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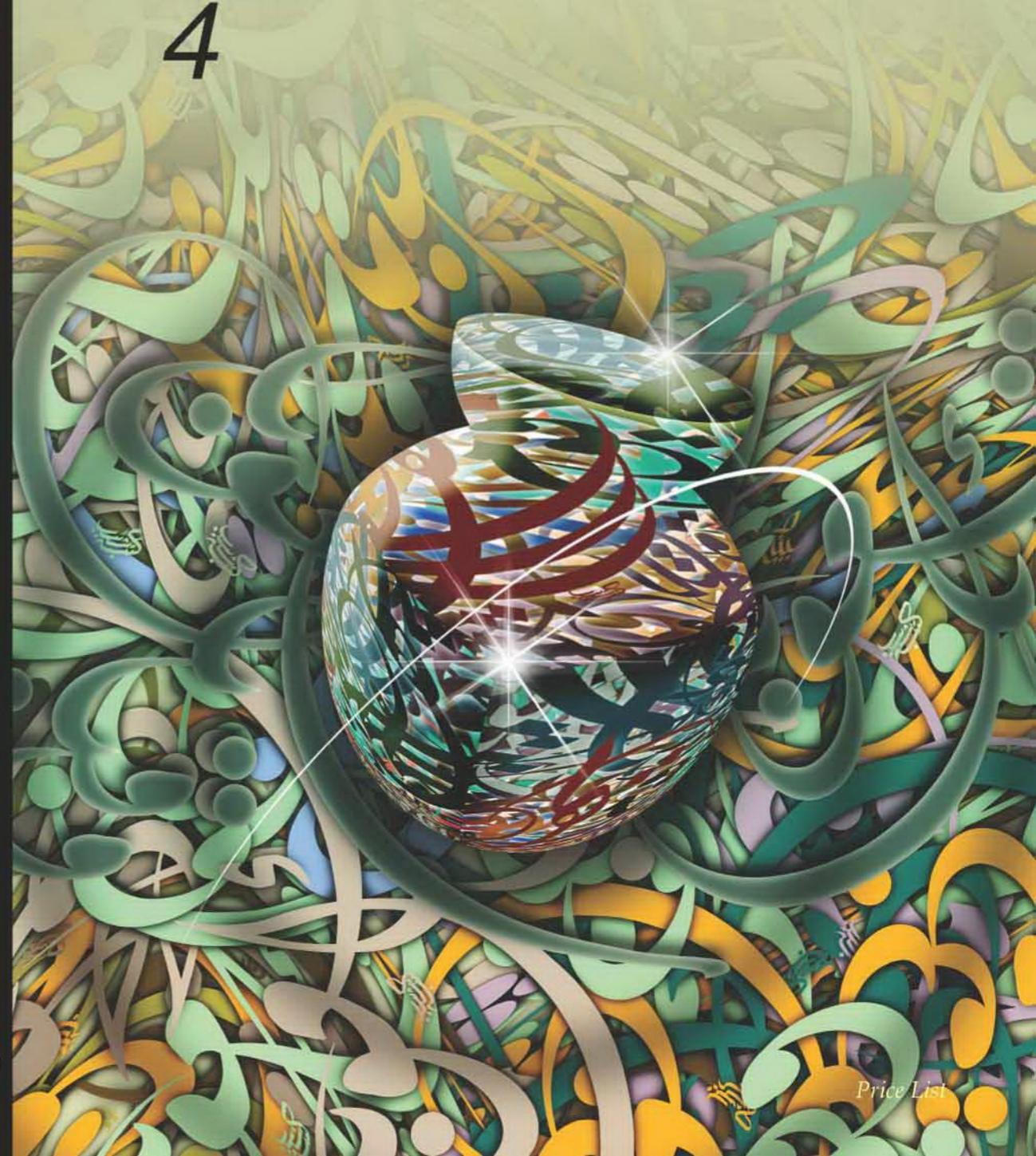
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Ethnicity, Tribalism and the Future of 'Primitive Societies'

Burhan Ghalioun

1-   The Concept of Ethnicity

Ethnicity, tribal and sectarian conflicts became a main subject for discussion in social and political research domains, not only in the Arab world but also around the globe. However, it is still difficult to agree on a clear and comprehensive definition for ethnicity and its wide horizons.

The first mention of the concept may date back to European studies in 1787. It was used to refer to non-Christian nations or groups and mainly related to idolatry. As continuity for the use of this meaning, which referred to whatever was different and negatively distinct from the Christian community, the concept of

ethnicity developed(1). Since 1880 Western ethnographic studies started using the term to refer to societies that were viewed as primitive. It is clear that there is a strong connection between ethnicity and idolatry because it is not possible to have a civilised people who still hold idolatrous beliefs without adopting Christian and Jewish values. Thus, groups who were described as having ethnicity were considered by anthropologists as uncivilised, lacking in developed culture and inferior to European people. In addition, the standards and concepts applied to studies of European societies were not used for those 'ethnic groups'.

In the era of colonialism, this use of the concept of ethnicity, which considers non-European and non-Christian groups as primitive and their European counterparts as civilised, became deeply rooted among Europeans at that time. A strong connection was also established between ethnicity and racism. On one hand ethnicity ceased to be

used to refer to the life patterns of communities who were subject to primitive or pre-civilised rules and traditions, and on the other, it was used to distinguish between societies whose biological features qualified them for promotion to the status of being civilised, with its spiritual, civil and logical political life, and societies that would always remain at a low status, compared to the aforesaid, due to their biological and physical characteristics. This was the pretext used by Europeans to justify their dominance over 'primitive societies' and even rationalise it through both humanitarian and religious reasons. This concept was also used at the beginning of colonialism as a standard notion to analyse the nature of societies who attained independence, and to justify systems and practices imposed by Europeans, who were described as a mixture of nationally unrelated tribes and clans. In addition, they said that the political standards of national or democratic systems were not applicable to them. Europeans considered these societies merely as settlements of ethnic groups that were not

expected to live in compliance with the principles of liberty and equality. In the past this enabled colonial powers to interfere in internal affairs through destabilising national and cultural diversity, which, accordingly, prevented societies from developing a real feeling of national belonging among themselves.

These days, during which the collapse of national experiences or attempts to build stable countries that depend on values of freedom and law have been witnessed, researchers and analysts use the power of the concept of ethnicity for different purposes. It can even be said that there has never been any kind of agreement among international and local, and scientific and political parties on the use of the concept of ethnicity to analyse the situations of non-European and Western societies. Western researchers believe that this proves the uniqueness of the Western experience and justifies the traditional policies of politicians who deal with sovereign societies on a racial

and ethnic basis. This also gives a new legal framework to the return of colonial policies on the pretext of humanitarian interference to stop ethnic conflicts or to protect internal peace from the threats of these conflicts and the violence that results from them, which they believe may spread to other parts of the world. This gives national movements, which seize power in newly independent countries under the name of nationalism and the establishment of national countries, a rational explanation that excuses them from undertaking the responsibility of their failure and covers the defects of their un-national general policies. The main reason for their failure in promoting sovereignty and building constitutional countries is their ethnic reality or the negative ethnic inheritance that prevents those societies from understanding and moving forward to develop a united national will. The concept of ethnicity also represents a saviour for all despotic regimes, which try, through focusing on the ethnic and factional structures of their societies and their readiness to create conflicts and unrests among ethnicities, to justify their

exclusive possession of power and their social and political expulsion practices. Moreover, they use the concept to justify imposing rigid systems that prevent people from participating in decision making and even from criticising the unjust policies of their governments. Political regimes use force, pleading fighting ethnic division, in order to protect their positions, which they even do by spreading tribal and racial conflict within their own societies. On the pretext of defending the status of the country and the preservation of its national unity, regimes also prevent and condemn any resistance or opposing political movements, which they accuse of stimulating sectarian and tribal feuds.

It is clear that the concept of ethnicity is Latin in origin and not related to Arab culture. It was introduced into Arab political literature after the Second World War and remained in the same form as Arabs could not find any equivalent in their own language. Actually, Arabs were right because, despite the fact that

the term refers in general to particular characters and traditions of certain groups, it kept changing its meaning, like a chameleon that changes its colour according to its surroundings, and came to refer to the nature of such groups and the origins of their distinguishing features and conflicts. It might sometimes be used to refer to minorities and their relationships with majorities in certain countries but also to cultural differences, such those between the Arabs, Kurds, Barbarians and Armenians, etc.

The term is also used to distinguish between distinct religious or racial backgrounds. For example, Christians form an ethnicity in a country with Buddhist or Muslim majorities and the same applies to any religious minority when they share the same language and culture with the majority. This is particularly how Western and American researchers look at the

Middle East: a mixture of different tribes and sects who fight each other and do not have any shared background. It is also used to refer to the same tribes who belong to the same culture, speak the same language and follow the same religion, and even belong to the same sect, as is the case in most Arab countries. These standards are not fixed and might change from one situation to another.

However, the case is more complicated than it looks. For example, Arabs might be treated as an ethnicity because they form a minority in a certain country, such as in some of the African countries where the logic of ethnicity dominates society and post-colonial political regimes. However, the case is different in a country where Arabs form the majority with different prominent religious distinctions. This also applies to a religious group that is not considered a minority unless it forms a minority in a country with other religious majorities. Actually, this is the reason why I prefer to use the term 'minorities' in the book

dedicated to discussion on this issue(2). And at a second stage, I use the term 'racism' after I retrieved its original meaning, which is not limited to describing religious minorities but also describes any group of people who distinguish themselves from others in an obvious and continuous way(3). In my opinion, we must differentiate between ethnicity as a corporeal reality that reflects diversity among societies and ethnicity as an ideological concept that is used to describe the relationship between those diverse groups and their possible understanding, tension or conflict. Undoubtedly, in each society there are different groups of people and there are no pure societies with only one group of people. These different groups result from intermarriage among people of different races, cultures and languages; the most diverse communities are now the most advanced such as USA, Canada and Australia, which comprise immigrants of various cultural and racial backgrounds who are still entering those countries. It is not a coincidence that ethnography and ethnology were founded in

the USA by the Chicago School to study the relationships of co-existence and conflicts among various groups in different American cities. It is very important to understand the reality of the distinction between ethnicity as a practice and as a theory. The diversity of groups within different societies is a reality, however, what is most important is how we look at this reality, how we analyse it and respond to it. Ethnicity takes different scientific, ideological and political patterns, and there are many aspects that constitute the core of the ethnic research process and its discussion. Those aspects are the objectives and the way we understand social diversity and its interpretation.

The comparison between the nature of American ethnography in the 19th century and colonial ethnography during the same period provides a good example. The aim of American ethnographers was to understand the differences of emigrant groups in order to find better ways for them to co-exist in the United

States. On those grounds, a sober and serious scientific cultural ethnographic movement was founded and led to a cultural concept free from racism. On the other hand, the objective of Western ethnographers who studied the differences in African, Asian and Arabian societies was to find what could controvert the existence of their national unities or national connections to justify claims for independence, sovereignty and equality. The best way for that to occur was to emphasise their ethnic differences, as was obvious in the writings of those ethnologists and French policies in the west and east equally. Even when individuals shared the same culture, religion, history and national unity, researchers deceitfully founded ethnic origins for some of them that completely distinguished them from others in order to show the irrationality of their existing understanding and, accordingly, their obvious need for an external mediator, culture and intermediate language to enable them to live together under the umbrella of one country. Others also created fake ethnic mythologies to promote the status of separation and division

among groups of people, just like the nationalists did when they created false myths about the unity of origin and belonging of people in the same country.

Instead of talking about competing and disputed ethnicities, we should talk about ethnicising some groups of people or whole societies to convert them to unorganised ones and, moreover, creating fake contradictory histories for some people in order to make them superior to others. By doing so, they sow the seeds of division among societies and found conflicts over dominance and power, along with conflicts over recognition and identity. The idea of ethnicity is contrary to the one of nationalism. Nationalism supports writing a history that minimises the importance of differences between people either on cultural or social levels.

In general, there are two approaches to ethnicity: the first one is connected to the

physical, mental and cultural characteristics that distinguish each group of people. The second approach is a relational one. The first approach supposes that the existence of differences in itself is an inevitable cause for dispute and is a source of cultural, political and social conflict. However, the idea of connecting abilities, skills and thinking patterns with biological inheritance and the size of a skull is the factor that dominated the field of anthropology in the 19th century and led to the emergence of theories of discrimination and racism. The origin of the idea of racism is connecting certain physical features of specific groups of people, their abilities and mental efficiency. On that basis, the idea that attaches white people to culture, and spiritual and mental civilisation appeared. Accordingly, anthropologists were not studying the materialistic and cultural differences that develop in societies nor promoting their understanding of its nature, but rather building pyramidal and ordinal relationships among them in order to create cultural, social and political dominance of one

over the other. Actually, they did this to justify their dominance. Their work reduces the value of others or their cultural aims to justify their dominance over societies and adds a humanitarian reason for it. This explains how the racial theoreticians of the 19th century moved from affirming racial differences to trying to improve the genetic constitution of the human species by random or systematic selection. They also exterminated or permitted the extermination of what they considered to be inferior human races.

Ethnologists who described non-European societies as combatant and discordant minorities, irrespective of the fact that they had been living together in the same place for a long time, refused to consider the status of those societies as a beginning of a modern or national and constitutional nation equal to other nations and sharing the same global rights and legitimacy. Ethnologists strove to deprive those societies from thinking for themselves as a nation or the foundation for a

nation. In an effort to affirm its identity, these groups insisted on their ethnicities, either describing themselves as an ethnic polity that denies diversity or diverse ethnic groups that differ from European societies. We Arabs believe that tribalism is an integral part of our identity and a deep-rooted cultural structure(4).

The discourse of ethnicity reflects its tendency to diminish the status and importance of the groups with whom it deals and distinguishes these national groups from others by describing them as natural cliques who deny individuality and marginalise it through sticking to their traditions and old relationships. Accordingly, they lose track of the general human modernity process. At present, this becomes obvious through the way the issue of emigrant groups is dealt with in industrialised countries. The secondary status given to these groups is always negative because they are described as incapable of mingling with 'Western' values of modernity.

Ethnicity appeared as a science out of the belief that the national feature that distinguishes Western communities and makes them political nations is not applicable to African, Latin American or Arab communities, which are viewed as coteries that did not reach a level of national bonding.

The relational comparison does not mean that differences do not exist or are only formal. As I said earlier, the cultural, religious and morphological variety is an undeniable reality. However, it means that cultural or national comparison by itself is not a source of tension or conflict and does not necessarily create partial allegiances that contradict general political allegiances. Ethnic feelings, or conflicts among different cultural groups within the same society, exist only in certain circumstances that depend on the nature of the relationship between individuals or cliques. The nature of the relationship between various groups of people is a factor that leads to many things, such as the development of ethnic

feelings or rather devotion to one's group and feeding the feeling of pride of belonging. Moreover, it makes the people of one group think that they are superior to others, and they become loyal to their group and its leadership and then, under certain circumstances, may fight them. At the same time, this may lead to dialogue and understanding between different groups.

In view of that, the way of looking at people varies according to the context. For example, an Arab living in a country of Arab majority is not viewed as an ethnicity but as a citizen in a national community or polity. However, the same person becomes a member of ethnicity or national group if he is living in a foreign country with no Arab majority. In times of peace, stability and prosperity, Arab Muslims and Christians view themselves as individuals belonging to the same Arab national community. On the other hand, in times of tension, conflict or deterioration of national confidence, individuals view themselves as

members of different religious groups. In other words, ethnicity cannot be separated from social relationships and their different statuses of cooperation and solidarity, or conflict and division.

Contrary to general opinion and what contemporary ethnological books say, cultural or linguistic diversity does not create disputes between ethnicities, however, conflicts create ethnicities. They turn cultural differences into esprit de corps that fight for power. Ethnic differences do not lead to conflicts between groups of people, but social fighting for various materialistic, political and moral resources makes people form allies or certain groups and generates ethnic feelings among them. It even creates these feelings from almost nothing, in other words, we become members of an ethnicity when we feel that we belong to an ethnicity or we feel others belong to a different ethnicity. This feeling grows, to the extent that we feel an announcement is necessary to achieve non-cultural or ethnic

goals, which are usually political in nature. On this basis, ethnic assemblies are separate from social and political conflicts.

Ethnic conflict takes place in a country to promote the chances of different elites seizing power and controlling it. Therefore, ethnicity is rarely referred to outside the context of conflicts that occur in national societies, and is not even a topic for discussion among researchers. Researchers and politicians scarcely find any ethnic problem in societies before the occurrence of such conflicts, as if the concept of ethnicity is unknown in times of peace and harmony. The concept appears in times of conflict either as a key to understanding conflicts or in order to uncover the deficiency of the national structure of the country in question. Ethnicity appears in this context as a theory that explains unrest and conflict in societies due to the assumption that the existence of ethnic diversity contains the seeds of conflict. Accordingly, when a conflict takes place, its cause becomes known and

comprehensible, but my point of view is that theoretical association does not help in understanding the meaning of ethnicity. It is not even *a fortiori* to understand the reasons that lead different ethnicities, if there are any, to find a kind of understanding between them, to create political unity at certain times and then, at other times, fight with each other to the extent of racial purification.

In the context of national movements that seek freedom and independence, a real dynamic convergence took place between different groups all over the world that, accordingly, led to the independence and foundation of nation states. Belonging to a recently established country that is based on promises for freedom, equality and progress to cope with the industrial and material developments of this age, made the majority mingle and interact with each other regardless of their ethnic origins, linguistic, cultural and religious backgrounds in order to establish a political or semi-political united state.

Traditional racial feelings disappeared and their influence diminished, as well as the rigid feelings of tribal belonging between individuals and groups. Traditional ethnic and racial feelings disappeared or their influence declined and tribal feelings of superiority between different areas also vanished. However, this is a common rule that is proven throughout humans' long history. On the other side, the failure in creating national unity resulted in eroding the process of social convergency and, as a result, an opposite movement appeared. This movement calls for emphasis on racial and tribal differences and even generates such differences within societies of similar national and cultural backgrounds. This means that just as the national identity, which is firm and unchangeable, racial or tribal identities are the same. They are all historical sequels founded by humans' will and related to circumstances of constitution, deterioration and recession. Undoubtedly, the ethnic discourse of developing societies during pre- and post-colonialism was a significant factor in this

kind of repetition in history. The discourse also made recently independent nations suspicious about their ability to build a united political nation, especially in view of the fact that imperial circumstances of the time would financially prevent that kind of building.

2- **Ethnicity, and Political and Democratic Recency**

In our part of the world, the East, whoever constantly reads the analyses of general political crises surrounding Arab societies finds that the most common terms used in them are sectarianism and tribalism. While some people consider sectarianism and tribalism as basic elements of the structure of Arab societies' political identity, others look at them as a result of conspiracies by foreign powers. They also consider them as a materialisation of the hidden and public desires of those powers to divide Arab countries and make them into small entities unsuitable for living. Most national

movements that were founded at the beginning of the 20th century made fighting sectarianism and tribalism one of their main slogans and feuded with any kind of sectarian actions or attitudes.

At present, analysts concentrate heavily on sectarian divisions in order to explain the reasons of the crisis that is strangling most Arab countries and societies. Analysts are doing this because the crisis is hindering the efforts of these countries and societies to establish democratic systems, or at least to avoid civil wars. Fighting sectarianism is still one of the principles promoted by national and left-wing movements that consider the existence of sectarianism as an obstacle ahead of their calls for national unity. They consider the situation in Lebanon, Iraq and Yemen, etc. as a tangible example of the negative influence of sectarianism ahead of the efforts for the establishment of national polities. On the other hand, they, sectarian feelings, pave the way for invasion and hinder the efforts of national

movements and the transference process to democratic systems.

Ethnicity has changed in modern political Arabic language from a historic social phenomenon to an eternal curse and social deformity that nobody knows how to stop in order to contain its negative consequences. The fear of conflict represents an obstacle ahead of the development in political dialogue. It is a sleeping dog that should not be woken, and any kind of discussion about it will inevitably waken it and, consequently, cause many troubles. The hate that Arab political culture, with all its movements and factions, harbours against ethnicity cannot be compared to anything but the fear from objective thinking of ethnicity and the reasons for its survival and dissemination. Thus, we find a kind of schizophrenia in political behaviour towards this topic. For example, we find that some individuals continuously condemn ethnicity and disavow its evils, while the same people, in certain circumstances, may turn out

to be among the followers and supporters of ethnicity. They make this shift willingly and unwillingly just to support racial or sectarian groups to which they belong in their quest for political or economic gains.

The repeated discussion on ethnicity creates a gradual awareness among Arab societies about the dangers and disadvantages of ethnicity. These societies feel that they are victims of evil powers that enforce division between disputing groups and thus close the door on their ambitions for democratic political and national changes. As much as this kind of ethnic thinking creates doubt and mistrust among disputing groups, it creates, at the same time, similar suspicion among members of societies regarding their ability to coexist and cooperate in building a united country that supports equality, cooperation and coexistence.

In fact, the focus attributed to ethnicity and the tribal structures of Arab countries does not reflect a real awareness of the ultimate dangers of ethnicity but indolence and misery that characterise this national and local ideology. These countries focus on topics of identity, harmony and coexistence to build legitimate states instead of on the meanings of citizenship and respect of law to secure liberty and equality for its people. In order to cover the absence of citizenship-building programs, these countries founded exaggerated discussions about identity and cultural belonging. Thus, they generated fanatical national feelings of belonging that are identical to feelings of tribalism, which do not reflect the real foundation of the idea of nationalism and political personality. Accordingly, instead of looking at racial diversity as a national heritage, they made it a social deformity that is considered a divine or natural curse. The normal situation of coexistence and tolerance known about Arab and Islamic societies and upon which they founded their main ethical principles, changed and became a curse that is

dividing them and downgrading their status among other societies.

Racial diversity and the continuation of tribal structures are not the reasons for the backwardness of the foundation of Arab nation states. They are also not responsible for hindering national consolidation projects and the development of democratic transformation projects. And they actually do not represent an eternal or historical curse. All societies comprise different groups of people and they can be classified into various minorities on cultural, religious, racial, professional and sexual bases as well as lifestyle bases (urban, rural). Nowadays, industrialised countries comprise more sectarian and racial diversity than Arab countries.

China, India and other Asian countries in general are rich in ethnic diversity to incomparable extents with Arab societies, which are characterised, in this context, by

harmony and cultural unity. This huge diversity in Asian societies reflects, contradicting common propaganda, the degree of civilisational prosperity witnessed by them in the past. Prosperity and its combinations, such as tolerance, coexistence and the resulting opportunities for dialogue and cultural exchange, as well as the extent of liberty enjoyed by individuals and groups, lead to the existence of diversity. These factors become powers of attraction for suppressed people who live in 'brutal' areas. There is no need to go far to see this dynamic civilisational history because, at present, the Arab world is a centrifugal area for minorities of either religious, racial or cultural and political oppositions. All these groups head to industrialised countries where principles of tolerance and freedom of religion and thought prevail, which add to their nature of diversity. On the other hand, Arab countries, similar to other countries, close in on themselves and they fight diversity even within the same racial group. There are no signs of civilisational progress and existence of national foundation

projects in these countries. Accepting migrants and different races reflects the self-confidence these countries have in themselves, their cultures, futures and their ability to coexist and continue working. In contrast, expelling minorities, either consciously or unconsciously, reflects anxiety, suspicion and the absence of self-confidence. The contact between traveling open minorities and indigenous homogenous cultural or religious majorities, described through their feelings of stability and permanence throughout history, represented an exceptional transporter of technology, science, culture and, accordingly, of interaction and communication between different cultures and civilisations.

In a nutshell, diversity, in all its aspects, is not an historical sin but a natural result in any civilised society that cannot limit the composition of its systematic organisation just to members of one family, clan or race. Diversity has always been present in Arab societies and will continue to exist in the

future. It also exists in many other countries under the protection of democratic systems and does not create any problems for the democratic transformation such as the Indian experience, where there are a myriad of races and languages, but where the country has succeeded in its democratic political transformation. Ethnic diversity does not turn into a problem threatening democracy and national life even in despotic countries, unless it is overwhelmed by feelings of racial belonging that supersedes the feelings of belonging to one nation irrespective of different races and cultures. Such a thing does not happen unless there is a failure of deficit in the general political system. The dominant political elites fuel racial and tribal distinction in their fight for power and authority, without which cultural and racial conflicts do not happen.

The problem occurs when racial and non-racial belonging replaces or supersedes general national belonging to the whole country. As I

said earlier, this does not happen except when there is a conflict over power. Consequently, this reflects the absence of a political system that is based on national solidarity and equality to all people in which they have the same opportunities and powers. Therefore, there is no real national framework that brings together all members and gives them the same political and legal rights. Whenever politics and law cease to exist, people will return to their traditional systems, which were based on kinship, racial and tribal solidarity.

The return to racial and tribal loyalties represents the collapse of national solidarity that unites all people in their loyalty to one superior and comprehensive reason, which is country. Mostly, the collapse of a country and its recent national organisation is a result of tribal attitudes of the political regime, which adapts such attitudes to renew its possession of power or to work without being subject to public opinion and questioning. The regime gathers all close tribes to its side so that it has

the support of the majority and, consequently, can guarantee the continuation of possession of power and avoidance of liability. So, in this case, what brought racial and tribal feelings is not there through natural existence but the state itself is represented by its political regime. By doing so, the country, which should undertake the responsibility of uniting the people and protecting them, turns out to be what divides the people and threatens their lives because of the support it gives to some allied groups. In order to restore peace and harmony between different groups, the country should play a natural role that is free from racism, tribalism and any kind of partiality(5).

These countries have to continually focus on analysing national crises instead of the racial and cultural diversities that they use as a pretext for their failure in building a real constitution. In order not to change their political systems, it is not possible to apply democracy in these countries because ethnic

diversity may lead to trouble and even racial wars. However, this situation and escape from democracy will not endure because things will definitely change. In order to revive the national spirit and help those who, out of fear, resorted to racism and tribalism, intellectuals and politicians have to focus on finding solutions for the materialistic and psychological devastation from which their countries suffer. This kind of reformation solely means changing the country from a tool that serves personal interests to a real constitutional country governed by law and ethics so that it guarantees equality and solidarity between its people regardless of their backgrounds. Retrieval of the idea of belonging to a country is the only way to get rid of racism and tribalism. However, the abolition of real national political life on the pretext of preventing racial tendencies is not the right way to go about reform as it merely fuels societies racially.

3- Criticism of the Ethnic Comparison

Ethnic theories are based on a wrong hypothesis that states that the conflicts of non-European societies or, more accurately, non-industrialised countries are the result of their ethnic combination or the absence of a national political program. It also states that conflicts are not due to social, economic, political and intellectual reasons, such as in the developed countries where there is a conscious public opinion, liberty and freedom of choice. The concept of ethnicity means any group that is different from the majority on bases of culture, language, religion, sect or traditions. Such ethnicities are not discovered by researchers and politicians and are not publicly known except in times of conflict, and maybe these are not important outside the context of tension and conflict. This leads me to say that such theories do not help in understanding conflict, however, they actually provide cover for the disputes and mislead researchers from discovering the reasons for ethnic feelings and then fighting. They suppose that the existence of ethnicities is just a natural historical result, and they do not consider that they are products

of social, political and cultural circumstances. They think that ethnicity, which is about resorting to partial solidarities, automatic party spirits and fighting with other groups, is an eternal truth that controls people's behaviour before and after the establishment of the state and nothing can change it. In my view, the opposite is true. Social conflict is the reason for party spirits and leads to creation of assemblies and organisations of either a modern type, such as political parties and civil associations, or traditional, such as tribalism, racism and sectarianism. The question here is in what circumstances and for what reasons does the revival of traditional organisations or old party spirits take place? And why are modern organisations weak and marginalised? The answer is not because society is built on tribal foundations or cannot overcome tribalism or racism, but because modern countries lack the necessary resources that enable it to build modern organisations that are politically transparent. Thus, how can we imagine the establishment of strong political parties, either liberal or left wing, in a kind of

modernism that denies the rights and freedom of individuals, permanently keeps an eye on them through security apparatus and controls them dictatorially? How will modern regimes, which are based on arbitrary, irrational laws that are despised, develop the necessary requirements for rational and civil behaviour of people with no choice but to follow authority and blindly obey it?

