986: 29–32).

1. Both emphasized a historical method and did not propose statistical methods.
2. Both distinguished their sciences from what preceded them.
3. Both believed human nature is the same everywhere.
4. Both recognized the importance of social change.

The obvious question that arises and that was raised by Baali is, was Comte familiar with the writings of Ibn Khaldūn? Some assumptions as to how Comte may have come to know of the works of Ibn Khaldūn are that Comte would have come across the French translations;⁶ that he would have heard of Ibn Khaldūn through his Egyptian students; and that he had read Montesquieu, who had read Ibn Khaldūn in the original Arabic. But there is only speculation that Comte was indirectly influenced by Ibn Khaldūn.

The possibility of the influence of Ibn Khaldūn on Marx and Engels has been discussed elsewhere.⁷ Some assumptions as to how Engels may have come to know of the works of Ibn Khaldūn are that he, like Comte, had come across French translations; he would have heard of Ibn Khaldūn through Marx, as Marx did cite de Slane's translation in some reading notes he made on Algeria in the early 1880s (Hopkins, 1990: 12); and Engels describes cyclical change in his reading of European history prior to the medieval period quite similar to that of Ibn Khaldūn. As Hopkins notes, Engels may have been attracted to Ibn Khaldūn because of what Engels might have seen as a materialistic approach in the *Muqaddimah* (Hopkins, 1990: 12). For example, Ibn Khaldūn states that 'differences of condition among people are the result of the different ways in which they make their living' (Ibn Khaldūn, 1378/1981: 120 [1967: Vol. I, 249]).

The point here is to suggest that thinkers living several centuries later than a different civilization may know and appreciate the works of their predecessors. This is rarely done in the field of sociology. Among the few exceptions are Becker and Barnes, who not only reserved a section in their work for Ibn Khaldūn (Becker and Barnes, 1961: 266–79), but also discussed the influence of his ideas on Europeans, that is, an instance of the intercivilizational encounter in sociology. They suggest that Ibn Khaldūn's direct influence on sociology probably began in 1899, the year that Gumpłowicz published his *Soziologische Essays*, which included a chapter on Ibn Khaldūn. They also note the influence of Ibn Khaldūn on the conflict theory of Oppenheimer, who draws upon Ibn Khaldūn for his work on agrarian reform (Becker and Barnes, 1961: 267). More importantly, Becker and Barnes were able to recognize the 'modern' aspects of Ibn Khaldūn's work without interpreting him out of context. They were perfectly aware of the fact that Ibn Khaldūn wrote in a time and place quite unlike that of 19th-century Europe. At the same time, they were able to understand those aspects of Ibn Khaldūn's work that were timeless and universal. Although Ibn Khaldūn developed theoretical tools and concepts that are valuable for the positive (as opposed to the normative) study of history, most students of Ibn Khaldūn have not been interested in building upon his ideas, combining them with concepts derived from modern sociology and applying theoretical frameworks derived from his thought to historical and empirical realities. There have been few works that have gone beyond the mere comparison of ideas and concepts in Ibn Khaldūn with those of modern western scholars towards the theoretical integration of his theory into a framework that employs some of the tools of modern social science (for exceptions see Cheddadi, 1980; Gellner, 1981; Lacoste, 1984; Carré, 1988; S. F. Alatas, 1993).

Obstacles to the Development of Khaldunian Sociology

At least one reason why Khaldunian sociology remains undeveloped has to do with the fact that there has been little emphasis on the empirical application of his theoretical framework to historical and contemporary data. The bulk of work on Ibn Khaldūn is theoretical and meta-theoretical.

