

Introduction

The present edited volume, *Reading Ibn Khaldun: His Heritage, Applications, and Significance for Modern Science*, is the product of the International Ibn Khaldun Colloquium, co-organized by the Sharjah International Foundation for the History of Arab and Muslim Sciences (SIFHAMS), University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, and the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, held on 10–11 December 2025 in Sharjah. Bringing together scholars from diverse disciplinary backgrounds and geographical contexts, the colloquium sought to revisit the intellectual legacy of Ibn Khaldūn (1332–1406), one of the most influential thinkers in the history of Islamic civilization and arguably one of the earliest architects of the social sciences.

More than six centuries after the composition of the *Muqaddimah*, Ibn Khaldūn continues to inspire scholars across a remarkable range of fields, including history, sociology, economics, political science, education, anthropology, philosophy, and civilizational studies. His concepts of *ʿumrān* (civilization), *ʿaṣabiyyah* (social cohesion), state formation, economic development, and historical change remain highly relevant for understanding both past societies and contemporary global challenges. The chapters collected in this volume demonstrate the breadth of Khaldunian scholarship today and reveal the enduring vitality of his intellectual heritage.

The volume opens with Dr Badr Hamid Al-Harbi’s chapter, “From Plato to Ibn Khaldūn: Tracing the Idea of ‘Man is Madani by Nature’ Across Greek Philosophy and Islamic Thought”. By tracing the genealogy of one of the most frequently cited propositions associated with Ibn Khaldūn, the author demonstrates how the notion of human sociability emerged from classical Greek philosophy, particularly Plato and Aristotle, before being incorporated

into Islamic intellectual traditions through the translation movement and the works of al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, Miskawayh, and Ibn Rushd. The chapter highlights the dynamic interaction between Greek and Islamic thought and situates Ibn Khaldūn within a broader intellectual continuum.

The second contribution, “A Critical Analysis of Ibn Khaldun’s Theory” by Dr Mashhad Al-Allaf, offers a critical reassessment of Ibn Khaldūn’s theory of civilization. Through a close reading of the *Muqaddimah*, the author explores the strengths and limitations of Ibn Khaldūn’s conceptual framework, particularly its cyclical model of historical development. The chapter argues for a reinterpretation that places greater emphasis on human agency, adaptability, and the possibility of civilizational renewal.

The economic dimensions of Ibn Khaldūn’s thought are explored in “Ibn Khaldun: A Pioneer of Economic Thought and Its Relevance Today” by Dr Khaliq Ahmad, Shekh Md Ibrahim, and Tharakulath Moosa Sinan. The authors demonstrate that many ideas commonly associated with modern economics – including labour theory, the division of labour, taxation, public expenditure, and economic cycles – can be found in embryonic form in Ibn Khaldūn’s writings. Their analysis underscores the continued relevance of his integrated approach to economics, politics, and ethics.

Questions of leadership and political order are addressed by Dr Hany T. Ibrahim in “From Cohesion to Control: The Dynamics of ‘Aṣabiyyah in Ibn Khaldūn’s Theory of Leadership, Control and Order”. Reinterpreting *‘aṣabiyyah* as Operational Cohesion Capacity, the chapter develops a contemporary analytical model capable of explaining how societies maintain stability, legitimacy, and institutional effectiveness while avoiding the destructive tendencies of exclusionary fanaticism.

In “Solidarity (‘Aṣabiyyah), Luxury (Ṭaraf), and Subjugation (al-Ummah al-Maghlūbah): A Khaldunian Interpretation of Nasrid Granada”, Dr Ghadi Amer applies Ibn Khaldūn’s conceptual vocabulary to the history and cultural production of Nasrid Granada. Through an innovative reading of the Alhambra’s epigraphy and artistic programmes, the chapter illustrates how Khaldunian concepts illuminate the relationship between political legitimacy, cultural refinement, luxury, and civilizational decline.

Fiscal policy and public finance form the focus of Dr Mona Mahmoud Idelbi’s chapter, “The Formulation of Taxes in the Thought of Ibn Khaldun”. The author examines Ibn Khaldūn’s understanding of taxation, public expenditure,

labour, investment, and corruption, demonstrating the remarkable relevance of his fiscal insights for contemporary debates on sustainable taxation and economic governance.

The epistemological dimensions of Ibn Khaldūn's thought are revisited in Dr Rudiger Lohlker's chapter, "Reading the Muqaddima: The Paradox of the Sixth Prolegomenon and Orientalism". Challenging long-standing Orientalist interpretations, the author argues that Ibn Khaldūn's discussions of prophecy, sainthood, and the occult should not be viewed as irrational deviations from scientific inquiry. Instead, they constitute an integral component of his intellectual worldview and demonstrate the need for a more nuanced and genuinely universal epistemology.