In short, ethnicity is not a number of fixed social structures that owe their existence to tribalism but rather one that reflects the failure of modern national policy. It is the use of old means in social mobilisation that is explained by the absence of modern means and prevention of public opinion. Ethnicity does not represent the continuation from the past to the present but the need of the current political situation for the past and its sleeping dogs so that it can wake them in times of need. What our societies are experiencing is not only the fueling of tribal feelings and their revival, which is an old thing, but exceeding that by

creating and generating those feelings, even from nothing. Nowadays, the revival of sectarianism, racism and tribalism is similar to the time when different religious sects appeared within one religion, such Shia, Sunni, Durziyah, Alawiyah and Ismailiyah, etc, and they now represent what we call old or traditional groups. With the passing of time, there is nothing that can prevent these new groups, which are experiencing the suppression and injustice of authorities that are not so different from the ones of the past, from being isolated and introverted groups who harbour feelings of hatred and dislike against the other groups. The Muslim Brotherhood movement, which was first started as a political party that was inspired by Islamic ideologies and is growing among religious people of the middle social class, is about to change to a group that has established a kind of thinking and reactions that distinguish it from the other Islamic movements. This also applies to so many religious and non-religious organisations.

This means that outside the context of social conflict there are no political indications for any differences resulting from origin, culture or place that lead to the formation of tribal parties or, in other words, participation in the fight for power and consequently sectarian or tribal conflicts. For example, a Sunni person is not considered a member of certain tribal group just because he is a follower of the Sunni religious sect. However, there must be 'political' circumstances that lead all members of each group to form sectarian allies, be followers of a certain leadership and give up their rights and freedom of choice. The followers of similar religious sects form groups in a difficult, long and complicated process that is not spontaneous and not related to racial and tribal inheritance. In Lebanon it took the Shi'ites, who for decades constituted the reservoir of left-wing liberal and national movements, two bitter civil wars, exceptional Israeli aggressive policies and unlimited political failure from the state in order to

become a real sectarian group ie. a special ethnicity. Its aim is to promote the status of the group regardless of any religious or national measures and they follow a rule which says, 'Help your brother whether he is oppressed or an oppressor.' This also applies to Sunni people who did not form a group before they were defeated so many times and witnessed many failures until the time of the late Rafeeq Al-Hariri, who succeeded in building a system of regional and international allies that gave him the chance to constitute a Sunni leadership and bring together divided Sunni followers under one umbrella. Sectarian and racial similarity in itself cannot be enough reason to form allies or groups. Difference, if not used for political reasons and not fueled by external principles such as the fight for social resources, does not represent a source of conflict. Actually, it represents a condition for exchange and interaction between individuals and societies. Without difference there is no exchange, interaction or innovation, but only dead societies. Thus, difference should not be referred to when we investigate the reasons for

the conflicts that take place in societies and countries. Also, it should not be used to explain the failure in building states and modern national societies. The one who should be blamed for all of these things is the political regime that is responsible for serving the public interest and controlling all social matters, among which is the difference itself and its positive and negative applications. Political regimes with their responsibilities to establish rules and regulations for human and different powers' interaction are the ones who decide whether to consider difference as an enriching factor or a reason for conflict. Racial and tribal conflicts reflect the existence of the spoil and war's logic in societies and make this logic prevail over that of interaction, exchange and enrichment, which currently has to be supported by regulations built on justice, equality and the law. The fate of these regimes is not separate from the position they occupy in geopolitical and civilisational systems that are controlled by the great powers and which, until recently, were denominated by Western powers, who determine the opportunities for

the foundation of new countries or the chances of their collapse.

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Human Community According to the View of the Holy Qur'an and the Historic Arab Islamic Experience

Ridhwan Al Sayyid (*)

I. The Qur'anic View of the Community

The Qur'anic verse that summarises the view towards community is *Ta'aruf* (social acquaintance), and its reads:

O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct Lo! Allah is Knower Aware(1).

Al-Hujurat (The Inner Apartments), 26: 12-13

The verse states four basic issues: (1) The oneness of the Creator and the created, (2) issues of basic human nature, (3) issues of lifestyle and social organisation, and (4) the eventual result (end) of human existence and human destiny (social acquaintance), as well as criteria for the success of individuals and groups, which is piety. Of the first issue, Allah says: 'We created you.' Therefore, there is only one creator, 'His verily is all creation and commandment' (*Al-'Araf* (The Heights), 8: 54). That issue is repeated hundreds of times in the Holy Qur'an in order to stress three fundamentals: the principle of the oneness of the creator, the principle of the oneness of behaviour (command) and the principle of the oneness of all creatures, 'He it is Who did create you from a single soul' (*Al-'Araf* (The Heights), 8: 189). The oneness of all created entities states that there is one creator, one origin and one human nature. Therefore, talking about issues of human nature is centered over controversy of the principles, which encourage the integration and unity of nature, as Allah says: 'Mankind is one

community' (*Al-Baqarah* (The Cow), 2: 213).

The second issue (issues of human nature) in the aforementioned verse represents the fundamentals of integration within the unity. These fundamentals are represented in male and female, the different colours of people and the difference of morals according to different environments. Allah says, 'And if thy Lord had willed, He verily would have made mankind one nation, yet they cease not differing. Save him on whom thy Lord hath mercy; and for that He did create them.' (*Hud*, 11: 117-118). Mentioning the different verses that talk about human nature and (the divine) history together could be understood to mean that difference is intended to be integrated and resulted from masculine and feminine, skin colour and environments, and, therefore, morals. However, interpreters of the Holy Qur'an linked the difference with sending messengers and what resulted from the existence of two groups: one that took the way

to faith and the other that took the way to infidelity.

Al-Anbari perceived that difference in his book *Al Addaad (The Opposites,* pp270-271). He cited both opinions without saying which one was right. He said,

The difference in this context of Allah's book can be interpreted two opposite ways. Some interpreters say that it means all men were infidels. The interpreters who said that 'nation' in the previous verse means 'believers' hold that when Allah saved Noah and the believers with him, all men at that time were believers. Other interpreters say that 'nation' means the infidels. They hold that before Allah sent Noah, all men were infidels.

In conclusion, it is more appropriate to say that the first level of difference here is that of integration or that which is necessary to

achieve integration (between creatures) within the origin and oneness of creatures. On the other hand, the difference in attitude or direction comes later on and represents the second level of difference, which has nothing to do with human nature. In fact, the usefulness of this difference of opinions is represented in differentiating between what is included within human nature and what is included within the divine guidance of history, ie. after the appearance of nations and sending the messengers. Therefore, the first level of difference is original and integral while the second level is secondary and revolutionary.

Continuing to talk about human nature and the Qur'anic view or Qur'anic theory of that nature, the third issue that is represented in the issue of lifestyle and social organisation is mentioned in the *Ta'aruf verse*: 'have made nations and tribes'.

· In an account attributed to Omar bin Al-Khattab, saying that *shu'oob* (nations)

means the mountain trails and *qaba'il* (tribes) means Arabs (Al-Tabari's interpretation of the Holy Qur'an v.26, pp88, 'The Sahih of Al Bukhari' v.4, pp216.

·   In one account, *shu'oob* means tribal branches of non-Arabs and *qaba'il* means tribal branches of Arab (Ibn Katheer interpretation v.4, pp217).The interpreter Sunaid bin Dawood stated that Shu'oob are the people who reside in the mountains who do not support any other group, and that Qaba'il are Arab tribes (Ibn Al-Jawzi, *Zad Al Massir*, v.7 pp474).

·   Sufian Al Thawri said, 'The tribe of Himyar was descended from Al-Makhalief (Sha'ab), while people of Hijaz are descended from Al Qaba'il tribes (*Tafseer Ibn Kathier*, v.4, pp217).

As Sufian Al-Thawri realised, the Holy Qur'an talks about two types of social organisation and lifestyle. The first is the one, according to Ibn Khaldun, which is based on

real or presumed kinship (which is meant by *qaba'il*). The other is based on geographical boundaries and lifestyle, which is meant by *sha'ab*. When we talk about this difference between *sha'ab* and *qaba'il*, we always address the form of the social organisation and lifestyle, and whether that form is based on wandering or settling. Rodi Bart, in his book entitled *Mohammad and The Qur'an*, says,

This issue is somehow complicated and mixed. The tribe Quraish was living in Macca and the tribe of Thakeef was living in Al-Ta'if and both of them were settled tribes. At the same time they considered themselves being descended from one father and one grandfather. As other Beduin tribes, they had many branches.

Bart wanted to divide the Arabs into those who are settled and those who are Bedouin, regardless of them being descended from one grandfather or whether or not they were

supporting tribal alliances. However, there are indications stated by genealogists that the issue of being descended from one tribal grandfather for town dwellers is subsequent to their settlement in towns or villages. The name 'Quraish' itself means gathering and settling. Likewise, the case is the same with the tribe of Tanoukh, who lived in Al-Hira and came from different places, and then considered themselves as one tribe in order to achieve unity and prevent struggle. Contrary to that, the people of Yathrib could not achieve that. They remained divided into two tribes the Aws and Khazraj and disputes between them continued until the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) united them under the name 'Al-Ansar'.

Overall, the Holy Qur'an talks about two models in social organisation: the town dwellers who are settled or semi settled, and the Bedouin who have a complete or partial nomadic life. While *asabiya* (tribalism), which is based on kinship, is present in the Bedouin

model, kinship might, or might not, be present in *sha'ab*, the settled populations or settlements.

The Qur'anic view of the human community is completed with the fourth issue, which is represented in social introduction (acquaintance). *Ta'aruf* means coexistence through mutual acquaintance between individuals and groups for the sake of forming small and large communities. There is no doubt that descending from one father or one grandfather is an important factor in achieving solidarity and compassion between people at the level of family or small tribal branches. However, it may not be enough or effective at the level of large communities (nation) where solidarity and coexistence is achieved through two things: (1) a single principle or belief, and (2) a single authority. Therefore, the Holy Qur'an elucidated in the verse of *Ta'aruf* the rich process of solidarity interaction, as Allah says, 'Lo! the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct.' Thus religion is

the basis for forming the nation and is described, in modern associations, as a single membership. In the Al-Madinah pact, which was put by the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) between the gathered parties in 2 AH, the declaration reads,

This declaration is made by Mohammad between the believers and Muslims from Quraish and Yathrib and who joined them and fight jihad with them. It is hereby stated that they constitute one individual nation.

The Prophet (PBUH) did not mention kinship considerations for small social units. Instead, he talked, in the declaration, about tribes of Bani Ouff, Bani Sa'ida, Bani Al-Harith, Bani Jashm, etc. In the same declaration, he 'made peace and agreements with Jews, and agreed that they keep their religion as Jews and keep their money. He also put rights and obligation on them.' Therefore, acquaintance on the basis of the 'membership

of principle' is what forms the nation and establishes joint coexistence with people of other religions. On the other hand, belonging to one grandfather could not achieve this goal but instead could cause disagreement and dispute because of tribalism. In the beginning, the Muslim nation was not established on kinship loyalty or tribalism, and could not be established between those who wandered as nomads in deserts.

II. The Qur'anic and Prophetic Experience with *Qabila* (Tribe) and *Badawa* (Bedouinism)

A- The term *Al-Araab* (plural), the wandering Arabs of the desert is mentioned ten times in the Holy Qur'an. Apparently, it is an exclusive Qur'anic expression not previously known before in the Arabic language in the northern regions; just like the term *insaan* meaning human, is also a pure Qur'anic expression. Through this use of the

term *Al-Araabi* (sing. of *Al-Araab*), the word Arab became a denotation of the genetic noun, while the other word, *Araab,* indicates Arabs of the desert. Strangely, Ibn Khaldun in his book *Al Muqaddamaa* (*The Introduction*) still insists on the use of Arab to mean *Al-Araab,* while the difference between the two terms has been clear since the days of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). At that time the term *Al-Araab* was used to indicate two types of people: (1) Those who did not migrate to Al-Madinah, and (2) those who continued to live the life of Bedouin by raising cattle, living temporarily in tents and wandering. This is obvious from two Qur'anic verses in *Sura Al-Tawbah* and *Al-Ahzab.* In *Al-Tawbah,* (10: 120), Allah says, 'It is not for the townsfolk of Al-Madinah and for those around them of the wandering Arabs ...' The idea is clearer in *Al-Ahzab* (10: 20), as Allah says, '… and if the clans should advance (again), they would fain be in the desert with the wandering Arabs.'

B- The term *Al-Araab* is mostly mentioned in the Holy Qur'an in a negative context. Some examples include 'the wandering Arabs are more hard in disbelief and hypocrisy' (*Al-Tawbah*, 11:97), 'And of the wandering Arabs there is he who taketh that which he expendeth (for the cause of Allah), as a loss ...' (*Al-Tawbah*, 11:98), 'And among those around you of the wandering Arabs there are hypocrites ...' (*Al-Tawbah*, 11:101), 'The wandering Arabs say: We believe. Say (unto them, O Muhammad): Ye believe not, but rather say: "We submit,"' (*Al-Hujurat*, 26:14). There is one verse in *Al-Tawbah* (99) where Bedouin are mentioned in a positive context as Allah says,

And of the wandering Arabs there is he who believeth in Allah and the Last Day, and taketh that which he expendeth and also the prayers of the messenger as acceptable offerings in the sight of Allah! Lo! verily it is an acceptable offering for them. Allah will bring them into His mercy. Lo! Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.

The Holy Qur'an holds against Al-Araab four orderly things: (1) Not responding to the call for faith, (2) Reluctance to give *zakat (almsgiving)* by those who converted to Islam, (3) Not responding to the call for immigration to Al-Madinah, and (4) Hating to fight on the side of Muslims when they are called for jihad. From the experience of Al-Araab with the Prophet (PBUH), the most difficult things for them were changing their lifestyle and adhering to one group or order. The Prophet (PBUH) tried, after the battle of Badr, to seek alliances and relationships with them, especially those who were located near to Al–Madinah, such as Qais and Amer bin Sa'sa'ah, without putting the condition of immigration on them. However, those Araab did not keep their word and continued to carry out raids on the cattle and solitary people of Al-Madinah. Moreover, when *Al-Ahzab* (parties), who were Al-Araab themselves, with Quraish laid siege to Al-Madinah, there was not a single Bedouin

living around Al-Madinah who could not resist reduction or shift the stance he took.

Therefore, *Al-Deen* (religion) is an internal commitment and belief. It is derived from the verb *daan* meaning submission and obedience. This is exactly what Islam means; complete submission to God by body and soul. Al-Madinah is derived either from the verb *daan* or *madana,* meaning to stay and to settle. The two meanings represent the project of Islam in establishing the state and nation, which could not be achieved except among settled populations or in towns. Thus, this issue, until the revelation of *Suraat Al-Tawbah*, remained negative and bad between the Prophet and Al-Araab. When Mecca was conquered and Muslims started to spread over Arabia, Al-Araab were compelled to convert to Islam, especially after the condition of immigration was cancelled by the Prophet when he said, 'There will be no Hijra (to Al-Madinah) after today, but Jihad and intention. Whenever you are called for war, you should answer that

call.' At this stage, the Holy Qur'an talks about *Al-Mu'adhirin* from Al Araab; those who asked the Prophet for an excuse for not going to battle because they did not want to participate in the military campaign they were asked to join. Moreover, some Al-Araab remained reluctant to give *zakat* although the Prophet ordered that money was to be given to the poor by Al-Araab, and then bring what remained from that money to Al-Madinah. However, at this stage, especially (between 8 and 10 AH) a group of Bedouin immigrants who were praised by the Qur'an in two things appeared: (1) responding willingly to the call of giving *zakat*, and (2) willingly accepting to abide with the Muslim group.

This issue culminated in the year of *wfoud* (delegations), when tribes and their largest branches from the northern and southern regions of Arabia came to give *bai'a* (swear allegiance) to the Prophet (PBUH) that they would adhere to Islam and join the ranks of the Muslim groups. That meant staying in Al-

Madinah for those who wanted to stay or could do so, or returning to their homeland with a wali and a religious teacher, who was often one of the specialised reciters of the Holy Qur'an. The Prophet (PBUH) sent a wali from Al-Muhajirun and Al-Ansar, if most of the people who came were living in towns. On the other hand, if Bedouin nature was prevailing on the people who came, the Prophet appointed one of them, usually one who had converted to Islam a long time previously. In this period, the Holy Qur'an declares the 'Great Reconciliation' as state and nation were established, as mentioned in *Sura Al-Nasir* (Succour):

1.When Allah's succour and the triumph cometh 2. And thou seest mankind entering the religion of Allah, in troops, 3. Then hymn the praises of thy Lord, and seek forgiveness of Him. Lo! He is ever ready to show mercy.

Shu'oob and Qaba'il were contained and the Islamic project was in the process of being accomplished; the people, not only Arabs, became responsive to Islam. Since the message of Islam was delivered, the stage of establishing nation had come; the stage that will last until judgement day. The Prophet (PBUH) said, 'This religion will last as long as there is day and night.'

III. The Historical Arab Islamic Experience

When the Prophet (PBUH) passed away, his Companions in Al-Madinah faced two problems: (1) political authority, and (2) the new relationship with the Bedouin. For the issue of the authority they perceived that the nation should have a new political system that was different from the Caesarian and Khosrau regimes, and also different from sheikdom or tribal sovereignty, which prevailed between Arabs. They expressed this understanding by describing their political leader as Caliph. In

this naming, they were influenced by the Holy Qur'an, which talks about *istikhlaf* (succession) on two levels: (1) naming a human as successor on earth in order to build it, and (2) naming good Islamic nations as successors in order to spread the religion and the teachings of Allah.

Clearly, caliph was the second level of succession. In the Prophet's (PBUH) last two years of life), many military campaigns were mounted on the border regions of Syria, and they happened after the Prophet had sent letters to kings and princes inside and outside Arabia calling for them to covert to Islam. Some Companions of the Prophet understood the authority differently, expressing their understanding by use of the term 'Amir Al-Mumineen'. This meant that they wanted to limit the jurisdiction of the authority dealing with the affairs of Muslims only. There was no great debate on that issue because they used the two terms: Caliph and Amir Al-Mumineen. This tradition was followed later by the

Umayyads and Abbasids who described their leader as Amir Al-Mumineen, and on the coins they carved the leader's name as 'Caliph of Allah'! The dispute and argument over who was eligible to become caliph and how he was elected came later.

Therefore, following the last days of the Prophet's life, the fate of the Muslim nation was determined by the establishment of succession and by spreading Islam throughout the earth. However, the problem of containment of the Bedouin reappeared. Until today, the argument continues between researchers on the issue of r*iddah* (apostasy from Islam) and its meaning. The insurgent groups that did not recognise the authority in Al-Madinah came from the northern and southern regions of Arabia, and it is worth mentioning that the settled populations, or town residents, did not participate in apostasy, while the majority were Bedouin. The Companions had different opinions about the problem. They said that the insurgency was

religious, and that the insurgents who had left Islam should be fought because they were apostates. The Companions, who said that the insurgency was political, perceived that there was room for negotiations with them in order to buy some time until the army of Osama bin Zaid, which the Prophet ordered to be sent for on his deathbed, returned to Al-Madinah from the border regions near Syria.

The opinion of Abu Bakr was followed, which held that although the insurgency was political, there is no way to make peace with it. Abu Bakr said, 'If they refuse to pay to me (even) *iqaal(2)* (cord) they used to pay to the Prophet (PBUH), I will fight them for it.' Thus, he gave priority to the state and the caliphate. Within less than a year the insurgency was subdued all over Arabia, at the time when military campaigns were starting to be sent to Syria and then to Iraq. It is worth pointing out that the Bedouin Arabs who lived in the border regions near Iraq did not became apostates. They were the first groups who

started engagement with Persian garrisons, forcing the authority in Al-Madinah to support them with more soldiers in order to fight on two fronts. In spite of that, the problem of containing Al-Araab took some time to solve. Abu Bakr refused to send the insurgents (or apostates) with the military campaign to Syria and Iraq. After two years of Omar bin Al-Khattab being caliph, he sent them with campaign.

During the history of Islam there were always Arabs, Bedouin and town dwellers (non-Bedouin). There were nations who converted to Islam and which had, among them, Bedouin and non-Bedouin. However, Bedouin (whether they were Arab, Turkish or Berbers) did not always like to submit to the dominant authority of the town or civilised centres. Instead, they started to form states within civilised regions.

Even when a Bedouin or half-Bedouin tribe belonging to Arab, Turkish or Berbers became independent in their own region, they built civilised settled towns as the centres of their authority. That prompted the renowned writer Abdul Rahman ibn Khaldun (808 AH) to introduce a theory, or philosophy, to explain Islamic history on this basis: tribalism + religious call = state. Tribalism means the common feeling of solidarity on the basis of a true or presumed kinship relationship. The religious call is *ijtihad* most of the time, undertaken by a jurisprudent or charismatic rebel aimed at achieving reform within Islam. Consequently, supporters of tribalism, who had an ambitious leader, became enthusiastic and headed towards the nearest town to take it over and establish their new authority in the name of the new idea. This authority remained limited to distant places from the centre of the existing state if that centre was successful in resisting it. However, if that new authority extended its power and the number of its supporters increased, an empire could be

established. This is exactly what many great fanatics did during Islamic history.

IV. The Patriotic, National and Tribal State

Since the beginning of 18th century, the West not only wanted to capture the world, but also restructure it according to their ideals. During that time in the Muslim world, Bedouin and non-Bedouin life still existed. However, that world was divisible into three types of lifestyle, not two. The first type was represented in large or medium-sized metropolises, cities and towns, and the second type was represented in settled rural areas and semi-settled villages where life was based on agriculture and raising cattle. Generally, these villages were subsequently affiliated to towns or cities. While the tribal system is not present in towns, it becomes apparent at the level of families, societies and small and medium tribal branches in rural areas. The third type is represented in desert life and includes pure

Bedouin, who depended on raising cattle and spending their life travelling, and half Bedouin, who also depended on cultivation but mostly on raising cattle, and travelling only in certain seasons.

This group still has a typical tribal system. In the mid-19th century, towns and rural areas constituted about 75% of the population in civilised areas. On the other hand, Bedouin continued to constitute 25% of the population. However, the 'initiative' to change the lifestyle or establish political entities was transformed into towns in most Muslim and Arab counties. The problem between the life of the Bedouin and urban life decreased because rural areas formed a boundary between the two types of life. Rural areas continued to be located near the borders of deserts and thus exposed to Bedouin raids. These areas continued to deal with Bedouin and to survive, following certain traditions and customs while, at the same time, following the trend of civilised or settled towns where

political authority resorted to modern military power to defend rural areas.

When saying that colonial Europe had started, since the 18th century, to occupy the world and restructure it according to its ideals, this means that they were tying to form national communities and patriotic entities. Ethnicity or nationalism is a form of political and social consolidation that had existed in Europe since the 16th century, taking the place of of Christianity. Bedouin life in Europe disappeared although gypsies, who are not purely Bedouin and do not constitute a considerable number in the population, remain. Instead of consolidating due to religion or customs, 'nations' consolidated on the basis of race and sex. A group of people aspired to establish a state for certain races, combining in its legend blood, geography culture and language.

Europeans were actually successful in distributing sharp ethnic awareness in Arabic-speaking countries, Turkish-speaking countries and the Balkans. In addition to colonial wars, this awareness resulted in the decline of the two empires: the Catholic Austrian Empire and the Islamic Ottoman Empire. Instead of the 'nation', which includes many classes, ethnicities and tribes, well-qualified groups appeared who were allowed to establish states. The elite groups in the existing entities had a national awareness and considered themselves as nation states. In these types of states, sharp integration posture prevails, which leaves no room for distinction even between towns and rural areas, let alone between Bedouin life and settled towns, in addition to the different classes within the traditional community. Due to new awareness of the overall integrated entity and colonial struggles, rural areas became more dependent on towns. The contradiction reappeared or increased with the Bedouin who were considered, just like religious groups, by occupiers as independent ethnicities. Moreover, contradictions

reappeared between consolidated communities, which suddenly became separate and appeared as competitive states or entities in the name of ethnic, national, historic, religious or geographical identity.

During the national stage of this awareness and practice, discrimination and contradictions appeared between minorities and majorities. During the contemporary Islamic stage, religious contradictions appeared and Islam was the pillar of order during our historic experience. To find a way out of this dilemma, the notion of nation should be reviewed again; the notion that joins nations and tribes to form basic units having organisational, administrative and developmental roles within the comprehensive system, not against it.

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References:

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[1])Translator's note: The translation of the Holy Qur'an used in this text the translation done by Marmaduke Pickthall.

2) a rope using for hoppling the feet of a camel.

Religion and ethnicity: between globalization and international conflict

Abdul-Rahman Al-Salimi

- I -

At the end of the First World War, various independent nation states emerged from the ruins of the Ottoman and the Austro-Hungarian Empires. As a result of this, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson set forth the proposal that colonised peoples should have the right to self-determination. In the Balkans and the Middle East, solutions to problems faced by the various peoples and ethnic groups in these regions have become possible. However, these have been influenced by the interests of the colonial powers, especially France and Britain. The allied Western countries attempted to deal with this by implementing mandatory rule. That is,

imposing proxy rule over the states which emerged following the collapse of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires. They adopted this strategy temporarily on the pretext of building institutions of the state before granting these countries their independence. However, the obstacles and aspirations of the newly established states led to the emergence of new problems, one of which has been referred to as the "Arab question". This refers to the problem perceived by Western powers, who did not want the creation of a single Arab state in the Levant (Palestine, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon). Other issues also emerging at this time were the "Armenian question", the "Kurdish question", and the "Jewish question".

However, the greatest problem at that time concerned the survival of the Russian empire, which comprised many different ethnic groups and had many zones of influence in Central Asia, Eastern Europe, the Baltic region, and the Caucasus. Although the Tsar of Russia was deposed in 1917 during the First World War,

the large state he had ruled did not disintegrate. This was due to the fact that the Tsarist Empire was replaced by a Marxist-Leninist regime, which maintained power through force and violence under the banner of the Soviet Union. This regime maintained power on the pretext that it had found an international solution to the problem of nationalism. However, in practical terms this left dozens of nationalities and ethnicities under Russian control, and deprived them of the right to self-determination in both theoretical and practical terms.

The Second World War saw a build-up of Russia/ the Soviet Union. The country increased in both military strength and territorial control, as it was among the alliance of nations which were victorious against the Nazis, the Italian Fascists, and the Japanese Empire. Between 1943 and 1945, the Allies held a number of conferences where the re-division of the world map was discussed. The Russians took control of half of the European continent, and the United States took

control of the other half. The outbreak of the Cold War after 1947 saw the gradual emergence of the NATO and Warsaw Pact alliances. NATO was composed of mostly independent European countries within a coalition led by the United States. The Warsaw Pact comprised various independent states which were led by Moscow, as well as peoples and territories inherited from Tsarist Russia, which the Russians considered to be an integral part of the Russian state.

- II -

The conflict which took place during the Cold War (1950-1990) centred around the fact that while the Soviet Union assumed responsibility for the liberation of Asia and Africa from colonialism, the United States assumed responsibility for securing freedom and self-determination for different ethnic and minority groups around the world. Until the 1970s, the Soviet Union had many successes in freeing countries from colonial rule. Dozens

of countries in Africa and Asia secured their independence and joined the United Nations, and this in turn secured a propaganda victory against the United States and its allies.

The two superpowers were in agreement only on two issues: the abandonment of white domination in black Africa (South Africa and Rhodesia in particular), and the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. In South Africa and Rhodesia, the western alliance, who called for freedom and equality of all peoples, could not remain supportive of control by the white minority, particularly in the light of the rising influence of the black minority the United States. In Palestine, the Western powers agreed on the creation of a state consisting of a Jewish majority in Palestine. This was in response to the enormous tragedy instigated against them by the racist Nazis. Two things occurred as a result of this: firstly, the establishment of a state based on Arab nationalism became impossible; and secondly, hundreds of thousands of Palestinian people were forced out of their homeland.

A crucial third event took place during the Cold War, whereby all conflicts within the European continent (particularly in the Balkans, the Caucasus and Eastern Europe) ceased out of the fear of nuclear engagement. The Russians insisted that there be no changes to the former imperial borders, while Western governments were convinced that they could grant a state to each ethnic community in the Balkans, a region which had been troubled with ethnic and religious turmoil since the seventeenth century. Thus, the new "balance" between the two sides brought stability to Europe, albeit temporarily. However, simmering turmoil continued in the continents of Asia and Africa. The two key ideas continued to be important: the idea of the right of every national or ethnic community in the establishment of a soft self-determination, and the right of peoples individually and collectively to freedom and prosperity.