Theory

As far as the area of theory is concerned, the works in existence are far too numerous to list here. Many of these works fall within two categories. One category consists of works that attempt to reconcile Ibn Khaldūn with modern sociology. As noted by Aḥmad Zāyid, many Arab sociologists were committed to comparisons between Ibn Khaldūn and the modern founders of sociology in order to prove that it was the former who

founded the discipline (Zāyid, 1996: 14). Ibn Khaldūn has been compared to Machiavelli (Al-'Arawī [Laroui], 1979; Laroui, 1987), Comte (Wāfī, 1951; Baali, 1986; Faghirzadeh, 1982; Khayrī, 1991), Marx (Baali and Price, 1982) and Durkheim (Faghirzadeh, 1982; 'Izzat, 1952; Khayrī, 1991). There are many studies of specific issues and concepts relating directly to Ibn Khaldūn's oeuvre that cannot be listed here. These studies cover topics such as state formation, *'aṣabiyyah*, the city, sedentary and nomadic societies, production relations and so on. A glance at some bibliographies devoted to Ibn Khaldūn will provide a good idea of the topical and linguistic range of such works (*Al-Hayāt al-Thaqāfiyyah*, 1980; Tixier-Wieczorkiewicz, 1999–2000).

Meta-Theory

Analytical studies on the epistemological and methodological foundations of Ibn Khaldūn's work are not as numerous as those on theory discussed in the previous subsection. Nevertheless, there are several important works that have been published during the last 50 years. A very important work in this respect is Muhsin Mahdī's *Ibn Khaldūn's Philosophy of History*. Mahdi discusses Ibn Khaldūn's dialectical study of Muslim historiography in order to reveal its weaknesses and justify a new science of society that has its own methods of demonstration based on the logic of Aristotle (Mahdi, 1957). Mahdi is critiqued by Al-Wardī who suggested that Ibn Khaldūn actually opposed the methods of the logicians and was instead influenced by Al-Ghazālī and Ibn Taymiyya (Al-Wardī, 1962, cited in Rabī', 1967: 26). Rabī', in his doctoral dissertation of 1967, provides a useful review of four trends in the study of Ibn Khaldūn's method. One trend is the exaggeration of Ibn Khaldūn's alleged secular thinking, suggesting that Ibn Khaldūn downplayed or denied the necessity of prophecy for culture. The second trend, represented by the renowned Orientalist, H. A. R. Gibb, underestimates the originality of Ibn Khaldūn's method, suggesting that he did not do much more than adopt the methods of the Muslim jurists and social philosophers who preceded him. The third and fourth trends are represented by Mahdi and Al-Wardī respectively (Rabī', 1967: 24–6). In addition to these debates, there are numerous works on other aspects of Ibn Khaldūn's methodology and epistemology (e.g. Badawī, 1962; 'Afīfī, 1962; Al-Sā'ātī, 1962; Ṭāhā, 1979; Al-Jābirī, 1979; Badawī, 1979; Al-Ṭālbī, 1980; Al-Marzūqī, 1982).

What is needed for the development of Khaldunian sociology, however, are serious efforts to apply his theoretical framework to empirical situations, historical or contemporary. For this to happen, there have to be more critical assessments of existing applications. Furthermore, this must take place within an overall context of the promotion of Ibn Khaldūn in teaching and research.

Building Neo-Khaldunian Theory

Very few works have attempted to integrate Ibn Khaldūn's theory of state formation with the theories and concepts of modern sociology (Ortega y Gasset, 1976–8; Laroui, 1980; Cheddadi, 1980; Gellner, 1981; Michaud, 1981; Lacoste, 1984; Carré, 1988; S. F. Alatas, 1993). An example of such integration is the explanation of the rise and decline of the premodern Safavid dynasty of Iran in terms of Khaldūn's theory of state formation.

According to such a historical political economy of Safavid Iran, the dynamic of historical change in Ibn Khaldūn's theory is applied to the Marxist concept of the mode of production. Safavid state formation is then explained in terms of the relationship between coexisting modes of production. Marxist and Weberian concepts may be integrated into a Khaldunian framework of historical change and utilized to explain the decline in *'aṣabiyyah* (group feeling) and the rise of *mulk* and *khilāfah* authority (S. F. Alatas, 1993).