A contemporary sociological reinterpretation appears in Dr Fatima Algharbawi's contribution, "Ibn Khaldun's Theory of Asabiyyah and Social Capital: A Theoretical Re-Reading", which chapter places *ʿaṣabiyyah* in dialogue with modern theories of social capital associated with Bourdieu, Coleman, and Putnam. By highlighting the dimensions of trust, reciprocity, collective identity, and moral obligation, the author positions Ibn Khaldūn as a significant contributor to global sociological theory.

The international reception of Ibn Khaldūn's ideas is further explored in "Ibn Khaldun and American Social Thought: The Dialectic of Reception and Intersection" by Dr Suleiman Al Daher, Labidi Bouabdallah, and Khalifa Khalid Abdullah. Their study examines how American sociologists and historians engaged with Khaldunian concepts and evaluates the extent to which these interpretations succeeded in transcending Eurocentric assumptions.

The relationship between nomadic and urban civilization is investigated by Dr Imen Helali in "Bedouin and Urban Civilization in the Thought of Ibn Khaldun: Polarity or Complementarity". Rather than treating Bedouin and urban life as opposites, the chapter demonstrates how Ibn Khaldūn understood them as interconnected stages within a broader process of historical and civilizational development.

Educational thought receives attention in "Intellectual Education in Ibn Khaldun: A Psychological-Educational Approach" by Dr Elhoussine Baaddi, Chaimae Elmajdoubi, and Dr Shaikha Nasir Alkarbi. The authors reveal the striking compatibility between Ibn Khaldūn's educational insights and contemporary theories of psychology and pedagogy, particularly regarding critical thinking, creativity, cognitive development, and mental well-being.

The practical significance of Khaldunian thought in contemporary governance is demonstrated in Dr Noura Nasir Alkarbi's chapter, "Ministry of Tolerance in the UAE: A Practical Application of Ibn Khaldun's Vision in Managing Diversity and Social Integration". Using the United Arab Emirates as a case study, the chapter examines how institutional frameworks promoting tolerance and coexistence reflect core Khaldunian principles of social balance and collective integration.

Reception studies continue with Dr Sead Karišik's contribution, "The Reception of Ibn Khaldun's Thought in Journals in Bosnia and Herzegovina". By analysing academic, cultural, religious, and political journals, the author provides valuable insights into the transmission, interpretation, and appropriation of Ibn Khaldūn's ideas within the Bosnian intellectual landscape.

Contemporary sociological applications are further developed in "Khaldunian Applications in Applied Sociology: A Contemporary Reading in Light of the Emirati Experience" by Dr Shaikha Nasir AlKarbi. The chapter argues that concepts such as *ʿumrān* and *ʿaṣabiyyah* remain analytically useful for understanding institutional development, social cohesion, and sustainable governance in modern societies.

The volume concludes with Dr Anja Zalta's chapter, "Ibn Khaldun's 'Aṣabiyyah and Gender Relations in Nomadic Society: The Case of SADR". Drawing upon fieldwork among Sahrawi refugees, the chapter demonstrates how Ibn Khaldūn's concept of social solidarity provides a powerful framework for understanding transformations in gender relations under conditions of war, displacement, and migration. The study reveals how collective solidarity, religion, and political ideology can facilitate new forms of women's participation in public life while simultaneously reinforcing communal identity.

Taken together, the contributions in this volume illustrate the extraordinary range and continuing relevance of Ibn Khaldūn's intellectual legacy. They demonstrate that the *Muqaddimah* is not merely a historical text but a living source of theoretical inspiration capable of informing contemporary debates on social cohesion, governance, economics, education, gender, culture, and civilizational development. By bringing together scholars from different disciplines and intellectual traditions, this volume seeks to advance a deeper appreciation of Ibn Khaldūn's place within global intellectual history and to encourage further engagement with his ideas in the 21st century. The chapters collectively affirm that reading Ibn Khaldūn today is not only an exercise in historical scholarship, but also an opportunity to rethink some of the most pressing questions facing modern societies.

Acknowledgements

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As the editors of this volume, we would like to express our deepest gratitude and appreciation to all those whose support, encouragement, and contributions made both the colloquium and this publication possible.

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We are particularly grateful to all the contributors to this volume. Each author has enriched this collection through original scholarship, thoughtful analysis, and fresh perspectives on Ibn Khaldūn's intellectual heritage and its continuing significance for contemporary academic inquiry. Their contributions collectively demonstrate the enduring relevance of Khaldunian thought across a wide range of disciplines and contexts.

Our sincere appreciation is also extended to the reviewers and proofreaders whose careful evaluations, constructive suggestions, and meticulous attention to detail have significantly enhanced the quality of this publication. Although their names are not individually mentioned here, their contributions are deeply valued and gratefully acknowledged.

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Editors