The mid-1970s was the time at which this system would be judged as either a success or a failure. Until that time the Soviet Union was able to keep all of the lands of the Russian Empire, even adding a number of countries in Eastern Europe, the Baltic region, and the Caucasus to this. The unification of the central Balkan region was possible under the rule of Slavic Serbia within the framework of the Yugoslav federation. However, inequality gradually surfaced in several ways. Firstly, there were many shortcomings in Russia's administration of the Empire and dealings with her alliances. Secondly, the concept of freedom was successfully spread throughout the Soviet Union by Western Europe under the umbrella of the United States. Thirdly, religion and ethnic sensitivities were introduced. Fourthly, the rise of the New Right in the United States ensured that the Western powers were able to defeat the Soviet Union. This was thus achieved by instigating calls to freedom, support of ethnic separatism from the Russians, the introduction of religion into the

conflict, and the supplying of arms against the Soviets.

All of these steps began in the years 1979 and 1980. In that year, Pope John Paul II was inaugurated as Pope. He was an ethnic Pole who raised the banners of faith and freedom. This was followed by labour unrest which was instigated by the Association of Solidarity in the Polish city of Gdansk, and was supported by the Pope in the name of faith and freedom. Also in that year, Ronald Reagan of the New Right movement became president of the United States. He raised the banner of faith and freedom in the name of the new liberal Evangelical movement. He also oversaw the imposition of "Star Wars", announcing a move to end the conflict with the "evil empire" (= the Soviet Union).

The Soviets missed their opportunity to understand these warning signs, and invaded Afghanistan in support of the communist coup there. The Americans responded by recruiting Muslim mujahideen from around the world to oust the Soviets and remove them from

Muslim Afghanistan. Thus, in the mid-1980s three religious factions fought a war against the Soviets: Muslims from the Arab world and the Soviet Union who fought in Afghanistan under the leadership of the United States; Catholics led by the pope, who revolted in Poland and disturbed the foundation of Russian control of eastern Europe, and the New Evangelicals, who during the time of the Reagan administration were determined to engage in an arms race and to support rebellions against the Soviets and their influence everywhere. In 1986, at the dawn of Glasnost, the program initiated by Gorbachev for more openness in a bid to save the state and the system, the leader of Yugoslavia Marshal Tito died. The Serbs moved to keep only themselves in power gradually. This led to an acceleration of the process of disintegration of the Yugoslav Federation.

Finally, at the beginning of the 1990s the Soviet Union collapsed under foreign pressure and because of the failures of internal administration. The following occurred as a result:

1) Six Islamic nations in Central Asia which were previously autonomous republics within the Soviet Union and were parts of the previous Tsarist empire declared their independence.

2) Central Asia was divided into various independent nation states, as were parts of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and the Baltic region. These states: Georgia, Ukraine and Belarus, and the three Baltic states, were originally within the old Empire or were gained as a result of the Soviet victory in World War II.

3) The dissolution of the Warsaw Pact upon the secession of Poland, and then the remaining countries within the Soviet Union.

4) In the 1990s, war broke out within Yugoslavia. The Serbs fought against the other ethnic communities as they struggled to keep both Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo within the Yugoslav federation. During this time massacres of tens of thousands people occurred, and millions of people were displaced. In the end, one region outside of Serbia remained within the Yugoslav Federation, nearby Montenegro.

The result of this was that the United States announced a new world order, but without abandonding the NATO alliance. During the years of chaos that befell Russia, the United States was ceded previously Russian-controlled areas in the Balkans, Eastern Europe, and the Baltic. These countries regained internal order only after 1998. Accordingly, these events in fact led to the collapse of the Russian empire seventy years after the dissolution of the empires of Ottoman Turkey and Austro-Hungary, and resulted in the loss of gains made following the Second

World War, in which Russia had made great sacrifices.

From another perspective, two factors in international politics re-emerged: ethnicity and nationality on the hand, and religion on the other. These two factors converged with respect to the Polish question (= nationalism + Catholicism), and diverged in the case of other issues such as competition between Catholics and Protestants in the new states, their cultural and religious identities, and the progress in the field of Catholic-Protestant relations in Latin America. This came at the expense of Orthodox Catholics in Eastern Europe and the Balkans, and the emergence of Islam in Western and Central Europe through immigrant communities and the rise of religious and nationalist sensitivities Europe against Islam and Muslims.

In 2007 and 2008, several phenomena emerged:

1) The crystallization of national and religious identity in the Balkans and the Caucasus with the emergence of the state of Bosnia-Herzegovina

2) The independence of Kosovo

3) Finally, Russia's objections to Georgia on the pretext of protecting Georgia's Abkhaz and Ossetian minorities, and preventing Georgia and the Ukraine from entering the NATO alliance, as well as preventing the United States from stationing missiles in Poland and the Czech Republic.

In Europe, there is an emerging phenomenon of nationalism mixed with religion, as well as an emphasis on ethnicity. At times, strong religious vitality emerges within Islamic and Protestant societies outside of Europe, and Hinduism and Buddhism fluctuate between the two. Researchers differ in their opinions on the causes of this upheaval, whether it is a result of intermixing caused by globalization, the

collapse of the Soviet Union, or because of an upsurge in religious sentiment in many communities. In fact, all of these are factors, and it is difficult to emphasise the importance of one factor over another.

In conclusion, three observations can be made. Firstly, nationality and ethnicity have become a problem following the fall of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. Secondly, international conflict between the Russia and the United States has encouraged upsurges in ethnic and nationalist sentiment. And thirdly, the concept of the state must be used to control upsurges in ethnic and religious upheaval, and there must be a return to the idea of strengthening the state and the effectiveness of the international system through international institutions. The absence of such steps will no doubt lead to fragmentation of the world to no end.

The Sociology of Nomads and Iraqi Society: with Specific Reference to Ali Al-Wardi and Ibn Khaldun

Faleh Abdul-Jabbar

Countries that are the home of too many tribes can rarely be governed by a state.

Chieftainship is in tribal affiliations.

Ibn Khaldun

I

Nomadism is fading out on the global arena but is still deeply rooted and persistent in Iraqi society, recalling to memory a vivid image of past clan coherence in ties of kinship and chieftainship, and recalling Ibn Khaldun's famous saying, 'The key to chieftainship is tribal affiliation.'

Dr. Ali Al-Wardi, an Iraqi sociologist, tried for decades to revisit Khaldun's rule in light of present Iraq. His book, Sociological Glimpses on the History of Modern Iraq, attempts to reveal the similarities and differences between present and past sociological approaches.

II

Dr. Al-Wardi says he approaches Iraqi society from the perspective of Ibn Khaldun's thoughts of nomadism vs. urbanism, a conflict that dates back, according to him, to antiquity(1). His claim is that the desert produces nomadism and green lands produce urbanism, and both these extremes are still in constant conflict. But, the Khaldunian concept of the eternal conflict, Al-Wardi says, unfolds into a unipolar hegemony: the nomadic spirit prevails and also reaches out to the city. Al-Wardi, in other words, topples the Khaldunian concept with some reasonable arguments that we will discuss. In fact, the Khaldunian cycle is not only closed but also has defined terms.

III

The cycle begins with the well-knitted nomadic group seizing power by making use of all types of kinship loyalty (tribalism) in a given city or urban area. The city cannot respond to this nomadic invasion by going to extremes and using violence, for courage and arms are not the characteristics of a city, which is usually stable and self-reliant on subsistence. The response, however, comes in the form of de-nomadising a nomad by integrating him into the city, which results in cutting off his ties with his clan by indulging him in a world of wealth and luxury, and, by so doing imposes a penalty as it paves the way to his demise as a ruler. And, here begins a new cycle.

This interaction between the two adversaries is marked with a weaker position of the city vis-à-vis the desert in terms of handling violence, though the city is still in a better

position as regards the regulation of wealth and welfare organisations. Each party uses its available means to fight the other in this struggle.

IV

The antonym nature of nomadism and urbanism, for Ibn Khaldun, involves values, organizations, production, psychology and ethics. They are two totally opposite realms.

Nomadism	Urbanism
- Closer to godliness	- Far away from godliness
- Closer to courage	- Far away from courage
- All are armed	- none are armed (except the ruler's soldiery)
- Everybody is in charge of	- Ruler is charged with

defending property - Courage - Freemen without fences - - Deterrence is in conviction - Power of leadership is in the respect of the elderly - Courage and valour are overarching traits	defence of property and souls. - Protect themselves with fences - Menacing - Deterrence in the city is handled through violence - Ruler's power resides in scare tactics - Scare tactics minimises the valour of urban people(2)

V

The nomad-urban extremes, according to Ibn Khaldun, are a dynamic process whereby

nomadism is an active/passive agent. Nomads tend to seize the urban because its tempting wealth cannot be resisted, and thus are trapped into the accession of power, which consecutively leads to luxury, then to loss of tribalism and eventually to loss of power. The cycle lasts for three generations, each of which lasts for forty years. The total age of power thus lasts for a hundred and twenty years.

'Countries that are the home of too many tribes can rarely be governed by a state,' remarks Ibn Khaldun, pointing out as an example the situation in Africa and the Maghreb countries that has persisted since the rise of Islam because of the overwhelming tribalism prevailing there. The case was not the same, he adds, in Iraq and Greater Syria, which fell under the protectorates of Persia and Byzantium, and both were city-states'(3).

VI

It is here inevitable to ask why the Arab region, extending from Northern Africa through the Mashreq up tillto the Arabian Peninsula, was marked with a conflict affiliated with religious designs, spreading out from the Desert, where it first originated, to the Urban.?

There have been many attempts by modern sociologists to answer that this question with their benchmarks established based on Ibn Khaldoun's thoughts, and thus they started to attribute that conflict to a state of imbalance between agriculturism and pastoralism, with the latter outweighing the former(5). This attribution, however, is almost hazy because pastoralism, as is commonly known, by its very nature encourages by nature the basic pre-technological military faculties like:such as swift movement, dynamism, and the ability to flee, either to avert a fight at allcompletely or to avert a fight at an inappropriate time. The pastoralist needs not produce any weaponry, neither does he need to live behind

fortified fences. In fact, he carries arms wherever he goes and keeps arms them wherever he is settled down.

"There are no people of the noble class, as in feudal Europe, who are specialized specialised in military arts. Here all people (nomads) hold arms, and no powerful militia is there to disarm them. Even if they had chiefs, those had no power at all in disarming the tribe, if at all they showed any desire to do so(5). A famous relevant excerpt that is relevant to this is quoted from a work of by Gellner saying that the prevalence of nomadism in North Africa and lack of it oin the opposite coasts of European opposite coasts is due to the relative disparity in the status of pastoral economy and agricultural economy in the two respective communities, and hence the domination of "'tribalism"' and the "'feudal choice"' on the two sides respectively as a solution for the regulation of arms, which is much easier to be handled in stable agricultural communities (lands are fixed and do not move from one

place to another) than in nomads' ever-moving ones.

Nomadic tribes, whose military strength is builds built particularly on the male adults, particularly, take advantage over other communities thanks due to its their superior portion of military sharemight, which makes itthem, in this sense, a military gatheringforce. As Gellner views it, the first condition for of military life is mobility, or, more precisely, the ability to flee, and this highlights the supreme dynamism of pastoral tribes, that who are able to take the flight by using their own wealth, i.e. camels, horses and light chattels. By the same token, they strengthen their subsistence by developing their abilities to launch raids on nomadic cattle and also by natural reproduction(6).

The source of power of nomads being a military group force is coupled with coherence of its members because ofthrough blood ties.

Equating civiliszation with the Khaldounian urbanism was impossible to achieve in the agricultural reign without a centraliszed authority (Reign). Likewise, it is impossible is to have reign rule without tribalism as the latter regulates coercion or (regulated violence that is able to hold retain rule. reign). In this sense, nomadism does not only mark the inception of civilization (i.e. a change of the life of nomads into settlement) but it also constitutes a basic condition for its subsistence, in a similar manner to the fact that civilization is a pre-requisite for the break-up of kinship- based coherence, i.e. the the dissolution of the Khaldounian tribalism.

In essence, Ibn Khaldoun's sociological thoughts are based on his vision of for the human sociological condition, stated as: pre-requisites for the rise of a civilization that is completely opposite to those pre-requisites of tribal solidarity.(7) Cohabitation between tribes and cities continued during the agricultural era in a state of troubled balance,

with cities unable to control the Deserts. The relative stability of that relationship was the reason why that Ibn Khaldoun envisaged an inescapable eternal phenomenon. The Ottoman State, as a matter of fact, was the first state during the Islamic/agricultural era to breach the Khaldounian rule concept of the Reign Rule Cycle.

The Ottomans with all their tribes, nomads and pastoralists alike, cohesive with through their tribal ties, seized reign rule in the first generation, consistently with the Khaldounian's analysis,, and in consistencet with the same Khaldounian model, the second generation monopoliszed Reignrule.

However, the Ottoman power lasted three times the period anticipated by Ibn Khaldoun, i.e. the three- generation period of 120 a hundred and twenty years. The Ottomans, moreover, were not defeated by the desert

people but their doom came at the hands of a strong industrial power:, Europe.

The Ottoman's deviation of from the Khaldounian rule cannot be explained in military terms, for the Ottomans, just like other nations, including pioneering Arab Muslims and, the later the Abbasids, originated from warring pastoral tribes including the Buyids and Saljuqs. . Once Reign rule is was established and monopolizedmonopolised, it was necessary to segregate military aristocracy from tribalism and kinship. . In other words, the Sultan had to create a military system made up of slaves, including non-Muslims, and what this meansmeaning is that violence as a system is was alien from the ruler's tribe and the society in general. . Its very existence is was owed to its "'buyer"'.

Such a sequence took place before during the Abbasid reign, when an army of ethnic

Turkish soldiers was formed and segregated from the population. . The Abbasids' rule, however, fell at the hands of the Deylamites, as Ibn Khaldoun(8) saysstates, while this was not the case with the Ottomans, even though the nomadic tribe continued to exist as ever before.

VII

Ali Al-Wardi addresses asserts that the nomadismn issue in that that period that constituted an irregularity of the Khaldounian rule, for the conflict between nomadism and urbanizationsation, in both its value and military terms, is still continuing if we take into consideration tribes' continuous raids launched at the urban cities, including Baghdad, and continuous tribal rebellions, aside apart from the actual warning influence of tribes making it almost impossible to trade, an important indicator of the balance between the urban and the rural(9).

However, these examples are occasional "'tempests storms in a teapot"teacup', so to speak, for none has ever been a real threat to the central authority, not to mention toppling it as happened in the days of Ibn Khaldoun. . This can be attributed to the fact that the Ottoman days era saw the rise of weapons using the gunpowder, weapons thatwhich reversed the relationship between the city and the desert and halted the Khadlounian cycle, just as it changed the relationship between the city and the noblemen's fortresses in Europe.

Al-Wardi's concept of the civilization/nomadism dichotomy is not the same here as the Khaldounian polarism, but it is exactly the very opposite. Nomadism here is a system of values and a form of structure that prevails over the society and moves on into the city, not to be dissolved therewith but to seek endurance in the form of: vengeance, invasion, ……, washing offridding of dishonour, and confinement to local tribalism

(fanaticism to the city, the sect or the neighbourhood).

Al-Wardi is reformulates the Khaldoun nomadic/urbanization struggle as a freak of modern-traditional civilization, which, according to him, nonetheless, results not from the nomadic-urban break-up of the society, but from the society's interaction with the Western civilization(10).

The Khaldounian society was, thus, trapped between a pre-urbanisation desolation and its own image. . The new society, which Al-Wardi tries to reproduce from a Khaldounian perspective, however, is confused between its already breaking updisappearing self-traditional civilization and the civilization of the others that has found its way into through fortified fences. This unique composition has been addressed by a methodological correlation in which Al-Wardi combined the Khaldounian concepts of sociology with those

of the Western modern thoughts, from in particular psycho-sociology and modernizationsation theoriesy in particular(11).

VIII

Basing Based on a relative-positive methodology, Al-Wardi proceeds into the induction of sociological components of the Iraqi society from a comprehensive historical comprehensive reading that covers the Ottoman reign in throughoutall Iraq.

This choice draws our attention to a very significant point: that is, the historical processes constituting the social "'ego"' and the value system attached to it, its self- esteem, cultural systems and social structures (including, for example, mMullahs, Effendis effendis (or the nobility), the Sufist groups, tribes, etc.) are by no means infinite, and that

the communal memory in that age does not last for more than a few centuries.

Al-Wardi identifies two important features in Iraq: a curbing of the nomadic expansion, and the Ottoman-Safavid(12) struggle with the consequences of "'a severe sectarian conflict between Shi'ites and Sunni Muslims."'

Al-Wardi stresses, without relying on clear analogies, that the nomadic expansion during the Ottoman reign, which was the last, was "'much more forceful than that of any preceding reign"',, which he attributes to successions of conquests (see: Wars) and halting of urbanizationsation, as a result of which, "'city dwellers resorted to tribalism and nomadic values to protect themselves and their properties, just as smaller tribes had to come together into a coalition of bigger tribes."(13)

In other words, the growth of nomadism and/or the hegemony of the nomadic values are in direct proportion to the weakness of both the central state and the city-states.

While the tribe, by virtue oif its very structure, produces its self-defencse mechanisms, the urban cities use fences and locked doors in neighborhoods locked doors, headed by young bullies (just like the Egyptian futuwa or the Lebanese qabaday)(14) to protect themselves from external and internal threats respectively. The cCohesive relations (tribal ties) presented by Al-Wardi here are very factual though totally contradictory to the coherence factors envisaged by Ibn Khaldoun.

IX

Ibn Khaldun's main obsession, even concern, is nomadic coherence. He is almost depressed by the dissolution of such coherence in urban cities, which, according to him,, are

terminators of nomadic coherence. . He never envisages any other tie than kinship to form the main block in building human association. In this way, as Genllner notices, his premises are the opposite of Durkheim's, who was, in turn, concerned with the study of human coherence and integrity throughout his life, and thus he distinguished two types of solidarity, arguing that those ties based on kinship fall under "'weak mechanical solidarity"' and those ties based on the modern division of labour and interrelationships under "'biological solidarity"'. . The first former is based on functional resemblance and simple division of labour, and thus everything is the same, while the latter is based on functional differentiation and complex division of labour with consequent mutual interdependence. . Regardless of the nature of each type of solidarity, the coherence factors of the modern city, modern coherence factors for Durkheim, are stronger than the traditional old ones(15).

Appareantley, Ali Al-Wardi, in his approach to the Ottoman Iraq, makes no distinction between the various forms of nomadic and civil coherence. He does not seem to consider the urban a terminator of tribalism but,r rather, he considers ita possible possibility for the movement of the latter into the urban as a factor of solidarity among urban groups. There are here (1) a nomadism based on tribalism or (kinship coherence,) and (2) urbanizationsation, that is manifested in three graduated levels, i.e. the neighbourhood, city tribalism, and sectarianism.

Al-Wardi approaches these types of coherence from a perspective of n arithmetical consensus perspective without giving much attention to its contents, and tribalism for him seems to be a fait accompli. . But, the spirit of urbanism spirit in its three forms can be attributed to an external threat, i.e. an aggression launched against the city or the members of a sect members. Thus, coherence factors, according to him are not structural but

rather external. . This interpretation looks quite narrow, for the urban groups have been tantamount to organisations with full social, economic, cultural and political functions, not to mention its "'military function'" that refers to self self-defense defence against eternal threats. . It can hardly be perceived that the relationship system that we call "'tribalism'" or "'coherence'" cannot be a result of one function that has to do with external threats, no matter how important this function is important.

The main reason for this deficient analysis is due to Al-Wardi's concern with about the shaping of the forms of this narrow coherence in a segmentary segmented way when addressing ideological myths, be they nationalistic ones that believe in the eternity of "'the sense of belonging to the nation'", or the narrow historical beliefs that neglect all types of collective consciousness, that which is differsent from class consciousness(16). Of course, emphasis on the existence of collective

consciousness and denial of the social hierarchy are two different things,, while we can envisage a graduated system of values that reflect and protect that hierarchy in the heart of "'collective consciousness"' (tribal, neighbourhood or sectarian) a graduated system of values that reflect and protect that hierarchy.

The existence of tribalism, parentalism and equalaisation in the heart of the tribe does not deny the fact that tribes vary from one another in professions, ie.: tradetrading, camel raising, agriculture, and handicrafts. . Here, trade arises almost as holy, while camel raisers consider themselves superior to "sheep raiserss", who, in turn, look down at on farmers, and rice growers look down at on vegetable growers, who, in turn, disdain the mere thinking of practicing handicrafts, the basest of all.

This graduated hierarchy of values/professions, that look external, ie. That governns inter-tribal relationships, is the old-world hierarchy. . Another type of hierarchyThere can be seen another type of hierarchy in the cities: - nobles, masters, trade chiefs, class chiefs, then and, finally, laymen. . It seems that the more non-productive a the social function of groups or individuals is, the better and the higher. , and The closer the body is to it is to physically touching of the body to living things, the baser.

The function/profession is constant and closed, which is the key for to its eternity. . It moves on from one generation to another with constant professionalism and development of the closed guilds develop their own professionalism in religious studies, trade and handicraft as well. Guilds… This career is marked by a special culture (religion or cult), as whenfor example when a cultural sign becomes an indicator of a career, such as the

(attachment of goldsmithery to the Sabi'ites, or banking to Jews.)

Al-Wardi has presented an innovative account on of some of these social elements, but he has, unfortunately, ignored the Ssufist groups with their own multi-functions and hierarchies (from the Qutub to the Mureed), as he ignored the means of dissolution of these elements(17), i.e. the end of the old division of labour (categorised in classesclosed in classes) and the emergence of the division of open labour division (the capitalist) with the first former being attached to tribalism and self-generating groups, and the latter attached to individuals organised in new groups, such as (parties, professional professions or trade unions, etc.)

X

From Old Tribalism to Neo-tribalism

Al-Wardi makes creates a sociological precedence by tracing back the dissolving of smaller identities and the formation of the bigger Iraqi identity to the year 1920, which saw the commingling of old consciousness with the new one, looting with mutiny, and anarchism with revolution. . Al-Wardi believes the British have failed in two things: firstly, in their intervention with the natural tribal representation by replacing it with the power of administrative appointments and authority,; and, secondly, in attracting the intelligentsia of the then society of the time, ie.: the mMullahs and the eEffendis(18), the former for the prestigious status they have enjoy as people of with religious knowledge, and the latter for their modern political culture.

Al-Wardi stresses that those two categories of knowledgeable people, are more able to incite poets and writers, for the eEffendis are good readers of newspapers and are well informed of about the global political affairs, as well as and come geographical and

historical information. . No doubt, their information was limited and superficiasuperficial, all though it was considered then to be of great significance(19). "This is why people used to stand agape when an Effendi spoke."'

We are now addressing the issue of the first seed, so to speak, that grew up into the modern- print media, cultured man and a developed knowledge of worldly life supported by the an authority with higher knowledge authority, i.e. religion. . The mingling of the two will pass through the fences of eternal isolation of tribes and sects. . It will be served by telegraph, railroads, and the print media. . Al-Wardi is addressing the new social interaction between the tribes, cities and villages of Iraq during the TTwentieth revolution, with special focus being placed on its content: the creation of the a new identity, the Iraqi identity without its own tools,: nNew telecommunication.

That period of the history of Iraq saw the distinction between what the holy and the non-holy are as envisaged in a new relationship. . The holy used to evaluate matters in a hierarchy topped headed by the holy itself, deeply permeating deeply the world of mankind.

The holy derives its sublimitye and value from its ability to getting to the depth bottom of things and controlling them by through the force of the holy word and rituals. . The monopoly exercised by the hHoly will begin a withdrawal from all or part of the social interaction, with the rise of the non-holy earthly knowledge and its bearers: the eEffendis' class. As for the efficiency of this knowledge, it is, firstly, as efficient as the holy, and, secondly, it has the ability to turn the older hierarchy upside down, or at least this is what appears to be the case(20).

XI

Relativity of Kknowledge or Manheim's Sshield

Adopting a positive approach, Al-Wardi found himself puzzled about Iraqi society while writing his book on historical sociology of the Iraqi society. He did not hide his puzzlement either in the prelude or in the annexes.

He is, first of all, cautious when addressing social bias;, the minute preoccupations that look at the past with through the eyes of the present. . He is also hesitant when tackling the ideological questions, in which case he found no shielding methodology except Manheim's relativity to which he claims conspicuous adherence(21).

What is that thing relating an observer to the observed event? What is the guarantee for an accurate observation? ? Al-Wardi finds this

question persisting as any other sociological history scholar would do, while leafing through the past with all its whims and prejudice.

The sociological perspective is incomplete by nature, for reality, as Al-Wardi says, comprises groups. . Hence arise the multiple partial theories. . In other words, objectivity, according to him, is not possible for any part, and objectivety objectivity can no longer be viewed except as an external component approached by a scholar that is separate from the partial groups. . Al-Wardi, however, wonders what could guarantee that the researcher hismef himself will would not fall a captive to a partial view. . In answering that question, he refers the reader to the nature of the society itself, for there is a closed up society (agricultural, traditional) and an open society (the modern industrial).

The closed environment, he says, is a case that is so similar to hypnosis that it makes one see things that do not exist, rendering communal consciousness a sheer fantasy, while multiple visions within a closed society result from that same society being in isolation, and therefore it is a matter of relativity. . In the open society, however, there is a possibility to of monitoring and approaching the subject matter. . But since reality, according to Manheim's thoughts adopted by Al-Wardi, is more or less a multimodal social pyramid, the various conflicting groups in the society would envisage other sides, different from those of that same pyramid, and since the individual is a member of a group, then this vision would not let reality express itself, as it is now segmented and inconsistent(22).

To overcome segmentation and inconsistency is to overcome self- relativity that results from social division, i.e. the

division of patterns of thought by dividing the society into lower and upper classes.

Manheim's relativity annihilates space as it gives some observers in the society the ability to free themselves from social affiliation, just as with the case of senior men of intellect. But this kind of liberation happens thanks to the social status itself. Manheim's relativity also seems to be comprehensive, while the one that Al-Wardi sees is immune from any tampering in the closed society and amenable to manipulation in the open society. . By using Manheim's approach, Al-Wardi enriches his methodology in explaining the bias of small communities in the Iraqi society as this enables him look at the same event from different angles.

The stated relativity of Manheim seems to have another function for Al-Wardi, that which is to pave his way into a solid intellectual arena with power centres

distributed in the 1960 in a particular setting: the Ba'athist state is dominating all institutions, and the Marxist thought (Soviet Marxism in particular) having holds sway over the intellectual sphere. . In this contrast, the institutions are not usually not losers, and in view of this contrast that gives no leeway, and here, Al-Wardi is catering for a special seed that is based on contrast. . In other words, he wanted more than one view to prevail.

As a conclusion of his work, Al-Wardi forgets his first teacher,: Ibn Khaldoun. . He leaves behind implied nomadism, implied while heand has already warned us against the impliedit at the very beginning of the book saying that nomadism is not a communal feeling introspected by the society despite the rise of neo-tribalism(23). And, we have forgotten Ibn Khaldoun's lesson, for in the aftermath of the shift from nomadism to urbanism, an ongoing process, there is a need for a "solid reign"rule. . The factors of modern coherence are still feeble, leading allowing

hidden nomadism to creep in slowly pace from the angles of a Al-Wardi's communal "'non-consciousness'" (see: Collapsed Nomadic Villages), in addition to powerful reigning rule (See: Army-Baghdad) that faces up to and beats defeats consciousness.

Had Ibn Khaldoun risen from the dead again and seen our presence, he would have said to us in surprise,: 'Didn't I tell you before that chieftainship is in tribalism!'

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2) Ibn Khaldoun, I (No date), Al-Muqaddima (The Introduction), Dar Al-Sha'b, Cairo, dar al-sha'b, (No date), pp 33,, 111-114.

3) Ibid, p 147.

4) MThe main scholars are Ernest Gellner in his book, 1981, Muslim Society, Cambridge, 1981.

5) Ibid, p20.

6) Al Mamaleek in Egypt are said to used to holdinghave, in wartime, held jewels under their armour for fear of any defeat. Jewels were looked at as movable monetary reserves allowing the start-of of seizure of power anew by using the sword and gold, i.e. the launch of the adventure.

7) Gellner, op cit, p 88.

8) Termination of tribalism let vulnerableallowed the reign of the Abbasids to become vulnerable as their power did not extend beyond the city of Baghdad until the Deylamites' occupation.

9) Al-MuqaddimahKhaldun, op. cit, p 140.

10) Al-Wardi mentions lots of cases. No biography of any new ruler of Baghdad was but attached to a number of actions to subdue mutinying tribes.

11) In so many instances, Al-Wardi uses the expression '"local environment'" as a way of showing cautiousness.

12) Al-Wardi admits the use of two principle hypotheses: McCarver's dual personality, and O'cBriain's social inconsistency,e as indicated in the second appendix of the first part of Llamhat ijtima'ya (Social Glimpses), etc. His theoretical references are much broader, nonetheless.