Critical Assessment of Applications of Ibn Khaldūn

If there is little in the area of building neo-Khaldunian theory, there is even less by way of the critical assessment of attempts to apply a Khaldunian model to the study of periods and regions other than Ibn Khaldūn's own. Gellner, for example, advanced a theory of Muslim reform based on a fusion of the ideas of Ibn Khaldūn and David Hume. This has not been taken up and engaged with by others. The same is true of the works of Ortega y Gasset, Lacoste and others.

Regular Panels or Papers on Ibn Khaldūn at Mainstream Conferences in Sociology

In the past, there have been several major conferences organized in the Arab world on Ibn Khaldūn. The more prominent ones include the Ibn Khaldūn Symposium in Cairo in 1962 (National Centre for Social and Criminological Research, 1962), the Colloque Internationale sur Ibn Khaldoun in Algiers in 1978 (Centre National d'Etudes Historiques, 1978) and the Ibn Khaldūn Seminar in Rabat in 1979 (Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, 1979). There has been far less attention to Ibn Khaldūn at national or international scholarly meetings in the West or in other areas outside the Arab world.

Teaching Ibn Khaldūn in Mainstream Sociology Courses or Sociological Theory Textbooks

While a comprehensive study of Arabic as well as western-language sociology textbooks on space devoted to Ibn Khaldūn has yet to be attempted, it has been noted by Zāyid, for the case of Egypt, the leading nation in the Arab world for sociology, that Ibn Khaldūn was rarely mentioned in

textbooks published after the 1960s, the heritage appeal having been lost (Zāyid, 1996: 16).

Ibn Khaldūn in the Sociology Curriculum

In the vast majority of sociological theory textbooks or works on the history of social theory, the subject–object dichotomy is a pervasive theme. Europeans are the knowing subjects, i.e. the social theorists and social thinkers. To the extent that non-Europeans figure in these accounts, they are objects of the observations and analyses of the European theorists, appearing as Marx’s Indians and Algerians or Weber’s Turks, Chinese and Jews and not as sources of sociological concepts and ideas. In one historical account, ‘early social theories’ in the so-called ‘simpler’ or non-literate societies, as well as ancient Egypt, ancient Babylon, the Greek city-states, Japan and China, were covered under the category of religious theories (Fletcher, 1971: Ch. 2). This discussion is obviously founded on the old scientific–mythic dichotomy that is supposed to separate the West from the East. The fact that there was what would be considered as positive, scientific thought that approximated what would have been regarded as sociology in the West in parts of the Muslim world, India, Japan and China from the 14th century onwards was not discussed, even though the relevant works have been known to the Europeans since the 19th century. In works on the history of social thought that chart the development of sociological theory, the focus is on European thinkers at the expense of thematizing intercivilizational encounters that possibly influenced social theory in Europe. For instance, Maus’s *A Short History of Sociology* does not refer to any non-European in his chapter on the antecedents of sociology (Maus, 1962: Ch. 1).

Most textbooks on classical social theory aim to introduce European classical theorists such as Marx, Weber, Simmel and Durkheim but are not true to the definition of ‘classical’ that they claim to adopt. The logical implication of the definition of ‘classic’ is the serious consideration of non-European thinkers who were contemporaneous with those Europeans of the 19th and early 20th century that are covered in theory textbooks.

The absence of non-European thinkers in theory textbooks results in their absence in theory courses as well. The *Resource Book for Teaching Sociological Theory* published by the American Sociological Association is very revealing in this respect. It contains a number of course descriptions for sociological theory. The range of classical theorists whose works are taught are Montesquieu, Vico, Comte, Spencer, Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Simmel, Tönnies, Sombart, Mannheim, Pareto, Sumner, Ward, Small, Wollstonecraft and several others. No non-European thinkers are included and women thinkers are by no means well represented (Moodey, 1989).

Although Ibn Khaldūn may appear to be an exception to the rule because many Europeans had 'discovered' and discussed his works since the 19th century, a quick review of these discussions would reveal that he is mainly of historical interest.⁸

Conclusion

The question then arises as to what can be done to reverse this civilizational imbalance in the teaching and researching of sociological theory, such that a more universal social science is cultivated.

The advantage of being teachers in the universities as opposed to elementary and secondary institutions of learning is that we have more autonomy and control over course syllabi and are in a position to make radical changes even if these changes do not reflect official positions or state philosophies of education. In a course that I have been teaching with my colleague Vineeta Sinha for a number of years, titled 'Social Thought and Social Theory',⁹ conscious efforts have been made to bring in non-western thinkers such as Ibn Khaldūn.

For example, we introduced alternative categories and concepts that we hold enrich and universalize sociology. There is a variety of points of view, in this case, of theoretical perspectives that have multicultural origins. Ibn Khaldūn's work, for example, contains concepts and theoretical explanations that emerge from his own period and cultural setting and suggest interesting ways in which they can be applied to the study of social phenomena both within and outside his own time and milieu. A variety of theoretical perspectives derived from the works of Marx and Weber have been applied to the study of non-western histories. Why should a theorist like Ibn Khaldūn be excluded?

The various changes we made to our course on classical sociological theory as described above are meant to get us to ask ourselves why some founders of sociology are not taught in textbooks and classrooms. It is not simply a question of setting the record straight, which is itself very important, but also one of opening ourselves up to other sources of knowledge.

Notes

1. The main works of Ibn Khaldūn are the *Kitāb al-'Ibar wa Dīwān al-Mubtadā` wa al-Khabar fī Ayyām al-'Arab wa al-'Ajam wa al-Barbar wa man 'Aṣarahum min Dhawī al-Sulṭān al-Akbar* [Book of Examples and the Collection of Origins of the History of the Arabs and Berbers]; *Muqaddimah* [Prolegomena]; *Lubāb al-Muḥaṣṣal fī uṣūl al-dīn* [The Resumé of the Compendium in the Fundamentals of Religion], being his summary of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's *Compendium of the Sciences of the Ancients and Moderns*; and Ibn Khaldūn's autobiography, *Al-Ta'rīf*

bi Ibn Khaldūn wa Riḥlatuhu Gharban wa Sharqan [Biography of Ibn Khaldūn and His Travels East and West] (Ibn Khaldūn, 1979).

2. For a study of this autobiography, see Merad (1956).
3. Page numbers in brackets refer to Franz Rosenthal's English translation from which this quotation is taken (see Ibn Khaldūn, 1967).
4. The new sciences discussed in the *Muqaddimah* fall under the following headings: (1) human society ('*umrān*') in general and its types, (2) the various groups that make up desert society, (3) dynasties and the types of authority, (4) sedentary society, (5) the modes of making a living and occupations, and (6) the classification of sciences and their acquisition (Ibn Khaldūn, 1378/1981: 41 [1967: Vol. I, 85]).
5. For an interesting and early study of '*aṣabiyyah*' from a social psychological point of view, see Ritter (1948).
6. It was probably in the 17th century that Ibn Khaldūn's name first appeared in Europe. A biography of Ibn Khaldūn was published in D'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque Orientale* in 1697 (D'Herbelot, 1697: II, 418). More than 100 years later, Silvestre de Sacy published translations of excerpts from Ibn Khaldūn's work into French (de Sacy, 1810). This was followed by a complete French translation of the *Muqaddimah* by de Sacy into French between 1862 and 1868; another French translation of that work was done by William MacGuckin de Slane (Baali, 1986: 32–3).
7. This connection was made first of all by Bousquet (1979), Gellner (1981) and later by Hopkins (1990).
8. Ritzer acknowledged Ibn Khaldūn as an example of a sociologist predating the western classical thinkers but he was not able to provide more than a brief biographical sketch of Ibn Khaldūn in his textbook (Ritzer, 2000: 8).
9. This is a compulsory final year module for sociology majors at the National University of Singapore that covers classical sociological theory. Our experience and findings were reported in the journal *Teaching Sociology* (Alatas and Sinha, 2001).

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