13) Al-Wardi tends to use the expression: Turkish and Iranian to refer to the Ottoman and the Kajarian states respectively. This is a projection of new names on the older names of the states, for the older states derived legitimacy from the ruling dynasties (Ottoman, Safavids, Kajar, etc.) while legitimacy in modern states is derived from

their people's ethnicities (Turkish, Iranian, Iraqi, etc.)

14) The two italicised words here refer to hooligans; young people who seek to show people in public that they are fearless and daring.

15) Hanna Batatou mentions theose factors in his interpretation of the imbalance between the rural and the urban in the first chapter of his great book: The Old Social Classes.

16) E. Durkheim, E 1984, Division of labour in society, Macmillan 1984.

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18) See for example Shaler Mustafa Saleem's dissertation: 'Al-Jabayesh', (1970), particularly with regards to those aspects on

the dissolution of intra-tribal ties because of education and migration.

19) Al-Wardi, A, op cit, lamahat (Glimpses) Part 5, Section 1, p35.

20) Al-Wardi, A, op cit, Part 5, Section 1, pp 25 and 35Al-Wardi, lamahat (Glimpses) Part 5, Section 1, pp 34, 25.

21) See: Bryan S. Turner, B. S 1984, Religion and Ssocial Ttheory, London, 1984.

22) In his book Iddieology and Utopia, Manheim gives an example for the Sophistical school of ancient Greeks, which he considers as a manifestation of a conflict between two forms of explaining things: the mythical approach, and the analytical thinking of the noble and professional classes respectively, p 8.

23) Here, I am referring to national coherence as a replacement of for local coherence of the tribe, the neighbourhood, and the sect.

The Tribe and the Relationship between the Qur'anic Jahiliyya and Ibn Khaldun's Nomadism

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The aim of this paper is to widen the focus of Ibn Khaldun's treatment of religious and theological concepts and locate them within the wider context(1) of the major social theory outlined in the *Muqaddama*,(2) which views the relationship between nomadism and civilisation as a dialectic, which, in my opinion, is on a par with the *jahiliyya* (pre-Islamic)/Islam dialectic in the Holy Qur'an.

Hence my reading of nomadism in the *Muqaddama* and the religious concept of *jahiliyya* in the Qur'an are both motivated by a social dynamic. The approach adopted will

consist of an examination of the widely accepted notion of *jahiliyya* in the Qur'an and an exposition of Ibn Khaldun's view of 'nomadism' as set out in the *Muqaddama*, followed by a comparative analysis and conclusions.

The Qur'anic Jahiliyya as a Space between Two Cities

The entry under j.h.l in Lisan Al-Arab states: '*Al-Jahiliyya*, the period of non-Islam. They also say "the ignorant *jahiliyya*" but this is an exaggeration. *Al Majhal* is the featureless desert. Land that is *majhula* is without landmarks or mountains. A she-camel which is *majhula* has never given milk or is neglected with no distinguishing features.' These are the main meanings of *al-jahiliyya* in Lisan Al-Arab but what is the common factor that links the religious and non-religious meanings of the term?

One of the main semantic components of *al-jahiliyya,* according to Lisan Al-Arab, is the ignorance of religion or the antithesis of religion, 'which is rightful guidance'. Rightful guidance can only be achieved through knowledge; in other words, ignorance will accomplish nothing without knowledge. What then impels people to be ignorant of religion? Is it a matter of subjective traits like repudiation and arrogance or objective factors like ignorance of the messenger or the message?

In order to answer these questions, I consulted the entry k.f.r in Lisan Al-Arab (since ignorance of religion is unbelief or *kufr*) and found the following: 'The *kafir* is one who lives in a land far from human society and it is narrated that Mu'awiya said: "The unbelievers are tomb-dwellers." According to Al-Azhari: '*kufur* are villages remote from cities and people of knowledge, ignorance is widespread

among them and they are quick to fall into error and heresy. They are like the dead detached from the social world.'

It seems that unbelief is on a par with 'the featureless desert' or 'the she-camel with no distinguishing features'. We are dealing with virgin space, the space of the interval (*fitra*) between two prophets or the period when Allah's messengers were absent - a period characterised by silence, weakness, despondency and a lack of religious devotion and zeal.

Al-Jahiliyya appears to be a characteristic of those who dwell in deserts or unknown lands and, if we accept the commonly held view that religion is organically linked to the city and its foundation, we can easily conclude that *jahiliyya* is a result of remoteness from religion. We are thus dealing with two opposing spaces: the city *qua* religion(3) and the desert wastelands of ignorance (*jahiliyya*).

Etymologically the word *jahiliyya* seems to denote the space extending beyond the city, whose inhabitants are unbelievers. However, research reveals that there are two kinds of unbelievers: the farmers and the Arabs of the desert.

In this connection, it is worth noting that the link between agriculture and unbelief was widespread in ancient civilisations. Early Christians called the peasants unbelievers and in the Jewish faith the period before the witness of the prophets was termed the time of the farmers.(4) On the other hand, the Arabs of the desert, as they are called by Ibn Taymiyya, (5) are described in the Qur'an as 'the worst in unbelief and hypocrisy.' (6) This meaning of *al-jahiliyya* parallels that in the verses of the Holy Qur'an containing the root j.h.l and its derivatives. The forms *tajhaluna* and *yajhaluna* occur in six verses of the Meccan suras; the derivation *al-jahil* appears once in a Medinan sura; *jahiluna* and *jahilina* occur nine times (seven times in the Meccan suras and

twice in the Madinan suras); *jahulan* once in a Madinan sura; *bijahala* four times (twice in Meccan and twice in Madinan suras); and finally *al-jahiliyya* occurs four times in Medinan suras.

A study of these derivatives in their Qur'anic contexts reveals the following:

· In the Meccan suras there is a consistent link between the root j.h.l and the term *al-qarya* (village), which demonstrates the close association between village dwelling and ignorance of religion. Indeed, the village is generally viewed pejoratively in the Qur'an on account of the iniquity and unbelief of its inhabitants because of their ignorance of religion. The village is thus part of the world of unbelief(7). In Surat Yusuf, both the village and the desert are characterised as part of the world of unbelief(8). The unbelief of desert and village dwellers is given historical credence in Surat Al-A'raf v.138, where the Children of Israel are depicted as 'moving into

ignorance' when they crossed the Red Sea from Egypt into the land of Syria, which was known as the land of unbelief (*kufur*). It was from Syria that 'Amr ibn Lahiy Al-Khaza'i gathered the idols to bring to the Ka'aba, as mentioned in the biographies of the Prophet, and who earned the nickname 'unbeliever' bestowed upon him by the Prophet(9).

· The unbelievers (or the inhabitants of this space) have certain attributes and characteristics: they are deaf and dumb (Surat Al-An'am v.40 and Surat Al-Niml v.82); blind (Surat Al-Niml v.83); like cattle (Surat Al-Firqan v.44); their men are sodomites (Surat Al-Niml v.57) and their women are ostentatious (Surat Al-Ahzab v.33). In this connection, certain theologians also mentioned dwellers in remote areas where Islam had not penetrated in relation to their fate on the Day of Resurrection, saying that they would not enter paradise or hell but would be rounded up with the livestock. The predilection of the inhabitants of the world of unbelief for

sodomy is evidence by their sexual disorientation and lack of hygiene. For example under the root k.f.r, Lisan Al-Arab describes one who has undergone menstruation as entering *kufr* (unbelief) (10).

· The ostentation of the women of the *jahiliyya* is linked to the tendency of the Bedouin to excessive ornamentation eg. on their riding saddles and sword handles, which can be seen as compensation for the absence of writing in their culture(11). Such motifs could also be used to distinguish between the different tribes. In this connection, we can draw a parallel between the Bedouin love of ornamentation and the 'over-elaboration' in city life, which, according to the *Muqaddama*, can lead to cultural decline and a reversion to life in the desert.

· A people with such attributes and characteristics cannot but be enemies of the prophets, 'likewise did we make for every

Messenger an enemy.' (12) The histories of the prophets mention that the Messengers failed every time they tried to discharge their mission in the plains and deserts(13) and that Allah never sent a Messenger to the Arabs of the desert(14).

· This space of unbelief is like a prison for its inhabitants, which explains the Prophet Yusuf's joy (Sura Yusuf v.100) as a result of his release from prison and his brothers' escape from the desert into metropolitan Egypt, an escape which paralleled men's passage from *jahiliyya* (ignorance) to Islam.

· In the Madinan suras, the *jahiliyya* is linked to the distinctive attributes of the unbelievers: supposition, opinion, ostentation and zealotry. Each of these attributes contrasts with a corresponding attribute among the believers, the unbelievers' supposition contrasts with the believers' faith, the formers' opinion with the latter's laws of God, the

ostentation of the unbelievers' women with the purity of the female believers and the formers' zealotry with the latter's piety. Taken together, these sets of attributes define two distinct groups, each with its customs and values: the community of the city (Al-Madinah Yathrib) and the Arabs of the desert(15). As is well known, Muhammad's emigration to Madinah led to the foundation of the Islamic *umma* (community) with its distinctive religious and political groupings.

· We are dealing with the clearly defined space described in Surat Al-Ghashiyya:

17. Do they not look at the Camels, How they are made?

18. And at the Sky, How it is raised high?

19. And at the mountains, How they are fixed firm?

20. And at the Earth, How it is spread out?

21. Therefore do thou give Admonition, for thou art one to admonish(16).

·   The key to these verses lies in the nature of their interrogative meaning, for they are not an invitation to marvel at the wonders of God's creation, as most commentators have suggested, but rather an appeal to unbelievers to remember the harsh nature of existence as a deterrent against their unbelief. Dr Hussain Mu'nis expressed the same opinion in his detailed analysis, pointing out that the camel mentioned in the above verses was not simply an animal but a symbol of the nomadic life and its environment with its 'endless sands, hills, depressions, clear blue sky and camels.'(17) In short, we are dealing with Deleuze and Guttari's concept of pure space. (18)&(19) Thus, the period between two messengers is tantamount to the space extending outside the city and, in particular, the space between two cities. Al-Tha'alibi referred to this notion in his *Stories of the Prophets* when he wrote about the first Prophet Adam's journey from India to Mecca to visit the House that Allah fore-

ordained him to build (the Ka'aba): 'and everywhere his feet touched became settled land beyond which were the wastelands and deserts.' (20)

Ibn Khaldun's Nomadism, which includes Agriculture and Pastoralism

Regarding his definition of the nomad (*al-badu*), Ibn Khaldun writes:

In a previous chapter we characterised the Bedouin as being engaged in tillage and animal husbandry. By necessity they are restricted in their nutrition, clothing, dwellings and way of life, eschewing luxuries. Those of them that are engaged in agriculture have a higher status than those engaged in camel rearing. The inhabitants of villages and mountain-dwellers are mostly Berbers and Persians. Those who make their living by grazing animals like sheep and cows are

generally camel-riders and are termed pastoralists, while those who rear camels live in more remote areas and are accordingly more wild and unsophisticated. Town-dwellers regard them disparagingly and look down upon them. Such are the Arabs of the desert(21).

We term this definition of the Bedouin as 'Khaldunian', given that many researchers are not satisfied with his incorporation of the village and agriculture under the rubric of nomadism. In this regard, Hussayn Mu'nis considers that Ibn Khaldun differs sharply from other sociologists and historians, who view pastoralists and agriculturalists as separate communities, both formally and functionally(22). Others have supported this dichotomy to a greater or lesser degree(23).

Consideration of such dichotomies leads us to a comparison of the two phenomena.

Detailed comparison

Tribal Solidarity

The following characteristics ascribed to the Bedouin in the *Muqaddama* can all be subsumed under the rubric of tribal solidarity.

1. 'Wildness'

The Bedouin can be located on a cline between 'wildness' and sedentariness, according to his closeness to or remoteness from the city. The more the Bedouin moves away from the city, the 'wilder' he becomes. As already mentioned, Ibn Khaldun adopts a three-fold classification of the Bedouin, ranked from the least nomadic (agriculturalists) to the most nomadic (camel rearers)(24). This classification, which reflects the nature of the terrain, takes the city as the optimum environment, which enjoys status and stability

with the resultant benefits in religion, politics, culture and economy, to each of which Ibn Khaldun devotes a chapter in the *Muqadamma.*

This linking of the Bedouin with 'wildness' and the city with civilisation ties in with the Qur'anic descriptions of the unbelievers as blind, deaf and dumb, prey to erroneous delusions, sexually deviant and enamoured of ostentation. In short, they are no more than beasts.

2. Courage

One of the characteristics of the Bedouin is courage. This is a negative quality rather than a positive one, as may appear at first glance. The presence of this quality among the Bedouin is indicative of their unsophisticated state outside the framework of the city: 'The Bedouin, because of their solitariness, wildness and remoteness, as well as their

renunciation of civilisation, depend upon themselves for protection.'(25) Courage, insofar as it is a mixture of fortitude and apprehension, is one of the characteristics of the people of the *jahiliyya*, one of the meanings of j.h.l being 'anger' and 'violence', as is well known. A factor that underlines the negative meaning of 'courage' is that it is not mentioned in the Qur'an and is never stipulated by theologians as a necessary requisite of a Muslim warrior, because of its association with the *jahiliyya* period.

3. Goodness

What does Ibn Khaldun mean by 'The people of the desert are nearer to goodness than the people of the city'? At first sight this seems to be a straightforward comparison between the Bedouin and city-dwellers but, in fact, Ibn Khaldun is comparing the Bedouin as raw material, with the potential of becoming civilised if they 'migrate' to the city, with city-dwellers who have become corrupted by

civilisation. In other words, the Bedouin are potential entrants into that state of goodness conferred by the city, while city-dwellers have already entered into sin and corruption(26). It is no coincidence that Ibn Khaldun completes this comparison by alluding to the 'migration of the Arabs of the desert', (27) which, in this context, refers to the need to civilise the Bedouin since they are in a state of nature. This is confirmed by the Prophet's saying: 'All newborn children are born in a natural state and it is their parents who subsequently bring them into the Jewish, Christian or Zoroastrian faith.' This pre-civilised natural goodness of the Bedouin is also commented on by Ibn Taimiyya when he writes: 'The Arabs of the desert before Islam were naturally predisposed to goodness although unable to put it into pratice.'(28)

In the final analysis, 'wildness', 'courage' and 'goodness' are simply the product of the chief attribute of the Bedouin, which according to Ibn Khaldun is 'tribal solidarity'.

Tribal solidarity is a survival mechanism triggered by the harsh economic and environmental conditions in which the Bedouin live, and emerges as a means of protecting the group with a common or perceived tribal ancestry. Ibn Khaldun comments: 'Because of their remoteness and isolation and their renunciation of the protection of the city, the people of the desert depend upon themselves for their defense, not relying on or trusting others in this regard.' (29) By its nature, tribal solidarity is organically linked with war(30), which is a feature of Bedouin life(31).

The presence of tribal solidarity entails the absence of government, religion, the city and knowledge, as well as the absence of brotherhood(32) and socialisation. Similarly, the Qur'anic *jahiliyya* is symptomatic of violence, war (one of the meanings of *kufr* in Lisan Al-Arab is 'donning weapons'), ignorance, remoteness from the city, zealotry and distrust. In both the Qur'anic *jahiliyya* and

Ibn Khaldun's *badawa* (nomadism), living in the city is enough to actualise the innate potential of the Bedouin for goodness (Ibn Taymiyya's natural predisposition), since socialisation in the city (state or *umma*) has the effect of dissolving the 'wildness' and fanaticism of the Bedouin and engendering in them the quality of 'brotherliness'.

Jahiliyya/Nomadism: a Working Hypothesis

Why then are the people of the *jahiliyya*/nomads depicted in such a negative way as primitive and wild?

It is clear that Ibn Khaldun did not devote the same attention to Bedouin society as he did to civilised society, portraying it in a defective and inexact fashion. Does this mean that he made a hasty judgement about Bedouin society, as Hussain Mu'nis claims? Or is it that

agriculture in his era was a poor means of making a living, practiced by wretched people as Muhammad Abid Al-Jabri asserts?(33)

We do not believe that Ibn Khaldun was unaware of the conditions of the Bedouin of his age or the preceding era (the migrations of the Bani Hilal and Bani Salim from Arabia to the Maghreb lands, the fall of the Muwahhad dynasty, the fall of the caliphate at the hands of the Moghuls, Tamerlaine's invasions). Nasseef Nassar explains the conundrum in terms of Ibn Khaldun's overriding belief that 'the origin of the state lay in nomadism and, as such, its internal structure was of no concern to him.' (34)

It is our contention that Ibn Khaldun was only interested in nomadism as a working hypothesis to highlight the virtues of the city and civilisation, in exactly the same way that the *jahiliyya* in the Qur'an refers not so much to actual recorded events as to stories of an

obscure past, whose value is more didactic than historical(34). This explains the diverse opinions of commentators in their definitions of 'the first *jahiliyya*' mentioned in Surat Al-Ahzab (the period between Adam and Noah, between Abraham and Enoch, and between Abraham and Moses etc.). It also explains the paucity of details about the *jahiliyya* in the Qur'an, compared with poetry and history. Finally, our thesis explains the lack of any positive details of the *jahiliyya* in the Qur'an, which would be contrary to historical reality. The image of the 'ignorant *jahiliyya*' is necessary to bring out the light of Islam and its virtue for the worlds,(35) just as Islam represents civilisation and *jihad* for the Arabs of the desert.

Ibn Khaldun's imprecise depiction of nomadism can be explained in terms of his view that, historically, the Bedouin aspires to civilisation, insofar as it is the true and rightful meaning of his existence. 'For Bedouin life lacks the civilisation of the town and the city.'

Hence Ibn Khaldun sees nomadism as civilisation's negative pole, constituting a perennial threat to its existence, and as a mere working hypothesis to highlight the positive aspects of communal life in the city.

In fact, the Bedouin *qua* primitive and wild nomad is a theoretical construct rather than a historical truth(36). That the Bedouin is an abstraction and an idea, rather than a living reality, can be seen for a number of reasons(37):

- Although nomadism is defined in terms of movement from one place to another, this is an incorrect definition since the nomad moves in his own space(38).

- In spite of its apparent simplicity, Bedouin life is the subject of competing definitions including migration, wandering, roaming, transhumance etc.

- Although for Ibn Khaldun nomadism is the origin of civilisation, the Bedouin has no

history since it is cities that create history. (According to Deleuze and Guattari, the history of the defeat of the Bedouin is the history of the victory of the state and religion).

The Nomadism/Civilisation Dialectic as an Explanatory Principle

This comparison between the concepts of *jahiliyya* and nomadism could not have been made had not Ibn Khaldun - contrary to his predecessors and contemporaries(39) - realised that the *jahiliyya* was not so much a historical period as a geographical space; the Bedouin space or, to be precise, the space of the Arabs of the desert(40). Ibn Khaldun expatiates on the features of the Arab *jahiliyya* (by which he means the desert Arabs) in the manner that has been described previously. 'They only inhabit open spaces … because of their wild nature.' (41) Consequently, if they conquer a city, it soon becomes corrupt 'because they are a wild community, among whom savagery is

endemic.' (42) They are the most ungovernable since they are 'the wildest of all nations living in the wilderness … and because of this wildness they do not easily submit.'(43)

In Ibn Khaldun's view, Bedouin nature can only be changed by religion, and history affords many examples. The desert Arabs formed into a governed community when religion conferred upon them the blessing of obeisance to laws for the common good. Rulers succeeded each other and the state grew in power and influence. When Rustum saw the Muslims assembling for prayers he said: 'Umar has defeated me. The dogs know manners.'(44) History also records that at the demise of the Arab state, the Arabs renounced religion, forgot obeisance to the law and returned to their former wildness, lawlessness and ungoverned state(45).

This similarity, or even identity, between nomadism and the *jahiliyya* is paralleled by

the similarity between religion and city, inasmuch as this is a political/religious space, which is the antithesis of tribal fanaticism(46). 'Wildness' and ignorance are erased and the city and its infrastructure are established etc. Thus, nomadism is to the *jahiliyya*, what civilisation is to religion.

Ibn Khaldun used this dialectic to explain in the *Muqaddama* many events in Islamic history, as well as the rise and fall of the Islamic state. Among the former we could mention Ibn Khaldun's cogent explanation of the success of the Arab conquests in Iraq, where towns and cities were built, in contrast to their failure in Ifriqiyya where the campaign was at the mercy of tribalism and dissension(47).

It is clear that people of the town are more receptive to religion than people of the desert with their conflicting tribal loyalties. This principle applies not only to Islamic history

but the history of other peoples(48) since 'every nation has its cities and its nomadism, the nomadism of the Arabs of the desert. For the Byzantines, the nomads were the Armenians, for the Persians the nomads were the Kurds. For the Turks the nomads were the Tartars and so on.' (49) Therefore, each nation is prey to the eternal struggle between the desert and the sown and between Islam and *jahiliyya*, ie. between religion and ignorance(50?).

Conclusion

Why then was the Qur'anic *jahiliyya* 'rotten' and without a single redeeming feature among its people? Why were the nomads in the *Muqaddama* a defective community, a kind of anti-civilisation and why were the Bedouin depicted as wild and worthless? Why were these two concepts reduced to mere working hypotheses in each case?

We believe that the Qur'anic treatment of the *jahiliyya* and Ibn Khaldun's treatment of nomadism exemplify a historical law in human affairs that necessitates the adoption of a new extreme position so as to advance beyond the old order. So it was in Islam, from Ibn Khaldun's perspective of history, arising from the ashes of what the Bedouin had destroyed in his era, and so it was in the European Renaissance.

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Notes:

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1. Naseef Nassar, in his analytical dialectical interpretation of Ibn Khaldun's thinking, considers that most commentators on the *Muqaddama* adopt a piecemeal rather than a

comprehensive approach. See Khaldun, I 1994, *Realism*, Dar Al-Tali'a, Beirut,, p15

2.   For other opinions on Ibn Khaldun's major theory in the *Muqaddama* see Hussayn, T, Al-Dawla and Al-Husri, S, *Tribalism.*

3.   Many linguists believe that the 'm' in 'madina' is superfluous and hence the root of the word is d-i-n rather than m-d-n. See Hijazi, M. F, *Arabic Linguistics*, Maktaba Gharib, p209. Similarly, most historians and anthropologists accept an organic link between religion and city, especially in their origins. See in particular Fustel De Coulanges, Raoul Lonis and our remarks on the relationship between the city and religion in early Islam in *Religion and ideology,* Dar Al-Tali'a, Beirut, 2005, p38ff.

4.   Max Weber

5.   Al-Faqqi, M. H. (ed.) 1369 AH, *The need for the true path to counter the opinions of sinners*, Cairo, p147.

6.   Surat Al-Tawba v.97.

7.   The word *qarya* (village) appears in several places in the Qur'an with the meaning of 'city', for example in Surat Al-Isra v.16: 'When We decide to destroy a population, We (first) send a definite order to those among them who are given the good things of this life and yet transgress; so that the word is proved true against them: then (it is) We destroy them utterly.' In our opinion, the matter pertains to those in the last stages of civilisation who have passed from goodness to evil and corruption ie. from the city to the desert.

8.   Sura Yusuf vv.82–100.

9.   Hisham, I 1990, *Al-Sira Al-Nabawiyya*, (eds.) Al-Saqa, Al-Abyari and Shalbi, Beirut,, Part 1 Vol. 1 p75.

10.   Among compilations of the Prophet's Hadith we find many hadith teaching the Bedouin the rules of hygiene, to the extent that one of the tribe of Quraish scornfully addressed the desert Arab followers of the Prophet thus:'Your Prophet

has taught you everything, even the rules of defecation.'

See for example: Muslim, Cleanliness, 57-58; Al-Darmi, Cleanliness, 4 and Al-Nisa'i, Cleanliness. 13.

11. Deleuze, G and Guattari, F. *Traite de nomadologie, p*471.

12. Surat Al-An'am, v.112

13. ibid.

14. Al-Jahiz, A. U. (ed.) 1988, *The book of animals*, (commentary) Harun, M. H, Dar Al-Jeel, Beirut, vol. 4, pp476-478.

15. Yathrib was none other than a copy of Mecca and it was for this reason that the Prophet migrated there. This may also explain his tolerance of the Quraish after the conquest of Mecca since he recognised their administrative skills in the state he founded in Madinah. History shows many examples of the administrative skills of the Quraish in the Arab state.

16.	Linguists differ more over the meaning of interrogation than in grammatical or derivational forms. See in this regard Yusuf, U 2003, *Polysemy in the Qur'an*, Sihr lil-Nashr, Tunis, p172 ff.

17.	*The history of Quarish: A study of how Islam made the smallest Arab tribe into the mightiest tribe in the history of mankind*, Dar Al-Manahil – The Modern Era. 2002 p.30ff.

18.	In this translation we have relied on Ibn Khaldun who refers to 'Al-basa'it' in the *Muqaddama* in the sense of extensive lands with no barriers on them. See Khaldun, I 2005, *Al-Muqaddama*, (ed.) Al-Shaddadi, A, Casablanca, vol1, p246.

19.	Deleuze, G & Guattari, F, op. cit.

20.	Al-Nisapuri Al-Tha'alibi, A. M, I 2000, *Stories of the Prophets or Ara'is Al'Majalis*, Dar Al-Fikr, Beirut, p37.

21.	Khaldun, I, op. cit, *vol1*, pp193-194.

22.   *Civilization*, 'Alam Al-Ma'rifa' Series, 1978No. 1. Kuwait, Pp144-145.

23.   See Al-Zaid, H 2004, *Nomads and nomadism in the Qur'an, Hadith and Traditions*, Dirasat Series, No. 7, Dar Al-Amin, Cairo, P.111ff. Also see Al-Wardi, A, *Ibn Khaldun's Logic, p*105.

24.   *Al-Muqaddama*, Vol1 p209.

25.   ibid, p200.

26.   ibid, p146.

27.   See chapter on Migration of the desert Arabs in Al-Sarkhasi, *Sharh Al-Sir Al-Kabir*, (ed.) Al-Din Al-Munajjid, S 1960, Cairo, vol1.

28.   Taymiyya, I, *The Need for the true path to counter the opinions of Sinners*, p161.

29.   Khaldun, I, op. cit,vol1, p200.

30.Hence the most exact translation of 'asabiya' in French is 'esprit de corps'.

31. On the relationship between the Bedouin and war, as well as that between the state - enemy of the Bedouin - and war, see Deleuze, G.

32. One of the meanings of 'al-ukhuwwa' is weakness or collapse, a meaning that contradicts, or at least is contrary to the sense of valour and solidarity. Another meaning refers to hobbling or taming in the word 'al-aakhiyya', in which two ends of a stick are fixed into a wall, the middle forming a loop to which animals are attached. Ibn Sikkit says, 'or both ends of a rope are embedded in the ground the middle forming a loop to which animals are attached.' Its plural is 'awaakhin'. One says, the animal is hobbled with an aakhiyya. Al-Samarra', I 1990, *Fi shi'ab al-'arabiyya*, Dar Al-Fikr Al-Mu'asir, Beirut, Dar Al-Fikr, Damascus, p101.

33. Al-Jabbari, A. 'A 1971, *Tribalism and state: outline of Ibn Khaldun's Theory of Islamic History*, Dar Al-Thaqafa, Casblanca, p30.

34.		Khaldun, I, *Realism*, p238.

35.		In the dialogue between Yezdigird and Al-Mughayyara ibn Zarara before the battle of Qadisiyya, in reply to Yezdigird, who had reproached the Arabs for their lack of wealth, lack of numbers and hunger, Al-Mughayyara said, 'You have described us incorrectly, for our hunger was nothing like hunger. We ate beetles, scorpions, and snakes and considered them our food. Our houses were on the ground and our clothes were spun from camel and sheep's wool. Our religion was fighting one another.' Al-Tabari, M. I. J 1967, *History of nations and kings*, (ed.) Ibrahim, M. A. F, Beirut, vol.3, pp499-500. It is evident that Al-Mughayyara is intending to denigrate the *jahiliyya* past of the desert Arabs in order to emphasise the light of Islam.

36.		It is well known that man in a state of nature, as conceived by the Social Contract philosophers (Hobbes, Spinoza, Rousseau etc.), was simply a theoretical

construct to bring out the value of the Social Contract in human terms.

37.	For more details, see Deleuze, G and Guattari, F, op.cit.

38.	For more details see Deleuze and Guattari's distinction between movement (displacement of a body from one place to another) and speed (absolute property of an indivisible body occupying a wide space in a vortex within which it can appear at any point).

39.	Ibn Taymiyya writes, 'The word *jahiliyya* even if originally an adjective is usually used as a noun' *The Need for the true path to counter the opinions of Sinners*, p77.

40.	It is striking that since 1911 the Wahhaabis of the Arabian Peninsula have started to abandon living in tents and have begun to settle in brick-built houses called *hajar* (the verb h-j-r in old Sabaean means 'to be established and stable' as explained in our book, *Religion and Ideology*, p48). Tribal groups in the Najd have begun to imitate

each other in quitting desert life, which has come to be known as *al-jahiliyya*. The inhabitants of the *hajar* are termed *Al-Ikhwan*. (Wahba, H, 'The Arabian Peninsula in the 20th century' from Al-Wardi, A, op. cit, p101).

41.		Khaldun ,I, *Al-Muqaddama*, vol1, p246.

42.		ibid, p247.

43.		ibid, p251.

44.		ibid, p252.

45.		ibid, vol1.

46.		One of the best historical indications of this is that Arabs, after the conquests, began describing their affiliations in terms of their place of residence, not just in terms of lineage. ibid, vol1, p200.

47.		*ibid*, vol1, pp277-278.

48.		ibid, p278

49.		Taymiyya, I, op. cit, p147.

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Tribalism and State in the Era of the New Nomadism

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The revered theory of the state as the expression of a collective identity occupies a key position in modern thought, especially in the following two formulations: the state as an absolute entity and guarantor of peace and security (Hobbes) and the state as an embodiment of General Will (Rousseau). This theory reached its apogee in the thinking of Hegel, the founding father of modernist philosophy.

In the present instance it will suffice to give brief reference to Hobbes' and Rousseau's theories in order to highlight their contribution to modern philosophical concepts of the state in contrast to what we may call tribal

formulations outside the collectivist purview of the state.

Although Rousseau's social contract prioritises individual human rights and freedom, the sum of these individual wills is finally subsumed by the essentialism of the state. In contrast to Hobbes, who emphasised the artificial and voluntary nature of the social contract, Rousseau elevates it from a legal principle to a political reality. The concept of General Will posited by Rousseau in the fourth part of *Du Contrat Social* leads to an essentialist view of the state as an expression of the will of the people, who are not simply free contracting individuals but a collective harmonious whole.

Rousseau clarifies his concept as follows:

As long as the number of individuals consider themselves one body, their single Will

is directed towards the collective welfare of the group. In this case, all the mechanisms of the state are fully functioning and all its orders are clear and rational. There is no place for obscure or contradictory tendencies and the collective good is self-evident to those who have the common sense to perceive it(1).

The social contract, to the extent that it is a contract between the people and itself (and not between distinct and competing individuals), is in effect a subjective contract between an individual and himself and thus emerges not so much from a natural or mechanical utilitarianism as from the rational will.

General Will, which is not simply the sum of individual wills or the result of a mutual pact, can be defined with absolute rationality as the Common Good. Hence, it is superior to the idea of a group of individuals, no matter how united or supportive, and its elevation to the status of Law above and beyond human will.

Such considerations led Hegel to substitute the individual subjective will with the corporate collective will, which is the State.(2)

Although Hegel sharply criticised Rousseau's conception of the state, he considered that Rousseau prepared the way for German Idealism by his promotion of the idea of freedom which 'makes Will a founding principle of the state.' However, this free will, even in its collectivist guise (General Will) is abstract and non-dialectic, which means that it is tolerant of repression and violence.

Consciousness of the self as part of the Will is rooted in the subjective utilitarian tendency of rationalism. Hence, the need to deny the implicit definitions of freedom in view of the dictates of the absolute mind, or, in other words, the collective dissolution of individual wills in the General Will. There is thus no room for intermediaries between the natural will of the individual and the rational will of

the state since infinite objectivity cannot coexist with the infinite nature of the concept of freedom.(3)

Instead of basing civil polity on abstract free will, Hegel defined the state as 'the actual reality of ethical thought'4 or the objective embodiment of the will, given that his definition of politics was 'the science of the will'. Although the will is similar to freedom in that both ideas are resistant to definition, each free act requires a positive formulation and hence the state is the condition of the historical realisation of freedom or the positive embodiment of the negative.

Hegel clarifies this idea thus: 'The state is rational in itself and for itself. This essential entity has an absolute and immutable purpose, by means of which its freedom outranks that of the individual, whose highest duty is to become a member of the state.'5

For Hegel the importance of the state lies in the fact that it enables the individual to realise his ethical tendencies by harmonising them with the Absolute Spirit and, in this connection, it is appropriate to mention that Hegel (especially in his earlier writings) looked back nostalgically on the Greek city state as an organic totality,6 and considered that man could not live outside the state since 'the state is essence of historical development which is driven by the multiplicity of states.'7

Although Eric Weil - one of Hegel's foremost interpreters - has defended Hegel against accusations that his concept of the state is a recipe for autocracy and absolutism8 on the grounds that Hegel's absolute state is a dialectical characterisation of free will that lies at the heart of the modern liberal notion of the nation-state9, we cannot deny that for Hegel the state remains the means for actualising man's rational and ethical nature. In addition to

that, the state in the modern era fulfils the organic and amalgamising functions of religion. It is also clear that this approach has energised social studies and has become one of the mainstays of modern political thought, as is evident in the work of two notable sociologists (with due allowance to their differences in background and perspective): Emile Durkheim and Max Weber.

Durkheim's theoretical and applied writings view the state as a network of determinants of social solidarity and approach the problem from two angles: descriptive, which objectively studies the mechanisms that determine the social fabric of society together with their internal logic and functioning,(10) and criterial, based on the premise that sociology has a political role of promoting social solidarity and strengthening collective identity in the manner of civil ethics.(11)

From this perspective Durkheim distinguishes between two types of solidarity, according to the nature of human society: mechanical solidarity, which describes simple primitive societies, and organic solidarity, which characterises complex modern societies.

In traditional restricted societies, social solidarity is based on strong communal feelings, beliefs and values, based primarily on religion. In such collective societies, there is no place for the individual and the law is strict and repressive allowing for no dissent or deviation from social norms. On the other hand, the chief feature of modern societies is individualism, which is a product of the Industrial Age and its attendant division of labour. Such societies are complex and multifarious and prioritise the freedom and independence of the individual. Hence, personal consciousness expands to the detriment of communal consciousness. In these societies the prevailing law is restitutive; the individual who has violated social norms is

not banished but encouraged to repair the imbalance that he has created in the social order. In this case social solidarity is based on mutual and complementary demands resulting from the division of labour. However, this type of society can suffer from an excess of individualism, resulting in the loosening of social bonds.

For Durkheim, the state is perceived as superior to the individual and, as such, ultimately responsible for redressing the imbalances in society by virtue of its role as promoter of social harmony and solidarity and upholder of communal values.

Hence Durkheim identifies the state with the communal political order, defining it as 'the group of social bodies which are concerned with discussing and acting in the name of society', and when political communities reach a certain stage of complexity, they can no

longer undertake any collective action without the intervention of the state.

In primitive societies without the apparatus of a state, social solidarity is based on obscure instincts and the influence of emotions, whereas the modern state gives this primitive solidarity a strong social underpinning. Hence the state becomes 'an instrument of social justice since it is based on collective reason rather than individual emotion.' In addition, the state alone is able to give individuals liberty and guarantee their rights, on the basis of the principles of equality and objectivity upon which it is founded.(12)

Although Max Weber's approach is based on a different premise - that of social hierarchies rather than social solidarity - he shares with Durkheim the view of modern rationalism as a determinant of the nature of industrial societies and their political legitimacy. From this perspective Weber distinguishes three basic

types of hierarchy: charismatic (obedience to a particular leader), traditional (obedience to one to whom power has devolved through social custom) and rational (obedience to an abstract non-personal entity).

The last type of legitimacy is that which distinguishes modern societies, the most visible of which is a bureaucratic administration based upon specialisation of employment and technical competence, in which the individual is loyal to the state, as supreme arbiter and 'monopoliser of legitimate violence', in Weber's memorable phrase.

Weber made a link between the evolution of modern rationalism and the phenomenon of 'removing religion from the world', by which he meant the rupture with the religious view of the universe and religion as a factor in politics, which opened the way for dealing with social relations on the basis of mutual human interest and individual conventions of freedom.(13)

At this point, we must make reference to theories critical of the centralist role of the state in the work of anthropological sociologists such as the American Marshall Sahlins and the Frenchman Pierre Clastres, working in the English anthropological 'schismatic' tradition. Both these writers seek to rediscover the social/political structures of non-Western pre-modern societies in which centralising forms of the state are unknown, with the aim of elucidating the checks and balances to the vertical power paradigm rather than treating them as primitive societies from the perspective of western models.

In his book *Stone Age Economic*s (1972), Sahlins asserts that societies termed 'primitive' in traditional ethnographical studies are by no means poor or indigent. On the contrary, they are wealthy with targeted needs and their economic situation is not so much a result of historical backwardness as a

cultural choice with its own internal logic. Hence, they cannot be interpreted by means of the historical developmental model in vogue in anthropological research, which in turn is strongly influenced by the prevalent utilitarian approach of contemporary economic studies.(14)

Building on this new approach, Pierre Clastres claimed, in his celebrated work *Society against State* (1974), that the absence of the state in such societies is not a sign of inadequacy or historical backwardness but rather a question of a differing social organisation, which does not require a central authority in order to discharge its affairs or regulate its internal mechanisms. According to Clastres, we are dealing with an integrated political system, in which the ruler is subordinate to the group and in which the economic infrastructure has no political role. In such societies, social relationships are based on equality within the framework of a mutually supportive tribal structure.(15)

The schismatic school of anthropologists is represented by Evans-Pritchard, who developed his model for studying the Nuer people of southern Sudan, and Ernest Gellner, who applied the same model to the Berber tribes of the Atlas region of Morocco.

For Evans-Pritchard, schismatic societies were characterised by a fission/fusion dichotomy that prevented the emergence of a state. In such societies solidarity among small groups and perennial clashes within the larger social grouping impeded the emergence of a centralising authority.(16)

Gellner, in his important study entitled *Saints of the Atlas*, hypothesised that the Berber tribes of the Atlas region were subject to the same schismatic tendencies, with holy men filling the void left by the absence of a coercive state.(17)

One of the chief criticisms directed towards the schismatic approach is its limited and rigid view of tribal structures, which does not take account of the wider hegemonic political relationships.(18) However, in spite of these criticisms, it can be said that the schismatic school played an important role in re-interpreting social and political structures and providing a strong counterbalance to the rationalism of modern political philosophy. The theories of the schismatic school contributed to a re-appraisal of tribalism and nomadism, in opposition to the view of the state as guarantor of stability, associated with historical and ideological systematic approaches.

We will now consider some of these recent philosophical and sociological trends in an alternative paradigm that can be labelled 'The New Nomadism' approach. This term can be traced back to the contemporary French

philosopher Gilles Deleuze in his celebrated work *Against Oedipus*, in which he expounded the concept of nomadic thought in contrast to the representative coercive thought of the modern state, which proscribes and excludes difference and idiosyncrasy and promotes homogeneous identities.(19)

Deleuze observes that history is always written by sedentary urbanites in the name of the establishment, but what is needed today is a historiography from the perspective of the excluded nomads or, in other words, what he calls 'Nomadology', in contrast to the prevailing systemic uni-dimensional view of history.(20) Deleuze comments that

... history has never understood the nomad and writers have never understood the external. Throughout history the state has shaped writers' thinking. Logos, philosophy, ownership, the priority of the idea, the inner meaning of the concept, the republic of souls,

the primacy of reason, the legitimacy of man and the self. The secret desire of the state to become the blueprint for the world and to sedentarise man.(21)

On this basis, Deleuze rejects the prevailing anthropological distinction between complex state-governed societies and simple schismatic societies based on genealogical lineage. He considers that the modern state is no less schismatic in the divisions that it imposes on society. Thus, instead of talking about a centralist/schismatic dichotomy, one must distinguish between two types of schism: the primitive and flexible, and the modern and repressive.(22)

For Deleuze, society is a fluid mass of successive waves of humanity, constantly subject to control and codification according to strategies and balances of power but these

repressive structures are unable to block the lines of disengagement and the avenues of escape presented by roving nomadism.

Deleuze's ideas were developed in the 1970s in the context of his criticism of psychoanalysis and the capitalist system, on the basis of his theory of power and desire derived from Neitzsche. However, his views on nomadism have been taken up in sociological and philosophical studies in the context of renewed speculation about the state in the era of globalisation and its unprecedented challenges to the identity and structure of the nation state.

We will here mention three examples of this trend: the sociologist Michel Maffisoli's theory of 'The New Tribalism'; the Italian philosopher Tony Negri's 'Empire' (with Michael Hardt); and the French political and economic thinker Jacques Berque's thesis of 'Man as a Nomad'.

In his recently published work *Iconologies,*(23) Maffisoli contends that globalisation - contrary to accepted opinion - has not led to universal standardisation and the eroding of cultural differences. On the contrary, it has had the opposite effect and destroyed the very foundations of modernism by encouraging a reversion to pre-modern identities, recreated by means of new technology. Maffilosi terms this trend 'dynamic radicalisation', by which he means fashioning the past in post-modernist forms, as can be seen in all areas of society, ranging from politics to art and fashion.

It is clear that Western society today is in the grip of a strong nostalgia for past cultural forms and allegiances, which was the subject of study in the same author's previous book, *The Time of the Tribes*(24) . The renewal of tribalism in this context spells the end of the

major structures of modernism, whether political, economic or ideological.

From the outset, modernism has suffered from a paradox, which is rarely perceived. Modernism seeks standardisation and unity by eliminating difference and divergence through the state, which is the highest expression of the political system, as well as the protector of the individual against the group. Although modernism increases the means of social contact, it empties them of any real meaning, while post-modernism opens up opportunities for individual communication by means of the new technologies - a phenomenon which Maffilosi terms the 'New Tribalism'.

The main modernist structures with the power to unify and standardise, such as the nuclear family and the nationalist state, have collapsed and no longer have power over the fragmenting social system. This, in turn,

explains the crises that the contemporary world is experiencing such as terrorism, aversion to politics and elections, and the revival of fundamentalist movements and isolationist tendencies.

After the era of established modernism comes the post-modernist age of new nomadism. This nomadism takes many forms - professional, sexual, ideological, religious and recreational - and is expected to spread into other areas of society.

Just as the structures of modernism have changed, so have contemporary values. No longer does life revolve around the work/future/rationality axis but is increasingly concerned with aesthetic values, which prioritise the body, the imagination and recreation. These changes underlie Maffilosi's claim that 'The post-modernist era is closer to the Middle Ages than it is to the modern age, which can be seen as a deviation in human

history which has now reverted to nomadic values and forms of narrow tribal solidarity.' (25)

Rather than adopting the prevailing concept of the nation state (which emerged in Europe in the 18th century), Maffilosi draws on Michel Foucault's critique of the modern state as an autocracy, terming it a 'soft autocracy', based on the principle of comprehensive surveillance and coercion. Even if this new model of the state has succeeded in monopolising legitimate violence, the result has been the return of outlawed forms of violence through the back door under the guise of specious legitimacy. The more the state is based on rationality, the more marginalised are non-rational forms of cultural expression, which results in their return in the form of religious manifestations outside traditional social norms. (26)

On the other hand, Negri, from a neo-Marxist perspective, considers the phase beyond the nation state, which he describes as a form of new tribalism, in which the community is in a state of dynamic fragmentation.

The phase beyond the nation state is termed by Negri 'the empire', by which he does not mean - as is commonly thought - American leadership of the international community through the dynamic of globalisation but 'a decentralised non-regional system, gradually absorbing the world space within its open constantly-expanding boundaries - an empire which engenders hybrid identities, flexible hierarchies and multiple exchanges by controlling its leadership networks.' (27)

The 'empire' is a new form of politico-regional space, replacing the nation state, which has become incapable of operating cultural and economic exchanges. This is because of the change in the methods of

production that have switched from dealing with material wealth to dealing with natural and vital human desires within the framework of what Negri terms (after Foucault) 'the vital force'. This force depends on the changes in the nature of work which has become non-material and decentralised in such fields as information technology and production of linguistic and visual networks, which in turn engenders new forms of economic activity such as knowledge-based, interactive and cybernetic.

In contrast to the optimism of some contemporary perspectives, Negri views the vital force as creating new forms of exploitation and repression, which cannot be opposed by the logic of the class struggle in the traditional Marxist dialectic. This is because the empire has no centre and no exterior and is not in a fixed position or constituted as a homogeneous block. Rather it is a fusional and fissional dynamic, which highlights differences and contradictions

(whether national, economic, political or social) and creates the means to eliminate the regional links that impede its spread.

The empire has no borders but its internal divisions are flexible and constantly changing and it has the potential to constantly invent new forms of identity and varieties of knowledge and social relations(28). Because the empire has no centre, there is no way that any nation state can overcome it since external opposition is meaningless. Consequently, social conflict does not take place between different classes or opposing forces, but in the empire itself within the axis of its vital force. Negri assigns the waging of this struggle to the people (an expression borrowed from Spinoza), which is a multifarious grouping of forces, feelings and individualities, forming into networks to counter forms of exploitation and repression within the empire or, in other words, 'the living alternative which grows in the bowels of the empire.'(29) According to Negri, the potential revolution is not an

externally engineered coup d'etat but a daily grinding resistance to an unclear and obscure adversary - a situation far removed from the traditional Marxist dialectic.

The thesis of 'New Nomadism', which was put forward by the well-known French thinker Jacques Attali in his book *Man as Nomad,*(30) is based on the premise that man has always been a roamer since he appeared on earth millions of years ago and has now returned to his nomadic roots by virtue of globalisation, which has created new forms of nomadism. Hence, the period of sedentariness and city dwelling was no more than a temporary deviation in the history of mankind. Attali observes that it is nomadic man who created the critical components of civilisation - from the discovery of fire to languages, myths, agriculture, animal husbandry and navigation, and finally to the invention of the wheel, democracy, music and the arts, while sedentary man contributed castles, taxes and the state.

The nomads - contrary to common belief - were not wild and boorish destroyers of cities and civilisations but rather the creative and inventive power behind the foundation of empires - from China to Rome and from Egypt to today's American empire. In fact the lesson of history is that nations have declined and fallen when they closed their doors to strangers and nomads.

Attali believes that at a time when we are witnessing the disappearance of the original nomadic peoples because of globalisation, this same phenomenon is engendering new forms of nomadism on the strength of actual and supposed communication and transportation technologies. So, who are these new nomads? Attali answers by dividing humanity into three categories:

- Lower nomads, who are descendants of the original nomads and enforced nomads such as the homeless, migrant workers,

political refugees, itinerant workers and representatives of commercial agencies.

- Settled inhabitants, such as farmers, merchants, civil servants and functionaries, engineers, doctors, factory workers, technicians, employees, pensioners and children.

- Voluntary nomads, ie. those who voluntarily choose a roving lifestyle and who can in turn be divided into: higher nomads, such as professionals, inventors, researchers and film directors, and recreational nomads, such as tourists, athletes and sports fans.

The economic effects of globalisation have widened the gap between lower nomads and the settled inhabitants on the one hand, and between voluntary nomads on the other. Lower nomads, who until recently formed more than half the world's population, accumulate in the shanty towns in the cities of the south, distinguished by their varying religious and cultural affiliations. They either

seek to rectify their personal needs by legal or illegal employment or they rebel against the market and the empire on the basis of collective religious or social ideologies.

Voluntary nomads are the upper class, pure and simple; the lords of globalisation. They have no domicile and no permanent place of work. They are not bothered by narrow political considerations even though some of them favour a kind of universal democracy. Unbounded by any borders, they have no links with social organisations of any kind and their values are based on recreation and individual self-fulfilment.

The situation of the settled inhabitants, who are mostly employees of the state or workers in the traditional economic sectors, has become precarious. They strive in vain to reach the level of voluntary nomads but constantly fear that they will sink to the level

of lower nomads, clinging to social and national identities that threaten to disappear.

The nation state no longer has control over its resources and, little by little, tends to yield its sovereign interests to the market, in the areas of education, healthcare and security. With the exception of the American empire, which is able to set its own rules, nations will soon be transformed into oases, seeking to attract trade from passing caravans. They will be populated by settled inhabitants, in an increasingly precarious position because of their immobility, and by the lower nomads whose situation is desperate. In order to counter the destructive tendencies of the nation state, some countries - as is the case with certain European states - will seek to contain the new nomads in a single space (as, for example, in the Schengen Agreement, which aims to confine migrants to continental Asia). Meanwhile, the United States strives to expand its economic space while preserving its

national sovereignty in order to create the world's sole superpower.

However, Attali draws attention to a danger that threatens the American empire, which does not come from the competing settled empires of Europe, India or China, who are unable to dominate the world economy, but from rebellious forces at its heart and at its margins. These are not organised bands of people rising up against the American hegemony, but forces unleashed by new nomadism in competition with the American world empire. These forces are the market, religion and democracy, each of which represents a challenge to empires and nation states alike.

With regard to the market, it has actually separated from Europe and the countries of the south, and will gradually become independent of the orbit of America, which is still entrusted with its operation. Capitalism is international

by nature and will seek to become a universal power with interests, laws and requirements, distinct from those of the American empire. Higher nomads, who control the market, will strive to create a non-territorial borderless empire, which will impose its laws on all nations, including the United States. Similarly, nomadic companies will not acknowledge any territorial affiliation and no national organisations will remain except the World Trade Organization, which regulates the markets.

To counter this dire threat some countries will seek to isolate themselves from the tyranny of the market, which will be termed the empire of evil, and new totalitarian ideologies will emerge to close their borders and reject the elites. New utopias will spring up, calling for a return to simplicity and austerity, while religion will provide the fundamental restitutive power. Attali believes that Islam alone would be able to resist since the group solidarity of its believers and

comprehensive nature of its organisation are powerful enough to challenge Western cultural values, in particular the market and democracy. Islam would therefore be in a position to attract vast numbers of city dwellers and lower nomads by giving them what the market cannot viz. tangible forms of solidarity and kinship to restore their dignity and hope, and lead them out of doubt and isolation.

The third force is democracy, which presents a challenge to the American empire, economic nomadism and autocracies based on religion. The market itself engenders a demand for democracy, which ultimately leads to a call for a universal democratic empire without borders, embodying the concept of world citizenship. Many, including lower nomads, who wish to make their voice heard outside national and religious boundaries and benefit from their numerical superiority, would heed this call. City dwellers would favour regional democratic alliances (on the model of the

European Union) to stand against the hegemony of the market. Some voluntary nomads would also favour this course of action because they desire to construct borderless supra-national corporations, gradually imposing the right of human intervention and laying down a comprehensive framework for the exercise of democracy.

The above three forces, with sometimes overlapping and sometimes conflicting aims, are united in opposing the American empire and, according to Attali's prediction, will eventually overcome it.(31)

The nomadism paradigm has been applied in strategic studies in order to refute the modern-day myth of the global village, in which boundaries have been erased and regions conjoined by the action of transcontinental globalisation, with the result that nation states can no longer control movements of populations, goods and ideas.

What if the opposite were the case? What if new and more effective and far-reaching boundaries had come into existence? What about the solid border wall built by the United States on its boundary with Mexico? What of the barrier built by Israel to separate it from areas of occupied Palestinian land? What of the defensive wall constructed by the Americans in Baghdad to protect their offices and those of the Iraqi government? To these we can add the walls of the exclusion zones in Western cities populated by political refugees, illegal migrants and the socially marginalised. Even the fall of the Berlin Wall did not lead to the erasure of borders that divided the heart of Europe - as is commonly supposed - since it created a whole host of new boundaries and borders.

In the past fifteen years, tens of thousands of kilometres of new political frontiers have been created in Europe and Asia, including 2800

kms in the former Yugoslavia as a result of the Balkan wars. However, these traditional borders are no longer the only form of boundaries between nations and states, although they may be more binding than new post-modern frontiers. Traditional borders performed the dual role of acting as a dividing line at the same time as a point of contact, while modern boundaries, built on the ruins of the old concept of place, constitute a break from the traditional channels of communication.(32)

In his book *So Near So Far*, the well-known philosopher Etienne Balibar(33) shows how the breaking up of European nation states, as a result of inter-continental penetration, has undermined the traditional mechanisms that separate the national entities formed in the modern era through the organic links between people, state and nation. As a result, there has been an explosion of new types of borders implicit in the centralised structure of the state. Thus, while continental Europe has become

united economically and politically, it has become fragmented with new cultural, religious and linguistic borders. The linguistic atlases, which were compiled in the 19th century on a historical linguistic basis, are no longer valid since new linguistic paradigms have arisen, even in such traditionally centralised countries as France, where there are now more than ten languages in addition to the national language. Undoubtedly, the worst case in Europe today is Belgium, where the indicators of schism are evident in the linguistic conflict between the Flemish and Walloon languages.

In addition to these highly visible borders, there are also cultural boundaries, which have become the subject of global interest and strategic concern. On the basis of such considerations, Turkey was excluded from European Union membership even though she had fulfilled nearly all of the conditions for accession, including secular political choice.

There are also surveillance boundaries that have come to fulfil the functions of territorial borders. New surveillance technologies are more effective and more deadly than traditional borders and perform the same function in a more indirect way. Michel Foucault investigated the surveillance and retributive systems of the modern state, commenting that techniques of physical coercion had been replaced by control techniques that direct people's lives and guide their desires and their ideas - a system that has reached its apogee in the present era. There are also new borders resulting from the break-up of the traditional family unit, which is no longer based on the traditional division of the sexes but takes on other intersecting forms within and between the genders.

Therefore, it is not the case that globalisation has erased borders and united the world and made 'the earth flat', in the words of Thomas

Friedman.(34) On the contrary, the cycle of sedentary city dwelling has come to an end and man has returned to his preferred nomadism, with its wider space and its new boundaries.

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Tribalism, Ethnicity and Religion

Abdul-Rahman Al-Salimi

O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! The noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Lo! Allah is Knower, Aware.(1)

Nomadism has played a major role in the life of Arabs and Muslims throughout history. It was a way of life that was widely spread between two major nations that significantly contributed to the historical Islamic experience: the Arabs and the Turks. Some researchers discussed this experience in their studies, talking about the rise and collapse of civilisations, and some talked about its spread and civilisational transformation in the classical history of nations. Those who dealt

with this topic in modern times took into consideration, while talking about nomads and urbanites, Qur'anic references, Ibn Khaldun's fanaticism theory and the studies, travels and comments of Western geographers and anthropologists concerning Arab countries and Muslims over the last two centuries.

In fact, Qur'anic references to nomads or urbanities dealt with the attitudes of many groups towards the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), faith, Islam and the Holy Qur'an. The references condemned nomadic life patterns but somehow also appeared to condemn the nomadic mentality, which systematically refused to be part of a group, society or state. Instead, this mentality inclines to conflict and favours a life of poverty and difficulty rather than the comfort of family and town or city. This is why the Qur'an calls for *hegira* (migration) because the meaning of the singular form of the word *(hagara)* in the Saba'ai Arabic dictionary, which is the Arabic language of the south pre Islam, is 'settlement

in an urban place'. Accordingly, the neighbourhood, cooperation and good relationships prevail among those people living together and prove stronger than tribal relationships. Thus, the idea of loyalty to tribal relationships will be replaced by loyalty to the one united diverse community (a group of true believers) who believe in the same principle. Therefore, the purpose of gathering in one town or city was not only for defensive reasons, which were important during the first stages of Islam, but also for establishing new patterns of life.

However, the first year of the Prophet's arrival in Yathrib (known later as Al-Madinah) shows the mechanisms applied for the transfer to city life. *Hegira* means settlement but it does not mean abandoning inherited Arabian structure. There is a difference between nomadism and tribalism.

In the era of Al-Madinah, the Prophet (PBUH) established a community of true

believers that represented a community made up of the people of Yathrib and migrants. This community took care, through its leaders and dignitaries, of the responsibility of relationships with other nomadic and urban groups. However, the tribal relationship group maintained its role of protecting rights and solidarity. For example, *Banu Auf* (sons of Auf) vied in supporting with one another, and the other tribes of *Aws* and *Khazraj* did likewise. Thus, the Islamic experience dealt with that reality but it gave a different example of a gathering that was unique in its unity and supreme authority. The new gathering adopted the positive values of intimate tribal relationships, the care of relatives and sharing responsibilities, and then it replaced the tribal spirit with faith in the context of the political and new Madinah groups.

In its first comparison of negatives and positives between Islam and nomadism, the Holy Qur'an classified all patterns of human life under two rules: competition and

acquaintance. The competition resulting from rivalry and desires of dominance is totally negative because it encourages competitors, winners and losers, even if they belong to different groups, to come together to defend themselves and achieve their goals.

For had it not been for Allah's repelling some men by means of others, cloisters and churches and oratories and mosques, wherein the name of Allah is oft mentioned, would assuredly have been pulled down(2).

Competition in this sense is human nature that finally leads to balance after the failure of the challenger in achieving dominance or desired goals. Undoubtedly, this kind of competition or gathering for attacking or defending is based on a party spirit from both sides and is a tribal spirit, or in modern terms ethnicity.

Some Western sociologists and anthropologists wanted to differentiate between the Western assembly and its Arab Islamic counterpart. They stated that the Western assembly is unionist and consolidative while the other is separatist and sporadic. Thus, according to this theory, the former succeeds in establishing and living in states while the latter fails in establishing states of equality because of its separatist nature and because it needs stability and continuity for one of two reasons: dictatorial authority or to maintain fragile peace by negotiation, cooperation and continuous balance. In fact, mankind's assembly is diverse but without occasional consolidative and separatist units, here and there and although there are tribal conflicts between Arabs or Africans, there are ethnic conflicts between Europeans that lead to world wars.

The Holy Qur'an provides the solution for ethnic and tribal spirit conflicts and its recognition, which means exchanged

recognition of specifics and interests. Thus, differences are inherited in human nature and, therefore, recognition and familiarity are the means to rise and progress. Although differences and diversity imply rivalry, scientific, political and economic developments impose another view, which is the recognition to avoid partial and comprehensive wars for the good of mankind. Thus, this view is the opposite of superiority, dominance and arrogance.

The first logic, the logic of dominance, implies the existence of masculine and feminine differences, and differences between nations and tribes, which lead to disputes, wars and instability. On the other hand, the second logic conforms to the necessity of human development and the balance and culture of countries. It is the logic of recognition based on logical dialogue that recognizes peculiarities and differences, which tilizes differences and does not try to reject them. We see incomplete experiences in classic Islamic

communities, which are distinguished by their ethnic and religious diversity eg. Al-Andalus. Moreover, the experience of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights can be used as a foundation to replace rivalry and conflict through dialogue and recognition.

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1) Pickthal's translation of the Holy Qur'an.

2) Surat Al Haj verse no. 44, Pickthal's translation of the Holy Qur'an.

Tribalism: the Key to Understanding Arab Society, Present and Future

Al-Arousi Al-Amri

The conventional view of sociologists and academics used to be that tribalism would be swept away by the momentous events of the past two centuries as a result of colonialism and the introduction of the capitalist system in countries of the south, including the Arab world; regionalism and its effect on society at the local level; and, finally, the social and economic effects of modernism and globalisation.

Yet today we find that tribalism has endured in the face of these events and, contrary to expectations, has become a significant part of the contemporary scene whether in Sudan (Darfur), Iraq (Al-Anbar and Najaf) or even in

Arabian Gulf states such as Kuwait, where tribal affiliation played a not-inconsiderable role in recent legislative elections.

In the Arab world the consensus of the intellectual and political elite has been that with the onward march of modernism, tribalism would be replaced by other concepts such as citizenship and nationalism. As President Habib Bourguiba ringingly declared on the eve of Tunisia's independence from France, 'You were nothing but fragmented individuals but I will make you into a nation, after we have got rid of tribalism and sectarianism.' Sociolinguists confidently predicted that social class would replace tribalism in the Arab world, drawing on the sociological theory that the feudal and primitive concept of community would fade away with the spread of liberal capitalism.

In this paper I will attempt to sketch the features of tribalism in the contemporary Arab

world through two case studies, one in Darfur and one in Iraq, in the hope that, taken together, these will present a comprehensive view of how tribalism is located in Arab social and political structures. Secondly, I will seek to bring out hidden aspects of tribalism and their continuity, whether in hierarchical or other forms of tribalism. My overriding aim is, thus, to lay bare the foundations of tribalism and ascertain its effects on the workings of Arab society now and in the future.

The Tribal Scene: Past and Present

Tribalism is the innermost building block of Arab communities and the feature that gives Arab society its distinctive character, in the same way that class can be said to be the defining feature of European society. When Jacques Berque entitled his magnum opus *The Arab Maghreb from the 15th to the 19th Century* he was referring directly to tribalism. As a sociological researcher, his lifelong

interest in tribalism stemmed from 1932 when his father, who was a senior French government official during the period of Algerian colonialism, sent him to the remote desert region of Al-Hudna in Algeria. Here Jacques Berque came to know the indigenous (to use an expression beloved of sociologists) tribes of 'the desert and the mountains'.

The behaviour of Jacques Berque's father towards his son is profoundly significant for it reveals the desire of the occupying power to know the innermost secrets of the occupied people in order to tighten its hold on them. To be fair to Jacques Berque, this was not his motivation, but his father's attitude is typical of colonial campaigns that were both military and scientific in nature. The scientific aspect was generally represented by a team of anthropologists and sociologists who prepared the ground for a military victory through information gathering according to well-established field techniques and methods. Although the motivation for these studies was

undoubtedly political and imperialistic, they nevertheless added to the stock of academic knowledge. On this basis tribal surveys were carried out in the Arab Maghreb during the colonial period with the aim of providing the occupying power with the most detailed information of remote desert areas, as well as settled conurbations. The former areas, referred to as *as-seeba,* were generally far from the centre of power and characterised by lawlessness and subversion, while the latter, known as *al-makhzan*, were loyal to the occupying authority and in return benefited from cash handouts and employment.

This was the traditional tribal picture in the Arab Maghreb, which evolved over hundreds of years, but can the same be said for today? Do the same conditions apply to those who wish to penetrate Arab society in order to find its strengths and weaknesses? In order to answer these questions, let us turn our attention to the contemporary situation in the eastern part of the Arab world.

Iraqi Tribalism: Loyalty or Disaffection?

After their invasion of Iraq in 2003, when the American military were faced with the prospect of engaging politically with the 'indigenous inhabitants' (it is noticeable that the terminology has not changed a jot), the decision makers in the American administration became convinced of the need to deal with the subject of the local tribes in order to gain an insight into the Iraqi community. Accordingly, Colonel Alan King, a senior official in the Defense Department, went to Iraq with the delicate mission of forging close links between the American military and Iraqi tribes. The initial area of operations was the region between Tikrit and Kirkuk, strategically important since the oil pipeline passed through it. After this first test phase, sociological researchers such as Ishaq Naqqash and Amizia Karam advised the Bush government not to neglect the tribal dimension

if they wished to tighten their grip on Iraqi society. They added, 'The military victory is easy; much more difficult is to gain control of the community.' These researchers were clearly mindful of the way the tribes (mostly of Arab origin from the Yemen and the Arabian Peninsula) rose up against British colonialism in the 1920s. The power of these tribes was never broken in spite of the thousands of tribesmen killed - a large number by the standards of the time. In 1958 the tribes returned to the fray once again, in opposition to the government of Abdul Karim Qasem, which plotted to deprive them of their traditional lands.

Dealings between the Ba'ath Party and the Tribes

The period of Ba'ath rule was characterised by shifting alliances between the government and the tribes according to the degree of engagement or disengagement between the

party and Iraqi society. The more long-running periods of veiled and secret struggle were interspersed by shorter periods of open conflict. An example of the hidden conflict was the decision by Saddam Hussein to grant the title of sheikh (or head of a tribe) to all those whom the government wished to use against the real sheikhs in order to undermine their authority. The exponential increase in the use of the title had the intended effect of trivialising both the title as well as marginalising its holders, resulting in a loss of their credibility in the eyes of the Iraqi people. The number of titles of sheikh conferred by Saddam Hussein eventually reached 7380, as revealed in the archives of the former regime and considered to be highly useful by the American military in their efforts to gain control of the country.

In point of fact, the list was only of limited use, as Alan King discovered after contacting three thousand sheikhs and realising that only

a hundred of them were tribal heads, if indeed their claims were to be believed.

A second more blatant aspect of Saddam Hussein's dealings with the tribal leaders was his earnest appeal to Iraqis to abstain from using their tribal affiliation in their identities. Saddam Hussein himself set the example by omitting his tribal name of Al-Tikriti and becoming known as only Saddam Hussein. This became the practice for two decades, during the 1970s and 1980s, until external circumstances changed in the 1990s, leading to a change of heart by the government towards the tribal question. The aim now was to restore the bonds between the people (with their tribes) and the Ba'ath party as the country united around the threat of external aggression. Tribalism once more became part of the fabric of daily life, being in evidence on such occasions as wedding feasts and circumcision festivals. Some newspapers supportive of the regime went so far as to praise certain tribal leaders for their valour against foreign

aggressors from the Sumerian era up to the present time.

The picture sketched above of the tribal situation in the modern era is not essentially different from that of 19th-century Algeria. Whether we are dealing with the Atlas Mountains or desert wastes or the banks of the Euphrates, from the west to the east of the Arab world the same elements are always present - colonial (or external) power, national (state) power and tribal (local) power, with patterns of alliance and misalliance constantly shifting according to historical circumstances.

Tribal Allegiance: the Shi'a Tribes in Iraq

The question of allegiance and the relationship between tribe and government differs between Shi'a and Sunni tribes in one important respect, which is that Shi'a tribes have a more tightly woven religious

organisation than their Sunni counterparts. This hierarchical structure gave the Shi'a tribes an immediate advantage over the Sunni tribes right from the outbreak of the war and the beginning of the occupation in terms of bargaining power. Ayatollah Sistani was able play realpolitik because of the need to weaken those ideologically committed to Saddam Hussein and encourage the hope that supreme power in Iraq could be in the grasp of the Shi'a.

This 'decorous' allegiance with the Americans lasted long enough to see Al-Maliki take power. By giving the Shi'a the opportunity to gain power, even though by constitutional and electoral means, the Americans expected a full-scale civil war, especially since the Sunni had been so cleverly and comprehensively outmanoeuvred by democratic means (elections, constitution, laws, consultative procedures). However after this period of open allegiance between Ayatollah Sistani and the occupier, the Shi'a

tribes began to have reservations about his policy and began to rally around the forces of Moqtada Sadr, thus changing from alliance to misalliance. One could argue that the allegiance between the Shi'a and the Americans was never really interrupted since Al-Maliki's coming to power represented a continuation of that allegiance at least at the level of government. Nevertheless, the conflicts that broke out between Moqtada Sadr's forces and Al-Maliki's police and regular army are indicative of a continuation of disaffection among the Shi'a tribes.

It should be said that the concepts of loyalty and disaffection often overlap and are not entirely separable. The first sign of this was when the first crack appeared in the coalition of Shi'a tribes, with some tribal leaders expressing reservations about the Ayatollah's pro-American stance. The second - and more visible and damaging - rupture was the military stand-off that developed between Al-Maliki as head of the government,

representing a number of tribal groupings in which Shi'a tribes played a restricted role, and the Najaf-based Al-Mahdi army.

Sunni Tribes in Iraq

We previously alluded to the fierce opposition to British colonialism and the high price paid in blood by the tribes at the beginning of the 20th century. From this earlier disaffection, we now turn our attention to tribal allegiances in the succeeding periods, which affected all tribes in the same way.

At the beginning of the occupation some Sunni tribes showed their loyalty when the Shammar tribes proposed that their tribal leader, Ghazi Al-Wa'r, be head of the new regime in Iraq. This post entailed many responsibilities during the transitional period, as well as notional submission to the American occupation. It was said that the Shammar tribe

numbered six hundred thousand but some, like Professor Saad Naji Jawad Al-Saati of Baghdad University, considered that this figure was exaggerated. Whatever the number, the tribes - or at least a good proportion of them - fell into line behind their representative without a murmur of dissent. However, according to press reports after the initial military campaign, when the Americans tried to win over these same tribes, they spurned their overtures and with a great deal of fanfare pledged their allegiance to the Sunni First Minister, Iyyad Al-Alawi.

The same kind of conniving attitude was shown by tribes that released a group of hostages from the clutches of the rebels. In 2004, Sheikh Hisham Najem Al Hassan Al-Dulaimi announced that he would intervene with his tribe (the Muhamada) to free four hostages (two Japanese and two Russians). The tribe was playing the role of local expert with detailed knowledge of the remotest corners of the country as represented by its

wise and all-powerful leader who operated with a mixture of ruthlessness and compassion. The above mentioned, rival of the leader of the two hundred and fifty thousand–strong Bani Aamer tribe in the Rashidiyya region, publicly intervened in front of the European press to resolve a dispute between two branches of this tribe that had erupted over a woman. This in itself shows the extent to which tribalism had infiltrated into society at that time. However, the factor of tribal allegiance was not only operational in the social sphere but also in the political, and sometimes took the form of armed conflict.

A significant number of Sunni tribes signed up to the creation of the Al-Anbar Salvation Council, among whose less publicised aims was the containment of Al-Qaeda. For a large cross-section of Iraqi society, Al-Qaeda constituted a national resistance movement, and some said that this council was set up at the insistence of the Americans in hope of deflecting attacks by Sunni tribes against

American forces towards Al-Qaeda itself. Al-Anbar had been the heartland of resistance against the occupying forces and the Americans also tried to woo the tribal leaders in the province of Salah Ed-Din, traditionally loyal to Saddam Hussein. It is impossible to explicate patterns of shifting loyalties and allegiances in the early years of occupation without factoring in the variables of tribal tactical positioning according to circumstances.

By nudging a large proportion of the Sunni tribes into opposing Al-Qaeda (or what was referred to as 'terrorism'), the Americans hoped to achieve a domino effect, in which increasing defections and in-fighting would lead to a collapse of the tribal coalition.

The Americans encouraged the Sunni tribes to coordinate their efforts by establishing the Al-Anbar Salvation Council, which came into being on 17th October 2006 in Al-Ramadi. As

its political role expanded, the council came to be known as the Sahwa Council, under the leadership of Abdul Sattar Abu Risha, and its jurisdiction was extended to cover Ba'quba in the province of Diyala. The Americans hoped that their tactic of encouraging the Sunni tribes to oppose Al-Qaeda and support the American military would succeed, and their hopes were greatly bolstered when many tribal leaders signed the Tikrit Agreement in the province of Salah Ed-Din (homeland of Saddam Hussein). Their plans received a setback when the new council's president, Sheikh Hamid Ibrahim Salem Al-Jabouri, ran into stiff opposition from tribal leaders from Tikrit itself. Sheikh Al-Jabouri, who was of the Abu Nasr tribe of Biji, summoned a meeting in the Saddam Hussein Mosque in Tikrit at which the attending tribes agreed to exclude the boycotting tribes from participating in the council. A few days later Al-Jabouri's house was destroyed by the Sunni opposition and four of his sons were abducted.

A subsequent leader of the Al-Anbar Salvation Council, Sheikh Ali Hatim Al-Dulaimi, announced that the government would not support united initiatives undertaken by the council, representative of thirty-two thousand Sunni tribesmen of different tribal affiliations in Al-Anbar. The reason was that the government wished to deal directly with the tribes on an individual basis, fearing that negotiations would be difficult with a united tribal block.

These patterns of allegiance and disaffection show the extent to which the tribal factor became part of the Iraqi political scene. We shall see in the section on Sudan how tribal relationships were played out against a background of economic and social factors in the 1970s and 1980s, taking on a more overtly political character in a subsequent phase that was characterised by violent and protracted armed conflict.

Sudanese Tribes: the Economic and Social Imperative

In this section we shall focus on the Darfur tribes, whose numbers vary between five and six million. Darfur tribes can be divided into African and Arab tribes, although this binary classification is overly reductive since the actual situation is considerably more complex. Many tribes are African in origin but Arabic in language and culture, and Islamic in religious orientation. There are also Christian African tribes related to Arab tribes by bonds of intermarriage.

Academic studies unanimously reject the binary classification but reports and other media-based writings that tend towards propaganda adopt a more superficial and reductive approach to the subject.

In order to understand the nature of Sudanese tribalism we must consider the natural environment and living conditions. The ambient environment is characterised by scarcity of water and restriction of cultivation potential because of desertification. The climate is dry and there is a lack of animal pasture. Taken together, the effect of these factors is devastating when we consider that the tribal economy in Darfur depends on peasant farming for settled tribes and animal husbandry and pastoralism for nomadic tribes. It is clear from this brief survey that the main determinant in intertribal relationships is the search for sustenance, often at a minimal level of subsistence.

If education and instruction was generally available at all levels, this would mitigate the harsh conditions of existence, but this is not the case, with only a third of girls and only 44.5% of boys in full-time education. In the absence of educational and cultural support to help overcome the severity of the environment, the productive base is restricted

by the infertile soil and subsistence pastoralism. In short the tribal economy in Darfur is an economy based on self-sufficiency, not open to primary accumulation, which is a prerequisite for a growing economy.

In the light of these economic conditions, it is possible to identify two socio-economic groups in Darfur: settled peasant farmers, who use traditional cultivation techniques, and nomadic pastoralists, who are constantly searching for pastures and water for their flocks of cattle and camels.

The harsh natural environment in which these two groups live out their daily lives is sufficient to account for the outbreak of social tensions among tribes in two respects. Firstly, the fact that existence is primarily at subsistence level, and secondly the lack of adequate cultural and educational support to break the cycle of hunger and thirst. These two external factors - rather than internal

individual or collective attempts at dominance - account for the violent and lawless nature of intertribal relationships in Darfur. Far from being able to practice tribal responsibilities, they are in the remit of the central and provincial governments who need to ensure a minimum nutritional level. Thus we find that the majority of tribal conflicts in Darfur centre on basic issues such as water wells, grazing areas and transhumance or nomadic rights.

These economic determinants of conflict or conciliation, and war or peace between tribes, are essentially the same that govern individual and collective relationships within or between tribes. Disputes arise over control of water resources and ownership of wealth and property - the same critical situations that can be observed in African farming tribes and which face nomadic pastoral tribes.

In the first two decades following independence, social needs were not addressed

through a vertical axis between the centre (Khartoum) and the periphery, but through a horizontal axis of tribal conflict. These conflicts operated on three levels: between African and Arab tribes, within the same type of tribe (according to the complex parameters discussed above) or even within the same tribe. In these two decades, conflict was primarily socially and economically determined and had not taken on political overtones either at intertribal or tribal/governmental levels.

The Pre-political Era: the 'Leopard Man' and Conflict Resolution

Overall, Darfur comprises approximately eighty tribes, of which the principal African tribes are: Massaleit, Dajo, Berti, Zaghawa, Meidob, Mayma, Buju, Tama, Mararit and Tanjur. The principal Arab tribes are Habaniya, Beni Hussein, Zeiyadiya, Beni Helba, Humur, Khuzam, Khawabeer, Beni

Jarar, Mahameed, Djawama, Rezeigat and Ma'aliya. For the previously mentioned reasons, relations between these tribes have always been tense but in the pre-political era disputes centred around mutual plundering and property theft with victory going to the strongest, until the central government stepped in to restore order. However, during this period a number of customs and traditions were in force, especially in the more remote areas.

Disputes and conflicts between tribes or between sections of the same tribe were submitted to the tribal council, which consisted of tribal elders who were wise and sometimes charismatic individuals who used peaceful techniques of amicable persuasion to resolve matters in the public interest. Even if disputants came to blows, the weapons used were traditional ones that had been used down the centuries in tribal conflicts, such as spears, sticks, and bows and arrows. In order to pre-empt the recourse to force, intermediaries were

often used. Writing of the Nur tribes in Darfur in 1937, Evans-Pritchard discusses the relatively civilised use of a 'leopard man' ie. a man who wore a leopard skin, not as a symbol of force but as a sign that the disputants were prepared to heed his advice to resolve disputes peacefully and amicably, a method of conflict resolution agreed upon by all tribes.

This is not to say that violence was never used in tribal conflicts but simply to point out that peaceful resolution of disputes was the traditional means of promoting intertribal stability in the pre-political era. The onus today is on the national government to restore these values in tribal society through the spread of education from pre-primary to university levels. This is easier said than done, and the introduction of universal education is only part of a massive infrastructural campaign to encourage political development at a local level in order to control the present violence and lawlessness.

Rising Political Tension: the Background

The current topographical and climatic environment in which the Darfur tribes live is conducive to the resolution of conflict by violence of arms, but it has to be said that over the centuries there evolved natural laws that governed life in a desert climate characterised by drought, scarcity of water and the presence of sandy and unproductive soils. However, in addition to natural disasters that overtook the region in a random and haphazard manner, we have to add another factor that has become increasingly serious in recent decades viz. the spread of industrialisation in Western countries, which has created a loss of balance in the environment, particularly in polar and desert regions. The environmental context of the region we are dealing with has, accordingly, become much more complex since we now have to deal with the global as well the local level.

An additional factor that contributed to the rise in political tensions was the influx of automatic weapons into the region. This is a fact seldom commented upon and one is entitled to ask, 'Could this be because the West is the main manufacturer and seller of such weapons?' This is a relevant question since it is the West that dictates whether such issues are raised at a global level. The 'southern' countries generally do not have the means to bring these matters to the attention of world public opinion and herein lies the conundrum. We can attribute the rising political tensions in the region to the area being flooded with lethal weapons but others can reply that they are attributable to climatic and environmental factors such as desertification, drought and lack of water resources, all of which inevitably lead to tribal instability. However, the importation of weapons is a man-made problem that aggravates the situation, while the latter is the work of nature against which man is powerless.

A third factor is that the tribes find themselves in a vicious circle from which they cannot escape. They will only be able to turn their lives around and improve their quality of life through development aid and assistance provided by the central and regional governments. Many surveys and studies indicate that the central government is not doing enough in this regard, but it should be mentioned that the central government itself is surrounded by competing regional states, presenting it with substantial challenges. It is reasonable to suggest that at the very least the national government should limit the ambitions of the great powers with regard to its internal affairs.

Phases of the Crisis

The successive disputes that broke out among the Darfur tribes were indicative of a

tribal phenomenon referred to in some theories as bilateral conflict. According to Robert Montagne, the French sociologist and anthropologist, this bilateral conflict provides a balance of power in the general tribal context, which is achieved by means of mutual surveillance between a tribe and its neighbour. This regime of mutual surveillance can be said to have a political value and we can even say that republican systems are founded on this basis. It is a principle that limits aggression and the spread of injustice. It is not surprising that Robert Montagne talked of 'Berber republics' in his book on the Berber tribes of the Atlas Mountains published in 1927. Montagne postulated a method of tribal coexistence that differs sharply from the rise in political tensions between the tribes of Darfur. It would appear that tribes possess a reservoir of goodwill on which they can draw in suitable conditions in order to ensure conditions of general stability. It is this that has led many to ask, 'Are the political systems in existence today inevitable or could there be some alternative form of government, the key to

which lies in tribal societies, which generally coexist peacefully, except when other contingent factors prevent that?'

Clearly Montagne's model of bilateral conflict cannot be applied in the case of the Darfur tribes since their conflicts have gone beyond two tribes and become multilateral. This hypothesis is confirmed by an account of tribal conflicts in the region, which is multilateral as well as bilateral in nature. In this account we will rely on the work by David Hoyle (see bibliography) that details these conflicts since the 1950s. We will sketch the main features of this process in the light of Hoyle's work, according to the theoretical perspectives of anthropology, sociology and political science.

The decades of the 1970s and 1980s in Darfur were marked by tribal unrest, which was economic and social in nature. 'Social' is used in the sense of a community not

necessarily a polity. Thus we are using the term in its conventional and not its colloquial or literary sense. This clarification is necessary since anthropological and sociological studies tend to give the term 'society' a political dimension (see the work of Pierre Clastres) and even more so in the use of the term 'state'.

The following phase (1990-2003) can be characterised as a political phase since from 1989 onwards tribal tensions began to be described as political conflicts, in particular with regard to the following events:

·   1990: the establishment of the People's Liberation Army under the leadership of Daud Bilad

·   1996: serious conflicts between two major tribes, the Zurayqat and the Zaghawa.

·   1997–1999: serious conflicts between the Massaleit and certain Arab tribes.

The 1990s were marked by the increasing use of weaponry to a much greater extent than in previous decades, as well as the creation of political movements whose programs overlapped with tribal agendas. This second phase was a period in which tribal issues came to dominate the political agenda and whose ramifications began to spread outside Darfur and even outside the borders of Sudan.

During the third and final phase (2003 to the present), tribal conflicts began to take on regional and even international dimensions, with interventions by neighbouring states such as Chad and the Central African Republic, as well as by sister states and organisations (in the form of the League of Arab States and attempts by Libya to narrow the differences between Chad and Sudan in 2007). There were also great power interventions under the pretext of 'the right to intervene' in the name of human rights, a principle proposed by Ronald Dumas, French Foreign Minister in the Mitterand era. This principle is also applied by

Bernard Kouchner, French Foreign Minister in the Sarkozy government.

Lastly, we should mention the initiative of the United Nations, the global forum used by the United States in pursuit of its policy of intervening in all parts of the world, which has led to a serious escalation in the situation in Darfur and still continues at the present time. The regional repercussions of this escalation have led neighbouring states into 'tribal' confrontations that are multilateral in nature, such as the hostilities that broke out between Sudan and Chad as a result of tribal conflicts spilling over their borders. For example, the Salamat tribe, which is African and Muslim, has a presence on both sides of the border in Darfur and Chad. When the situation became critical, the Darfur section of this tribe took refuge with their brothers in Chad. They, in turn, helped form a resistance movement composed of tribal refugees fleeing the harsh conditions of drought and famine in Darfur. Analysts state that factors motivating tribes to

flee from Darfur were twofold. On the one hand, military or semi-military repression such as that carried out by the Janjaweed groups (armed groups composed of Arab tribesmen) and on the other hand, the harsh climatic and economic conditions in Darfur. If we recall the terrible drought in the Darfur region in 1984/5, which resulted in a hundred thousand deaths, we can easily imagine the pitiless landscape where rain does not fall for eighteen months at a time, inevitably leading to competition for scarce resources and tribal conflict. During that drought the mostly Arab pastoral tribes, after their fruitless search for pasture, were forced to settle in the lands of farming tribes, who resisted their incursions by force of arms. A further factor causing tribes to flee was the armed intervention of the central government, leading tribes to seek refuge with their brethren across national borders.

As a result of these tribal displacements, relations between Sudan and Chad have deteriorated sharply and the two countries

have come close to open warfare, with mutual accusations of incitement of tribal unrest and encouraging sedition being traded, not to mention the charges of training and equipping rebel armies. The crisis between the two countries reached its peak when the Chadian rebels took themselves to the seat of President Idris Dibbi's government in Chad.

Sudan's relations with several of its neighbouring states have become strained, with forty-eight thousand inhabitants from Darfur fleeing to the Central African Republic and two hundred and thirty-two thousand to Chad (according to United Nations' estimates). Tensions have also spilled over the border into Ethiopia where the Armed Darfur Movement has relocated under the banner of Imra Muhammad Abdurrahman Musa Abu Sirra. These neighbouring states also complained about the failure to treat tribal issues at their economic and social roots through a policy of comprehensive development, without infringing individual or communal freedom so

as to encourage social inclusion through education and acculturation.

The other aspect to this third phase was the international ramification of the situation in Darfur, with the consequent threat to the unity of Sudan and the continuation of the political regime. The Darfur question took on an international dimension when the great powers began to use it to draw up a charge sheet against the Sudanese government. It was even hinted that borders should be redrawn on the grounds that the presence of a single tribe in both Sudan and Chad was inherently destabilising. It was recalled that African tribes had fled to join their brethren in neighbouring Chad in a state of terror, subsequently forming an armed rebel movement. Chad became the launching point for military operations into the Darfur region, at the insistence of Western powers, which helped arm the rebels. This, in turn, provoked the Janjaweed into pursuing them into Chadian territory. Some observers feel that the

deteriorating relationship between Sudan and Chad warrant United Nations or international intervention on the grounds of human rights violations. Justification for such intervention is not hard to find in view of the flight of refugees from Darfur into Chad, the stoking of dissensions in Darfur by the Chadian government and the dire state of relations between Chad and Sudan. The upshot is that the Sudanese regime now faces a charge of genocide and may be required to appear before the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

Summary

The social and economic imperative dictated that the Darfur tribes should be permitted to live in dignity in a secure and stable environment. The fact that this was not provided by the central or regional governments led to an outbreak of tribal disputes, which would previously have been settled by traditional methods. With the

outbreak of armed conflict in the 1990s (the second phase), the situation became politicised and volatile, and from 2003 took on regional and international dimensions (the third phase).

During the long period from 1950-1990, which we have labeled that of the 'economic and social imperative', tribal dissensions could have been addressed if the Sudanese authorities had provided the necessary economic and educational infrastructure, which would have mitigated tribal dislocation. The central argument of my doctoral dissertation (defended in 1991 at Université VII Paris) is that dislocation and disequilibrium in Arab society can generally be traced back to the tribe. The solution, however, is not to destroy the tribe but rather the factors that hinder the dynamic of self-development. Indeed, tribal culture possesses many features that are worth preserving and cherishing, such as honour, chivalry, pride, respect for one's word, loyalty, good neighbourliness and respect for the aged, as

well as traditions of consultation, brotherliness and solidarity in difficult times etc. However, this stock of tribal wisdom was not utilised, nor was the social and economic imperative addressed by means of wise policies with the resultant adverse consequences for the whole of Sudanese society.

The tribal scenario in Iraq differs from that of Sudan because of the factor of national loyalty. This evolved through the long war that Iraq entered into with the West and some of its neighbours under the regime of Saddam Hussein. It is clear that tribalism played a major role in shaping nationalism in Iraq if we accept the current period in which tribes have vacillated between allegiance and disaffection. The common thread between Iraqi tribes - for all their diversity - has been the phenomenon of national resistance. Tribalism has thus risen above its inherent divisiveness and mutated into a kind of social inclusiveness, above and beyond parochialism or the bonds of kinship. In contrast, the scenario in Sudan is murky and

indistinct, in the absence of a national issue around which northern and western tribes can unite. Tribalism might have followed the same route in Sudan if the central government had developed the educational, economic and social infrastructure in Darfur, the effect of which would have been to divert tribes away from their fixation with territorial and kinship issues.

Tribal bonds do not necessarily have to be so close and it is possible to imagine more mixed patterns of intermarriage between the black African tribes and the Bedouin Arab tribes. Accordingly, it is possible to discern at least four types of tribal affiliation in Darfur:

·	Originally Arab tribes eg. Djawama, Zeiyadiya, Rezeigat and Beni Hussein

·	Assimilated Arab tribes that have adopted Arabic as a means of communication

·	Half-assimilated Arab tribes

·   African non-Arab tribes that have no contact with Arabic and no intermarriage with other tribes

The above classification of predominantly Arab tribes indicates the direction in which the Sudanese could move, always remembering that a tribe's African roots must be respected and developed through traditions and values that have the effect of leading the individual to adopt the principle of citizenship and the public interest rather than narrow tribal and factional loyalty. The African tribes of Massaleit, Yirti, Mima, Tama and Kanein have a store of tribal culture that could be utilised to fashion a distinctive and multilayered national identity, combining both Arabic and Nilotic linguistic and cultural elements.

Our vision of a future tribal scenario is one in which the national government implements far-reaching reforms while respecting individual and group freedom, including

freedom of expression, freedom of association and employment, based on universal justice free from the negative and injurious regional, factional or kinship alliances, which have had such a deleterious effect on the fabric of society, whether in Iraq or Sudan.

Conclusion

The structure of present-day tribal society as a result of developments over the period 1950-2008 suggests that a traditional schismatic analysis is no longer adequate to explain the complex and mysterious phenomenon of the tribe. The tribe, which is the object of our research, whether in Darfur, or Al-Anbar or Najaf, is that familiar construct in Arab history based on the well-known schismatic paradigm 'I against my brother; my brother and I against my cousin; I, my brother and my cousin against the tribal subdivision.' The schismatic principle has dissolved in the face of new realities, which have outpaced the traditional

tribal mechanisms of conflict resolution. These new realities centre on the competition for economic, political and cultural influence at local, regional, national and international levels.

Over the past half century, the 'old' tribe has been replaced by a 'new' tribe, which participates in elections in Kuwait, contributes to the democratic process in Mauritania and is involved in multi-party systems in Algeria and Morocco. This is testimony to the adaptability of the tribe and its ability to join the trend of modernisation without losing its fundamental values of kinship and territoriality in Arab society, which now attaches less value to the traditional tribal qualities of honour, chivalry, loyalty, respect for religion, reverence for the elderly, courtesy to women, solidarity, respect for lineage and magnanimity.

The Arab tribe has adapted to the trend of modernisation but it has paid a heavy price,

losing its soul in the process. The modern tribesman now has employment and deals with financial and economic matters, learns foreign languages, wears a suit, holds degree certificates, drives a car and is computer literate etc. Which brings us to consideration of the future of Arab society - will it be based on tribalism with its attendant features of group affiliation and noble lineage, or will it be based on class with the advantages it confers of social and economic mobility? Or will it be a blend of the two?

To put it another way, how will tribalism and class intersect in Arab society in the future? How far will this be dictated by external (foreign) influences and how far by internal (adaptive) influences? The class paradigm has a number of defining features: the written contract is privileged over word of mouth, the language of self-interest is privileged over the language of solidarity, utilitarianism trumps aesthetics and the search for power is at the expense of ethics. These are the symptoms of

the liberal model, which is slowly gaining ascendancy. But, meanwhile, tribalism endures in Arab society and shows signs of staying power in the Arab world in contrast to medieval hierarchical structures and tribal and military alliances, which composed the social fabric of European society before the advent of capitalism. The panoply of medievalism was swept away by the Renaissance in the 15th century, the French Revolution of 1789 and the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century, which, taken together, altered the whole basis of society and ushered in a new social order.

Is the class-based society, with its emphasis on the public good and its uncompromisingly materialistic orientation, able to subsume tribalism? Can a tribal/class social model subsist without collapsing under its internal contradictions? In particular, with regard to the Arab world, is it possible to imagine a model in which materialism can coexist with honour and economic assertiveness and concern for lineage and ancestry?

Iraqi history provides some answers with its many instances of tribal groups gaining positions of power and influence in society, in a social rather than tribal manner. In the Ba'ath era the military could be characterised as a social class, although their roots were undoubtedly tribal. And not just in the Ba'ath era but under the regimes of Abdul Karim Qasem, Abdul Salam Aref and Abdul Rahman Aref. Nor was this phenomenon confined to the army; it applied equally to Ba'ath Party members, government administrators and businessmen. The governments that succeeded the fall of the monarchy in 1958 were all based on the twin foundations of the tribe and the army. Abdul Salam Aref (1963-1967) embodied the military hierarchy and had close blood ties with the Jumailat tribe. However, the tribal/class social model is far from an established concept. It is no secret that tribes are in a delicate situation and the temporary alliance of tribalism and class cannot endure for long in the face of the money-power

paradigm. We need look no further than Europe and America, where socially and historically the reality of power has triumphed over idealistic ethical values. All indications are that the historical trend is for power and might to prevail over ethics and culture. We are not in an era of cultural dialogue for the simple reason that the concept of culture is in retreat - especially in Western countries - and not in the process of renewal and regeneration. In short, we are witnessing a struggle between conflicting powers at the global level.

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Tribe and Religion in Historical and Anthropological Studies

Muhammad bin Moosa Hassan (*)

Since time immemorial the tribe has been a historical reality all over the world, especially in nomadic societies, constituting a social, economic and cultural entity. On the Arabian Peninsula in particular, and on the borders of Syria and Iraq, its status has been enshrined by poets in the pre-Islamic era, and in the Arab Maghreb the tribe was distinguished by its fierce resistance to invaders. Although it is true to say that the birth of Islam saw a new supra-tribal concept of the *umma* as a uniting social force in Al-Madinah, tribalism and tribal solidarity have been forces shaping Arab Islamic history up to the present day.

With the spread of Islam into desert areas, tribalism became associated with religion in a symbiotic relationship that persisted up to the 7th century AH/13th century AD. Tribal life and culture underwent a radical change - whether in the centre or on the borders of the Arab world - as a result of progressive sedentarisation of both northern and southern Arab tribes in the cities of Syria, the new cities of Al-Basra and Al-Kufa in Iraq, Al-Fustat in Egypt and Al-Qayrawan in the Maghreb. Centres of power shifted and tribal solidarity weakened as tribes metamorphosed into smaller groupings remote from the mother tribe, as happened with the Yamani tribes in Syria in the Umayyad era. With the expansion of the Arab State, the Yamani tribes in Al-Andalus became geographically separated from their roots, although they never lost their cultural affinity with the mother tribe.

In this era tribalism became inseparable from religion as tribes sought knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence in order to spread the new faith

and improve their position in society. Although Islam has subsequently been linked to the emergence of numerous political systems, the tribe/religion nexus has always been relevant to notions such as lineage, honour and belief.

In spite of its importance, the issue of tribe and religion has generally been absent from Arabic historical and anthropological research, apart from some studies drawing on traditional theoretical premises remote from objective reality. This is an approach that we wish to avoid in our study of the tribe and its relationship to religion.

I. Tribalism and Religion for Ibn Khaldun: a Theoretical/Practical Approach

1. Ibn Khaldun's Triad of Tribalism, Religion and Power

Bedouin life is organically linked to tribal structure, which, in turn, is based on tribal solidarity and lineage. Ibn Khaldun commented on the cline between the desert and the pastoral and the lack of a clear break between them, while pointing out differences in Bedouin society between pastoralism and nomadism. For Ibn Khaldun, civilisation is not based on binary oppositions or historical stasis or cycles but on the continual evolution of the phenomenon of the tribe, whether in its internal structure or in its relation with power, culture and religion.

Tribal solidarity, based as it is on real or imaginary pride in lineage, is the solder between neighbouring tribes for their mutual protection and defence. The strongest tribe becomes the magnetic pole for its branches, which initially gravitate towards it before launching raids against neighbouring tribes. The second stage, when the tribe assumes a

hierarchical structure, is the time when the state is taken on and vanquished. Ibn Khaldun comments in this regard:

The solidarity of a single tribe overcomes that of its divisions and branches and becomes paramount. The tribes are welded into a single tribal unit, thus avoiding conflict and dissension within its ranks.(1)

However, Islam is seen as a counterpart to tribalism in the bid for power. According to Ali Umayyil, this is the only way in which the Bedouin can become politicised.(2) Religion needs tribalism as its defender but when power is achieved, tribalism is necessary to protect religion. Ibn Khaldun comments:

States whose rule is based on religion either through prophecy or missionary activity. A state based on religion will overcome a tribal power even if numerically inferior. However, a

state that has religion without tribal solidarity will not endure.

He explains this thus: 'The power of religion dissolves the dissensions and jealousies of the tribe and prioritises what is right.' As evidence of the enabling power of religion, he cites the victory of the Arabs over the Persians at Al-Qadasiya, in spite of their greatly inferior numbers. In the Maghreb he gives the example of '… the Lamtuna and the Muwahhadin, who were opposed by many other tribes more numerous and more fanatical but the religious spirit of the former gave them the foresight and courage to overcome the latter so that none prevailed against them.'(3)

Thus the invocation to practice what is right and to avoid what is unlawful acted as a catalyst, converting the hostility and lawlessness of the Bedouin into a positive fighting force, united by tribal solidarity.

On the other hand, when the religious spirit declined, tribal conflicts were resolved by force alone, as when the Masmuda tribe prevailed over stronger tribes such as the Zanata but '… when the religious factor declined, the Zanata rose up against them and removed them from power.'(4)

In spite of the effect of religion on tribalism, without tribalism religion is incomplete. 'The Muridin movement in Al-Andalus, led by Ibn Qissi at the end of the Almoravid era, failed due to the absence of tribal solidarity. Similarly, adventurers and self-proclaimed Mahdis, whether in the desert or the town, failed in their bid for power because of a lack of tribal power base.'(5)

Ibn Khaldun discerns two complementary mechanisms that lead the tribe to power: tribal solidarity and religious invocation. Tribal

solidarity derives its unifying strength from the bonds of lineage and the more it is allied with a spiritual force, the less other tribes can prevail against it.(6) However, these models of states deriving their force from tribal solidarity cannot be extrapolated to other societies, Ibn Khaldun believes, since they are specific to Bedouin communities in Arab Islamic countries.

The Extension of Ibn Khaldun's Doctrine and the Loosening the Bonds between Tribe and Religion

In this era states operated on the basis of tribal solidarity and religious invocation. The Umayyad dynasty looked for support to Quraish, in particular the Bani Umayyah and congregationalism, while the Abbasid state depended on the loyalty of client tribes and the Mu'tazilite doctrine. The emerging emirates on the borders of the eastern and western Arab world had a different view from the tribes at

the centre; some, like the Bani Madrar at Sijilmassa looked to the Kharijite school, while others such as the Rustam state of Taharat favoured Ibadhism, which was the preferred doctrine of the Zanata, Lawata, Nafousa and Hawara tribes. On the other hand, the Idrissid state in Fez adopted Zaydi Shi'ism. In all these states tribalism and religion were conjoined in contrast to the situation in Al-Andalus, before the rise of the emirate in 137 AH, where the competing claims to power of northern and southern tribes led to the formation of pressure groups not based on confessional differences. In spite of the distance between the margins and the centre, tribal affiliations remained strong and only weakened gradually as groups with different tribal backgrounds competed for power.

Politics remained interlocked with religion in the 4th century AH/10th century AD, as evidenced by the spread of the Isma'ili doctrine among the Katama tribes of the northwest Ifriqiyya region (today bounded by

Constantine, Setif and An-Naba) in which the traditional hierarchical structure yielded to the new religious fanaticism of the Fatimid state. The religious leader, Abu Abdallah Al-San'ani, was able to build a new community within the Katama tribe, in which religious fanaticism triumphed over tribal solidarity. During the period 280-296 AH/894-909 AD the Katama tribe was transformed into a religious movement that swept all before it.

The Almoravid state developed from the tribal federation created by the veiled Sanhaja tribe of the Sahara (currently Mauritania) who, adopting the Malikite doctrine, spread their influence northwards towards Morocco as well as southwestwards towards Sudan. This tribal federation succeeded in creating a state extending from Al-Andalus in the north to the Niger River in the south, in which Malikite clerics had a firm grip on the levers of power. This resulted in the suppression of any dissenting opinion and the proscription of independent thought, culminating in the

burning of Al-Ghazzali's masterpiece, *Ihya Ulum Al-Din* (*The Revivification of the Sciences of Religion*), as well as the subsequent outlawing of free thought under the Muwahhids.

Even if the Masmuda tribes of the Atlas Mountains in Morocco were able to combat the Al-Moravid doctrine and reject practical in favour of theoretical rules of religious behaviour. The state they founded remained theocratic in nature with no separation between politics and religion since they looked to the teachings of Muhammad ibn Tumarat, the disciple of Ash'ari, whose doctrine combined aspects of Sunni, Shi'a and Mu'tazilite thought.

These examples, cited from the east to the west of the Arab world, demonstrate the link between tribalism and religion in the creation of the state. However, religion began to lose its power in mobilising popular opinion after the

rise of the Bani Zayyan state in Tlemcen, the Bani Merin in Fez, and the Bani Ahmar in Granada following the fall of the Muwahhidin. With the exception of the Hafsid state in Tunis, which represented a continuation of the Muwahhidite model, at least in form, the remaining states of the Maghreb were established on the basis of the sword since religion had lost its power to mobilise followers. Ibn Zayyan was motivated by no specific doctrinal affiliation, in contrast to the kingdoms of the Maghreb and Al-Andalus where the Malikite denomination reigned supreme. This can also be seen in the eastern part of the Arab world where the Mamluk coastal states were established through force and the Mamluk communities in Egypt. Does this mean that a new model began to emerge, relying on force rather than religion, in which the clerics were consigned to an inferior position?

Ibn Khaldun utilised actual examples in order to formulate his triadic

power/tribe/religion theory and since his main concern was Berber and Arab tribes, his *Muqaddama* attracted the interest of a follower of the French army of occupation in Algeria, Baron de Slane, who published a study entitled *History of the Berbers*. Ibn Khaldun's ideas were also present in the writings of Maskari, Quti, Marcais and Gellner, among others, and were generally favourably received as long as they were in line with the current orthodoxy. Although Ibn Khaldun's approach is basically different to that of the anthropologists, there is some superficial similarity between his analysis of the evolution of tribal power and structures and the 'schismatic' approach of ethnologists and anthropologists.

II. Tribe and Religion in Ethnological and Anthropological Studies

1. Ethnological and Sociological Approaches in the Colonial Period:

Montagne and Berque's Competing Analyses

These types of studies pre-date and overlap the French occupation of Arab North African lands and concentrate primarily on the Berber tribes, who were believed to be less open to outside influences, in the Kabylie, Aures and Mzab in Algeria, in the Atlas Mountains and the Rif in Morocco, and in the Jabal Waslat, Dammar and Nafousa regions of Tunis and Libya. They focused particularly on the remaining Ibadhi groups among the Zanata tribes. Maskri wrote about the origins of villages and social groupings in Algeria and in 1878 translated into French Abu Zakariah Al-Warjlani's *Lives of the Imams*, one of the principal works on Ibadhism. In 1905 Mutlanski published a list of manuscripts discovered in Algiers and edited Ibn Al-Saghir's work on the history of the Ibadhi Bani Rustum emirate. Joseph Schacht also published and edited a list of some two hundred Ibadhi manuscripts and Italian

researchers dealt with the same theme, for example Ripinacci's study of Ibadhism in Libya in 1949. In general, there was abundant interest in the Berber/Ibadhi nexus.

And in the colonial era, when the researchers sought to win over the original inhabitants and differentiate them from the Arabs, they eulogised the Berber tribes (especially the settled descendants of the Sanhaja, Kitama and Masmuda tribes) while they treated the history of the Arab tribes in a different way. Whether these tribes came to the Maghreb with the Arab conquests or with the Bani Hilal migrations in the 5th century AH/11th century AD, they tended to present them in a negative light, which would be tedious to exemplify.

In general, such historical and ethnological studies considered that the Ibadhi tribes had not developed at all during the period between the Roman occupation and the French occupation. This is the period that Al-Quti

labels the Maghreb's Dark Ages, from which the people were 'delivered' by colonialism.

This is well exemplified by the ethnological studies carried out by colonial and military officials such as that of Robert Montagne (1893-1954) on the Berbers and the *makhzan* (government) in the Atlas Mountains, in which he sought to explain the characteristics of the settled Berber tribes of the Atlas, in contrast to the Arab tribes. Montagne put forward the concept of Berber 'republics', which were governed by the law of *al-saff* and *al-laff*, referring to binary oppositions competing within the same tribe. In this he drew on Maskri's previous work on the theory of *al-laff* in Morocco and *al-saff* in Algeria. In his opinion, these tribes were beyond the pale, in the sense that they were not subject to the control of the *makhzan* (state) and were distinguished by oral culture and accepted custom, in contrast to urban life characterised by literacy and religious sanction. Throughout his work he appeals to the dichotomy of the

central authority (the *makhzan*) and the Berber tribes.

According to Gellner, Montagne 'represents the French colonial anthropological tradition at its best'(7) since it was located in an imperialistic context in which the tribes of the Rif rebelled against the colonising power and almost defeated it, although their influence was less in the cities. The occupying power operated a policy based on alliances with these tribes and the preservation of their quasi-republican structures and their self-government according to accepted custom.

Gellner noticed that Montagne adopted a mixed theoretical/practical approach similar to that of Ibn Khaldun's view of the relationship between tribe and state as a continuing factor from the Almoravid and Muwahhid eras up to the present time, with leaders such as Abdelkarim Al-Khattabi in the Rif and the sheikhs of the Atlas tribes (Al-Mgharr), whom

he likened to the tyrants of ancient Greek city states. There was a fragile balance of power between these 'republics', which could break down if one leader became too strong. This is what he meant by the absence of central power in this tribal society.

Such ideas crop up repeatedly in studies on southern Ifriqiyya and Algeria and have an affinity to Evans-Pritchard's study of the Nuer of southern Sudan since all these studies draw on the concept of equilibrium between opposing factions of a tribe or between competing tribes.

Although Jacques Berque's study of social structures in the Atlas Mountains derives from the same tradition of scholarship, his perspective is more objective, for example in his study of the Saskasawa tribes of the Atlas he rules out the existence of *al-laff*, pointing out that the conflicts over water and pasturage were not definable in terms of the *al-laff*

system. His article on tribalism in northern Ifriqiyya had a considerable impact in the field of tribal studies and marked a departure from the traditional tribe/power/culture analysis applied to the Maghreb. Berque called for a re-interpretation of the concept of the tribe in terms of its historical context and its relations with ruling authority.

The currency of these ideas did not cease with the coming of independence to Arab countries as can be seen - intentionally or unintentionally - in a number of contemporary studies on the tribe and its relationships with political and religious authority. The Polish Arabist Tadeus Livsky studied the Zanata tribes in terms of Ibadhism in northern Tunisia and contemporary studies by Western and some Arab academics are still unable to free themselves from the misleading and exaggerated theories circulated by the colonial school of writing and fail to achieve the necessary degree of objectivity in their research.

2. The 'Schismatic' Approach

The ethno-anthropological studies undertaken by Robert Montagne on the Berber tribes and the government in the Atlas Mountains helped to crystallise Durkhiem's concept of 'organic solidarity', and although this theory was strongly rooted in the colonialism of the era, it did not prevent it from being adopted by Western researchers like Gellner in his theory of tribal schism and the conciliatory role of holy men.

Followers of this approach drew theoretical support for their model of tribal organisation and equilibrium, in the absence of a central deterrent authority, from the Arab proverb: 'I against my brother; my brother and I against my cousin; my cousin, my brother and I against the stranger.' They viewed tribalism as adialectic between convergence in the face of

an external threat and divergence when the tribe became weak and fragmentary.

Gellner believed that tribal society, in addition to its inherent fissiparousness, tended to live far from the centre on the margins, and in Morocco he described the tribal lands as beyond the pale (or areas beyond the jurisdiction of Shari'ah law) in spite of the fact that numerous studies by orientalists such as Paul Bascon and Moroccan researchers proved the contrary.

In his approach to the question of lineage within the network of tribal hierarchies and sanctity, he commented on the role of holy men in linking the tribal world with the wider world of Islam and in preserving social equilibrium, contrasting the tribal brand of Sufism with the more rigid and conservative urban world of orthodox Islam.

In his opinion the tribes of the Atlas Mountains constituted a suitable research model since their political and social structure was schismatic in nature. Every tribe divided into branches, which in turn divided into sub-branches, culminating in the family unit and, on the basis of case studies and Ibn Khaldun's history, he posited that constantly renewing leadership was a feature of tribalism.

Since *zawiyas* were situated in adjoining neighbourhoods and erected on tribal boundaries, it was natural for holy men to take on the role of arbitrators. That this was an effective role can be seen from the fact that holy men interceded between quarrelling tribal sheikhs, drawing on their personal charisma as well as their own brand of saintliness; very different from the urban theologians whom they despised.

The holy man's authority derived from a number of rituals involving dances, legends,

miracles and lineage for the tribes of the middle Atlas, united around a common legendary ancestor, the founder of the tribe and guarantor of good luck, and certain times of the year were set aside for visits to the tombs and shrines of saints, in the vicinity of which fighting was prohibited.

3. Criticism of the Previous Approach

It is evident that the advent of independence in Arab countries after the end of the Second World War generated a new perspective on the phenomenon of tribalism and its relationship to power and culture. Georges Balandi, a vehement critic of the theories of the colonial era, called for an 'independence-based' rather than an 'imperialistic' sociology, and Jacques Berque's approach inspired a new generation of studies on tribalism and power by North African researchers such as Abdullah Al-Arawi on the history of the Maghreb and Muhammad Al-Qibli on society, power and

religion in Morocco (reminiscent of the anthropological approach).

In the light of historical and anthropological studies, researchers were able to gain a more objective understanding of the issue. Although they did not deny the value of some aspects of the culture/religion analysis of tribal society, researchers such as Jacques Berque, Abdullah Hamoudi, Abdullah Al-Arawi, Lilia bin Salem et al criticised the 'schismatic' approach on the grounds of its limitations and its inaccuracy; it focused on description rather than on explanation of the workings of tribalism and failed to account for its evolution and development over time.

Gellner studied the holy men of the Atlas tribes, starting from the following proposition: 'How is it possible for the Atlas tribes to coexist and maintain their social structure in the absence of a central authority? He believed that the answer to this conundrum lay in the

inherent schismatic nature of the tribe and the role of the holy men and saints in maintaining social equilibrium within the tribe. He compared the role of saints and Sufis in the tribe with that of the theologians in the cities. He believed that the holy men and Sufis were outside the tribal structure, in that they were perceived as neutral elements, not identified with any particular social or political group. Their basic purpose was to maintain a balance between opposing social forces, to act as conciliators and arbitrators and promote stability and security in the absence of a central authority.

The fact is that this characterisation of holy men as a wandering class of arbitrators and peacemakers, unaligned with any particular tribal grouping, is a historical fiction in both the eastern and western parts of the Arab world. We frequently read of holy men taking part in external raids as well as being involved in internal conflicts as members of tribal alliances, and defending their economic and

social interests. Besides, they were often involved in drumming up support through the allocation of lands whether by grants, bequests or conveyances. The historical-anthropological approach has proved conclusively that the holy man was an integral part of a tribe's social structure and an active participant in its affairs.

III. The Historical-Anthropological Approach

1. Tribe, Holy Man and Theologian

Traditional historical anthropological studies focus on simplistic dichotomies in Arab history in general, and the Maghreb in particular. They refer to Berber and Arab, Ibadhi and Sunni, the desert and the pastoral, and accepted custom and jurisprudence etc. Although there are echoes of these ideas in the writings of Felix Quti, Georges Marcais, Robert Brunswick, Andre Louis and others, the 'schismatic' school revived these

dichotomies, giving as evidence tribal conflicts over pasturage regardless of the tribe involved. We will attempt to clarify the relationship between tribe and religion, as well as discussing previous theories on the basis of historical and anthropological case studies of the Maghreb region.

Southern Ifriqiyya: William Brett sought to extend the schismatic theory to the southern Ifriqiyya region, building extensively on bibliographical references on the tribal balance of power. This area is ruled by two branches of the Dhabbab tribe, living in equilibrium: the Mahamid in the area between Gabes and Jabal Nafousa, and the Jawari, in the area between Jabal Nafousa and Zuwara. Tijani comments:

Leadership of the Washshah tribe is currently restricted to the Jawari and Mahamid tribes and other Washshah tribes such as the Amur, the Gawawabah. These two tribes are commensurate in numbers and

power, so that the loss of a horseman in one tribe is matched by a corresponding loss in the other.(8)

In the first place, the Dhabbab tribes are under the power of the government and not independent of the central authority. Secondly, the equilibrium between the two tribes is not automatic, as Brett suggests, but can be explained by the intervention of the Hafsid government in Tunis, which capitalised on their intertribal rivalry, a policy it also followed with the Ka'ub tribes of central Tunisia, sometimes depending on the Awlad Abi Al-Layl and sometimes the Awlad Muhalhal. It is similar to the policy followed by the Umayyad State, which alternated between dependence on northern and southern tribes.(9)

As regards the opposition between Berbers and Arabs, represented by the subordination of the Berber tribes to the Bani Dhabbab, the

former received protection in return for collecting taxes from the latter, but this is rejected by Al-Tijani when he states:

The historical context shows that the Bani Dhabbab devoted themselves to collecting taxes from other tribes for the benefit of the Hafsid government, in return for which they received protection. Thus, there was a three-way link rather than a dichotomy between two tribal groupings. In addition to that, the factors underlying these tribal alliances were governed not so much by confessional (Ibadhi-Berber and Sunni-Arab) or racial (Berber/Arab) factors as by the social and economic relations between pastoralists and semi-settled inhabitants of the mountain villages.

Thus Al-Tijani mentions the alliance between the Mahamid Arabs and the Waraghma Berbers, while referring to the rivalry between two branches of the Arab

Dhabbab tribe: the Mahamid and the Jawari. On this basis we can more readily understand the congruence in population and combatants of the two tribes.

Consequently, we can say that a dichotomous model is not applicable in the case of these tribes since the equilibrium between the tribes of southern Tunisia was a function of their relationship with the central government and differing economic factors over a considerable period of time. Neither is the distance of a tribe from the centre an indication of immunity from political developments in the country.

Morocco: The correspondence between the tribes and religious groups in the south of Morocco in the Sufi religious brotherhood. Ibn Al-Qunfudh attended a meeting of these groups in 769 AH/1367 AD on the Atlantic coast in the north Dakalah region and

commented on the similarity between religious and tribal affiliations. He wrote:

I asked about all the sects in the land of Morocco which produces holy men like it produces pasturage and I found them to be as numerous as their leaders, most of them Sunni. They are from the tribes of Shu'aib, Sanhaja, Majar, Hajjaj, Ilhah and Ghamat.(10)

Similarly, the relationship between holy men and theologians cannot be explained as a simple dichotomy. We find that popular Sufism subscribes to the Sunni doctrine, as well as theologians who are Sufis and Sufis who are theologians. Differences are graduated rather than clear-cut; we find learned people who are converts or marabouts, scholars of the literal or the esoteric schools, those who are Sunni and those who follow scholastic theology or philosophy. Alternatively, we can classify them as followers of Prophetic tradition, theologians or Sufis. *(11)*

This quotation demonstrates the differences of opinion between religious and tribal groups on the one hand and the unifying force of Sufism among the tribes on the other, without any reference to tribal dichotomies.

2. 'Penitence' of the Desert Arab, the *Zawiya* and Tribal Settlement

It is clear that the decline in the phenomena of holy men, *zawiyas* and monasteries in the eastern and western Arab world went hand in hand with the waning of tribalism and orthodox religion, since tribal solidarity was superseded by religious brotherhood. We have studied the situation in Ifriqiyya drawing on new perspectives on tribalism in the Hafsid era (7th-10th centuries AH/13th-16th centuries AD). The rural *zawiya,* presided over by a holy man, performed a number of functions including settlement of the weaker tribes into

the wider social order in a process known as the 'penitence of the warlike desert Arabs'. In the Maghreb, the role of the holy men was similar to that of the farmers, hence our proposed coinage of 'holy men-farmers'.(12)

A good example of this process is Abu Yusuf Ya'qoub Al-Dahmani, of the Arab Dahman tribe that was settled around Al-Qayrawan, who was born in 551AH/1156 AD and became a warrior learning the arts of chivalry and field combat, and participated in the defence of the city of Al-Mahdiyya between 570-575 AH/1175-1180 AD. Various factors conspired to turn him into a wandering 'penitent' and he studied jurisprudence in Al-Qayrawan before studying the principles of Maliki Sufism with Abu Madin Shu'ayb at Bajaya. He left for Egypt to expand his knowledge and, on his return, settled at Al-Qayrawan, adopting Sufism as the road to 'penitence', and guiding many of the Bedouin tribes to adopt this course.

He heads the list of Arab tribesmen who substituted the sword for the pen, the horse for the *zawiya*, the tent for the house and the leadership of the tribe for the leadership of a religious brotherhood - a list which includes famous Arab tribes that had lost their fanaticism such as Jamil ibn Thaghr Al-Habibi, Ya'qoub ibn Khalifa Al-Dahmani (d.669 AH/1270 AD), Ghayth Al-Hakimi (d.685 AH/1286 AD) and Maymoun ibn Karfah Al-Lawa'ili). *(13)*

Abu Rahma Ghayth Al-Hakimi was a desert warrior who opted to join one of the Al-Qayrawan *zawiyas*, which was a disadvantageous move since he obtained extensive landholdings by royal decree (country estates), from which his heirs benefited for many generations - in the form of income from round rents and tithes from farmers. Thus Al-Hakimi's life can be seen not

as a function of his tribal affiliation but in terms of his service to the Hafsid government.

In general, such territorial grants to impoverished tribes were a major factor in weaning them away from raiding and encouraging their settlement on the land. It is worth noting that these grants were not made to individuals on the basis of their status as holy men but rather in their capacity as tribal leaders (of the Bani Hakim, Bani Riyah, Bani Wa'il etc.) with influence over the tribes, which were beginning to settle in the vicinity of Al-Qayrawan.

The process of inducing tribesmen to 'penitence' and subjecting them to government control continued over the next century and tribal leaders like Abu Al-Hassan Al-Ubaidli (d.748 AH/1347 AD) played an important part in bringing the tribes under government control by means of the *zawiya*. However, although based in Al-Qayrawan, Al-Ubaidli

was not able to shake off his tribal fanaticism and inflexibility and retained close links to his desert roots.

A more socially integrated example of the trend was Abu Yusuf Ya'qoub Al-Zoghbi of the Hilali Zoghbi tribe, which was settled near Al-Qayrawan, who was both founder of a *zawiya* and a judge in Al-Qayrawan (and later in Tunis). He was a constant defender of the villagers against the depredations of the Bedouin in an era marked by four plagues: 'the sun, the locust, the cold and the Bedouin.'*(14)*

The holy men and leaders of the *zawiyas* began to infiltrate into desert encampments all over the Maghreb region, with the exception of the Ibadhi minorities in southern Tunisia, inducing the tribesmen to 'penitence'. However, an example of failure to overcome tribal fanaticism is that of Qassem ibn Marra, cited by Ibn Khaldun. Qassem, who according to Ibn Khaldun was descended from the Ka'ub

tribe of central Tunisia, studied under his leader Yusuf Al-Dahmani (d. 621AH/1224 AD) and on returning to his tribe scolded them for their bellicosity and weak religious belief, and attempted to found a marabout order from among them. However, the tribal leaders rejected this movement as being contrary to the tribal order and it was also challenged by the central government. When Qassem was killed and his son succeeded him in 706 AH/1306 AD, only one section of the Ka'ub tribe (Awlad Muhalhal) called for his death to be avenged. *(15)*

The above examples provide evidence of the weakness of tribal affiliation in the case of holy men turned semi-feudal landowners, and the extent of their integration into society, both in peace and war. This goes against the claims of the 'schismatic' approach and there is no doubt that the granting of lands to such tribal groups as Bani Hakim, Bani Riyah and Bani Wa'il was a major factor in persuading them to adopt a sedentary lifestyle based around

agriculture, rather than a nomadic one based on raiding.

The same period saw the rise of a similar movement in the Az-Zab region near Biskra, led by Sa'ada Al-Riyahi, who studied in Taza and returned to his tribe as a *muhtasib* (inspector of markets). He formed a marabout movement attracting many followers, with the aim of ridding the area of highwaymen and thieves. The movement founded a *zawiya* in Tulqa, from where they were able to control the Az-Zab region. However, the movement failed in the end because of the refusal of the Riyahi tribe to lend its support and accept this cultural change. *(16)*

Overall, the holy man derived many benefits from land grants, which conferred upon him charisma and prestige, which in turn attracted adherents and also helped suppress dissent and rebellion. Thus the holy man did not by any means operate outside society but was tightly

integrated into the hierarchy of the tribe and in a good position to attract followers, utilising the chants and dances of the ancient zarda rites.

In short, in the Maghreb the *zawiya* operated on many levels, creating an intra-tribal and intertribal social network, whether in the city or in the desert. The social and religious groupings that emerged under the aegis of the *zawiya* operated to the disadvantage of traditional tribal hierarchies and loyalties, which began to lose their power. (17)

3. Tribal Legacy and Beliefs

We have previously shown that religion, at any stage of tribal evolution or decline, is a somewhat contingent factor and for this reason we do not generally find new religious ideas germinating in the tribe and spreading to the city. The fact is that the tribesman has an

uncomplicated attitude towards religious belief, allied to a strong respect for tribal customs and traditions. I propose to illustrate this from consideration of the Maghreb in the late Middle Ages.

Although the *zawiya* was built 'on the ashes of the tribal leader's tent', the tribesmen were not over enamoured by this importation from the city, and were not taken in by the charisma of those holy men, whose animal and agricultural wealth they would not have hesitated to ransack.(18)

In line with the dismissive attitude of the Bedouin to holy men and farmers alike, their view of sanctity differed from that of the city dweller. The famous example of Haddaj Al-Ka'abi (d.705 AH/1305 AD) is worth quoting in this context, 'When Haddaj was upbraided for entering the Zaytouniyya Mosque with his slippers, he replied that did this when he entered the Sultan's council.'(19)

Nor is the Bedouin's attitude towards religious devotion the same as the townsman's; the tribal tent is not suitable for performance of communal prayers and desert life is not conducive to the presence of imams. As for fasting in Ramadan, when Arafat Al-Shabbi visited the Tarud tribe in the Sahara, '… he found that they were not observing the fast and were Muslims only in name.'(20)

Although the Bedouin is not known for his devotion to religious observance, tribal traditions are scrupulously upheld. In the southern Tunis region, a *farid* acted as a *mufti* issuing judgements in disputes. According to Al-Tijani, the Mahamid clan had a *farid* who did not appeal in any way to Shari'ah law in giving his judgements. They also had a black Arab fortune-teller who foretold the future, although one of the urban theologians considered that there was no truth in this story.(21)

Among the pastoral and semi-settled tribes of southern Ifriqiyya, such as the Ibadhi Zanata, religious observance takes many forms. Although one does not find the domed shrines of holy men in this region, the tribes visit shrines, rocks and caves in rituals which predate Islam. In 'The Names of the Mountain Shrines' (Jabal Nafousa), mention is made of worship at caves and other holy places (such as rocks and stones).(22)

The Bedouin are extremely interested in natural phenomena, such as the stars, which are a reference point in their wanderings and which occupy an important place in their lore, both auspicious and inauspicious. At dawn on the 7th September when Canopus appears, they recite, 'When Canopus rises, nights become cold, the wadis flow and the heat abates.' This proverb alludes to the change from the heat and drought of summer to the cold and rain of winter and demonstrates the

importance of the stars for the Bedouin in marking the change of the seasons and other natural phenomena. For the Bedouin there is a unity between the earth and the sky, and the world is a complete whole with no separation between its upper and lower parts, a view which accords with the neo-Platonic philosophy of Ibn Sina (Avicenna) although the Bedouin belief is the product of his close association with and observation of the secrets of nature, rather than the fruit of philosophical speculation.(23)

However, this inattention to religious ordinances, simplicity of belief and close association with nature does not prevent an ascetic tendency emerging among the Bedouin from time to time. Although Gellner believes that this ascetic tendency is just a myth,(24) the spread of the Maliki doctrine among the veiled Sanhaja tribes is evidence enough of the trend.

Conclusion

In the light of the ontological and anthropological approaches to the study of the relationship between tribe and religion, the historical-anthropological method, grounded in observation and historical analysis, seems to be the most suitable vehicle for the objective study of this important social phenomenon.

To talk of one religion for the Bedouin and one religion for the townsman seems unnecessarily reductive, as is the dichotomy between Shi'a and Sunni Islam. The desert and the pastoral are not two discrete and distinct worlds and to view them in this way is to ignore the points of similarity between them and the close relationships that have subsisted between them throughout Arab history, and Maghrebi history in particular. The *zawiyas* and the holy men originated in the cities and spread among the tribes of the desert, utilising a network of relationships linking the poor

people of the tribes with their peers in the cities. For this reason it is difficult to study the evolution of this social and cultural phenomenon without reference to the settled world.

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Notes:

1.   Khaldun, I, *Al-Muqaddama (The Introduction)*, Dar Al-Kitab Al-Lubnani, p.245.

2.   Umlayil, A 1984, *The historical discourse, a study of Ibn Khaldun's methodology*, Casablanca, p.155.

3.   Khaldun, I, op. cit., pp.277-9.

4.   Ibid, p.27.

5.   Ibid, pp.279-284.

6.   Al-Jabari, *Tribalism and state*, p.290.

7.   Gellner, E 2005, *Muslim society*. trans. Abu Bakr Ahmad Ba Qadr, Beirut, p.336.

8.   Al-Tijani, *Journey*, p.118.

9.   Brett, W, *Arabs, Berbers and Holy Men.*

10.   Al-Qunfudh, I, *Uns Al-Faqir*, pp.63-66.

11.   Al-Barzli, *Jami' Masa'il Al-Ahkam*. See our book The City and the Desert. Vol 2 p.746.

12.   Al-Mughayyibun, 1999, in *Tunisian social History*, Bayt Al-Hikma, Tunis, pp.311-372.

13.   Naji, I, *Landmarks of Faith among the theologians of Qayrawan*. Vol.3, p.264; Vol.4, pp.34, 106, 118.

14.   Ibid, Vol. 4, pp.166-169.

15.   Khaldun, I, *History*, Vol. 6, pp.160-162.

16.   Ibid., pp.81-85.

17.   For this section see our volume, *The City and the Desert in Ifriqiyya in the Hafsid Era*. Vol. 2, pp.735-772.

18.   Naji, I, Sharh Al-Risala. Ms. Vol .2 p.209.

19.   Al-Zarkashi, *History of the two States*, p.56; Khaldun, I, op. cit., Vol. 6, p.715; Al-Wansharisi, *Al-Mi'yar Al-Maghreb*, Vol.1 p.22.

20.   Al-Shabbi, A 1982, Arafat Al-Shabbi, Tunis, p.77.

21.   Al-Tijani, op cit., pp.188, 189,197.

22.   See   Al-Shamakhi,   Sir, Introduction.

23.   Ibid., pp.59-64.

Gellner, op cit., p.169.

Tribe, State and Economy

Al-Habib Al-Janhany

In this paper I wish to make some theoretical observations concerning the tribe, the state and the economy on the basis of the historical reality of Arab Islamic society at different periods.

Firstly, scholars tend to link tribalism with power because of the dialectal relationship between these two elements in the history of Arab Islamic society, but they generally omit mentioning the economic aspect.

Secondly, in my opinion, it is not possible to talk about the economy in absolute terms given that we are dealing with the economics of the Arab tribe, guardian of Bedouin values, as well as its influence over the power base in Arab society from the founding of Al-Madinah

up until the modern era. The Arab Islamic economy did not develop from one historical period to another, as happened in Europe, but in a qualitative change that gave birth to a new social class as a result of the pre-eminent position of the Arab Islamic community in the orbit of world trade. Nor, methodologically speaking, can the economic postulates of an urbanised pastoral society be applied to the means of production of the Arab Islamic city in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AH.

In no way should the economics of the tribe in Bedouin society be confused with the economy once the tribes had acceded to power in an increasingly urban context. Nor should the economic characteristics of nomadic Bedouin communities, primarily dependent on rearing livestock, be confused with those of their sedentary cousins who earn their living through farming.

I referred earlier to the way in which world trade created new means of production in the Arab Islamic city and led to the emergence of a new social class, but I should also mention a contemporaneous intellectual trend that sought to liberate Arab Islamic society from conservatism, especially in the shape of the clergy who gave unstinting support to the political status quo. I have used the term 'means of production' but this begs the question of the exact structure of Arab Islamic society in its Bedouin and urban manifestations. I shall, accordingly, exercise caution and refer to socio-economic formations at various stages of history rather than a change in means of production.

Thirdly, the star of the Arab Islamic city began to wane in the 5th century AH with the spread of 'military feudalism' under the Buwaihids, and more especially under the Seljuqs and Mamluks. I would go so far as to

say that this phenomenon was the deciding factor in the urban decline of the city and its diminishing influence in the surrounding countryside as a result of plundering by soldiers and Bedouin raids.

Evidence for this view is Maqrizi's description of old Cairo in the mid-5th century AH, which eloquently reflects the fear and destructiveness of the time:

The commander of the armies, Badr Al-Jamali, entered old Cairo in 466 AH. The city was almost empty of its inhabitants, who had been decimated by plague, destruction and death. The few people remaining were like the walking dead, white with fear of the military and crushed by the punitively high cost of living. The slaves were in revolt and no one could be found to till the fields. Land and sea routes were blocked unless one journeyed under escort at prohibitively high cost. The new town of Al-Qahira had also become a

wasteland. The military and the Armenians as well as the locals were able to build wherever they wished and the houses of the dead in Old Cairo were razed to the ground to provide building materials for dwellings in Al-Qahira.

Fourthly, in the Arab world, capital has always had a precarious status vis-a-vis political authority. In the past, confiscation and fines were a potent weapon against rich businessmen and rebellious tribes, and today the apparatus of taxation is employed to muzzle the most economically independent social classes. In addition, this precariousness of capital acted as brake on economic development in the 3rd and 4th centuries AH.

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Our starting point is the Arabian Peninsula where a predominant tribe, the Quraish, which was based in Mecca, emerged. This

commercially favourable location, with access to trade routes in the Indian Ocean and Syria and the Mediterranean, as well as East Africa, resulted in the Quraish becoming a world trading power that was dependant on a political framework of alliances and treaties. The 'Council Chamber' was the new command centre, which, in the fullness of time, acquired a religious dimension.

In this connection it is no exaggeration to say that it was economics that enabled the Arab Bedouin to contract alliances and submit to a new authority not based purely on tribalism. One could say that this new authority derived its legitimacy from consultation and maintaining the balance of power through the concluding of pacts. If we add the powerful factor of religion, the success of the Quraish in spearheading this new order on the Arabian Peninsula becomes clear; the Quraish community of Mecca tribalism became welded to political and economic power.

After the advent of Islam, tribal conflict reasserted itself, especially among the major tribes, and the need to contract new alliances outside the confines of Mecca became apparent. The Quraish quickly realised the threat to their political and economic supremacy and accepted the new religion. They dreamed of a new kind of alliance that would go beyond the bounds of tribalism. Their goal was nothing less than a united nation state whose influence would stretch beyond the Arabian Peninsula. The emergent state in Al-Madinah charged its leaders with specifying new aims, which were:

a.   The political and strategic goal of western and northern expansion at the expense of the two great powers of the ancient world: the Byzantines and the Sassanids.

b.   The related goal of advancing the banner of Islam.

The political and religious leadership understood that the realisation of these two aims necessitated material power with solid financial underpinnings. They began modestly enough with the type of economic structure familiar in city states in the ancient world but, with the major conquests that took place during the reign of the Second Caliph, Umar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him), the situation changed. Umar was aware of the necessity of protecting financial resources to consolidate power in the new regions, in furtherance of the two stated aims. Indeed Umar's attitude towards the distribution of Al-Sawwad lands in Iraq to the conquerors can only be understood in the context of the new strategy. Umar was mindful of another, even more important factor - the tribal mentality, which constantly threatened the unity of the new state. After the experience of Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) with renegade tribes, Islam had succeeded in uniting the tribes around its banner but it was not powerful enough to dispel tribal arrogance, which Umar feared would raise its head just as

it had done after the death of the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him). Umar hoped that the political and economic structure of the 'nation state' would curb the recalcitrance of tribal pretensions but these hopes were dashed in the reign of the Third Orthodox Caliph when tribal conflict reasserted itself, brotherliness turned to enmity and the community descended into civil war at the battle of Siffin, whose ramifications are felt to the present day.

The momentous change that overtook Arab Islamic society during the early period of Islam cannot be understood without reference to the economic background. The mission of the young Arab nation state carrying the banner of the new religion was eclipsed by the economic interests of a nascent social group who accumulated great wealth as a result of the Arab conquests. A brief description of the great wealth of some of the Companions of the Prophet is enough to indicate the momentous economic changes that had taken place.

Talha ibn Ubaid Allah from Al-Ain left two million dirhams and two hundred thousand dinars. His revenue from Iraq amounted to one hundred thousand, apart from other revenues. His family derived their living from his farm at Qana, which was tilled by twenty camels. Al-Zubayr left fifty thousand dinars and one thousand horses, in addition to houses. When Zayd ibn Thabit died, he left prodigious quantities of gold and silver in addition to property valued at a hundred thousand dinars. When Yaali ibn Umiyya died he left five hundred thousand dinars, as well as debts and property valued at one hundred thousand dinars.

Al-Mas'udi comments:

One could expatiate on the subject of the vast wealth accumulated in those days, which

was not the case in the era of Umar ibn Al-Khattab.

Al-Mas'udi continues:

Abdurrahman ibn Auf bequeathed fifty thousand dinars in gold, as well as considerable fortune. He had one thousand camels, three thousand ewes, and his farm in Al-Jarf was tilled by twenty camels. He left four wives, whose share of his inheritance was between eighty thousand and one hundred thousand each. It is related that Abdurrahman left so much gold that those who broke it up with axes blistered their hands and Abdurrahman was not unique in this respect but comparable to other Companions and leaders of Quraish.

What then were the social and political results of this momentous economic change

and the emergence of this wealthy class of Companions and leaders of Quraish?

The first result was the demographic changes that occurred in Al-Madinah and the towns that Umar planned as part of his population policy. By this means Umar hoped to prevent mass immigration into Al-Madinah, which would lead to social and political unrest. In the wake of the Arab conquests, Madinah had become a melting pot of prisoners, slaves and businessmen, among whom we find the Nabateans who took over the running of the market. Umar took the opportunity to inform the people about this but when he blamed them for not using the market, they replied, 'Allah gave it into our power to do this.' Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) replied, 'If you had done so, your menfolk would have needed their menfolk and your womenfolk their womenfolk.'

The class of slaves (of all types) and immigrants from the desert areas constituted the mainstay of the general class, referred to at that time as the rabble or the Arabs of the desert, who soon came to play an important role in social and political events. Although the leadership of the opposition to the Caliph Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) was in the hands of a small group of Arab tribal leaders and descendants of the Companions, such as Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr (may Allah be pleased with them both), the opposition movement relied principally on the rabble and the desert Arabs. The Madinan aristocracy referred to them as the dregs, but these dregs gained ascendancy over the city during the long period of uprising against the Caliph Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) and his party in the second half of his Caliphate. They surrounded the Caliph in his house, forbade him water and did not allow him to go out and pray in the mosque. The situation grew so critical that some of the well-known Companions left town to avoid being

humiliated by the rabble, as is clear from the description of Ali (may Allah honour him):

My brothers, I am not unaware of what you know but what can I do with a people who own us and we do not own them? These are the people with whom our slaves rose up in support and with whom your Arabs of the desert allied themselves. Through them they are humiliating you at will. Do you see a way of achieving what you want? They said, 'No.' He said, 'By God, the only opinion I see is the one you are holding, if God wills.'

This social group, which came to be known in Arab Islamic society as the general class or the common people, played a leading economic and social role at various periods of Islamic history, from the time of the orthodox caliphs up until the era of Islamic cities. They were the power base behind social uprisings in the cities, which were frequently religious in nature.

Umar ibn Khattab was able to handle the situation, although there were signs of rebelliousness in the latter part of his rule. However, the situation became more critical in the days of Uthman ibn 'Afan, who deviated from Umar's policy and adopted his own when he warned the people of Madinah in 30 AH, 'People of Madinah, be prepared and be united, for sedition is at the gates!' In fact discord broke out first of all in the new cities as a result of demographic factors before spreading to Al-Madinah and infiltrating the economic and social structures. When Sa'id ibn Al-'As took power in Al-Kufa in 30 AH he addressed the people thus: 'If dissension rears its head, I shall strike it and crush it.' And he wrote to Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) saying: 'The people of Al-Kufa were unsettled but the men of honour won out and no affliction or calamity has taken root.'

The new social groups that came to represent the general class in Al-Madinah and the new cities adhered closely to the principles laid down by the Prophet Mohammed (prayers and peace be upon him) and which were supported thereafter by Abu Bakr and Umar (may Allah be pleased with them). Primarily among these was the principle of equality among Muslims and their participation through the principle of shura (consultation) in decision making in the community. They rejected favouritism and party politics based on the clan or the tribe. It is related by Saif that Mohammed and Talha stated:

There is no precedence or priority in the council or in the leadership. They then criticised favouritism harshly and ruled it out as being unjustified and unwarranted. Arabs of the desert and freed slaves have been taken in by their words and they are now on the increase while others decrease until evil triumphs.

The central authority was unable to control the demographic factor and the resultant political and economic problems until the situation in Al-Kufa deteriorated and rumour and unrest spread like wildfire.

The second result of the momentous economic change referred to earlier was the changes in tribal structure in the new cities. Tribal solidarity among the tribes who emigrated from Al-Madinah and settled in the new cities, or in the old cities in Iraq and Syria, had begun to wane in the face of a new rival social class - the general class. This class, which was largely composed of non-Arabs, contributed strongly to the social unrest in Arab Islamic cities, once again showing the link between the tribe, the economy and the ruling power.

I have dwelt in detail on the formative period of Arab Islamic society in the belief that this had a decisive influence on later periods. Doubtless each period is defined by its particular geographical and historical features, yet the model has persisted from the earliest days of Islam up to the foundation of the modern nation state, in which the tribal/economic/ power nexus endures under a veneer of modernity.

-2 -

How then did the relationship between tribe, state and economy continue?

The answer is that the role of the tribe remained important in the Umayyad and Abbasid eras but became less important when the state began to depend on soldiers from different ethnic backgrounds. The Arab Islamic city flourished in the 3rd and 4th

centuries AH as a result of the expansion in international trade and the growth of professional crafts. Subsequently, in the eastern part of the Arab world the phenomenon of military feudalism became implanted from the time of the Buwaihid dynasty up to the Ottoman era with dire consequences for Arab Islamic society and the role of the tribe diminished sharply, especially after the Seljuq era. However, in the western part of the Arab world military feudalism did not take root and the Maghrebi tribes that embraced Islam maintained their tribal structures and were not weakened by emigration, as was the case with the tribes on the Arabian Peninsula. In this region tribalism was a decisive factor in the foundation of dynasties from the 2nd century AH up to the Merinid era in Fez, and was closely linked to the economy. City states like Taharut, Sijilmassa, Fez and Marrakech thrived commercially on the basis of the gold brought by camel caravans from Sudan, which underpinned the economies of the tribal states of the Maghreb. However, the 8th century AH

marked the onset of the period of cultural and social decline, described by the historian Ibn Khaldun:

When we consider the countries of the east such as Egypt, Syria, Iraq/Persia, India and China, and the countries beyond the Mediterranean, we see that their numerous cities and abundant populations flourished on the basis of their great wealth derived from trade and commerce. The accounts we have of the fabulous prosperity of these countries were brought to the Muslims of the Maghreb by Christian traders, as well as by merchants from the east. The most extraordinary tales of fabled riches came from Persia, India and China, and one is tempted to explain them on the basis of the valuable gold and silver mines monopolised by those countries. But this is not the case since their wealth was used to bring their commerce to other countries, and if their wealth had been so prodigious then they would have no need to trade with others at all. On the other hand when we consider the countries

of Ifriqiyya and Cyrene, we notice that they are sparsely populated so that their people live in penury and tax revenues are low, in contrast to the earlier wealth of the shi'a and sanhaja states with their abundant tax revenues and large budgets. As an example of the latter consider the thousand camel loads of wealth sent from Qairawan by Jawhar Al-Rumi to provision his troops during his campaign to conquer Egypt.

The Maghreb states had previously been wealthy but their Berber civilisation declined until their situation resembled that of Ifriqiyya, whereas formerly their writ had run from the Mediterranean in the north to Sudan in the south and Cyrene in the east. Now the majority of this region is desert and wasteland, apart from the coastal strip and hills. Verily Allah is the inheritor of the earth and he is the best of inheritors.

The relationship between tribe, state and economy does not differ in the Maghreb from the situation referred to in the Arab east, apart from the phenomenon of military feudalism, which took root in that region especially during the Seljuq and Mamluk eras. This is not to say that the phenomenon did not exist at all in the Maghreb but that it was less extensive in scope and had less impact on the economic and political scene. The reason for this lies in the nature of tribal organisation whereby the land - especially pasturage in the desert and hill regions - was under common tribal ownership. Another factor was tribal solidarity, which prevented the state from taking the land from the tribes in order to distribute it to the military, as happened in the countries of the Arab east. In Al-Andalus the phenomenon of tribal solidarity was widespread in the early years after its conquest by Arab and Berber tribes but over time it declined in inverse proportion to the fortunes of the city states, with their professional craft guilds and varied social structures. The city state, rather than the tribe, came to represent

the power base and only declined with the rise of military feudalism, which Al-Tartoushi describes in Siraj Al-Muluk:

I heard military leaders and notables of Al-Andalus saying, 'The Muslims were in the ascendant and their enemies were in disarray when the land was divided up among the soldiers. They cultivated the land and treated the peasants well. Agriculture thrived and flocks and weapons were in abundance until the last days of the rule of Ibn Abi Amir, who returned the soldiers' gifts of land to monthly labourers, confiscated the wealth of the greedy, and raised tax collection to punitive levels. The citizens began to flee in the face of these draconian measures, tax revenues declined and the economy collapsed. The military was now in a weaker position than their enemies, who began to overrun the Muslims' territory and gain in strength until the appearance of the "Veiled Warriors" (the Almoravides), who returned the feudal estates to the military.'

Therefore, the link between the state and the economy through military feudalism was prevalent in Al-Andalus and the eastern part of the Arab world but not in the Arab Maghreb, where the tribalism continued to be important up to the beginning of the modern age.

What then was nature of the relation between tribe, state and economy?

My belief is that it was mostly a fraught one, especially in difficult economic times when the state was forced to raise new kinds of taxes beyond the limits laid down by Islamic Sharia in the early city state. Excessive taxation was frequently a potent weapon in the hands of political opponents of the regime.

If we revert to the Ibn Khaldun perspective we can discern an organic link between

prosperity and taxation policy, whether for good or for ill. If the taxation policy of the city state was equitable and even-handed, citizens worked harder and prosperity, as well as tax revenues, increased. In contrast, an iniquitous and burdensome tax regime led to economic stagnation and falling prosperity with the result that tax revenues fell at the very moment when they were needed for reconstruction and regeneration. The relationship between policy and economy is also clear in that oppression leads to economic decline whether this oppression takes the form of over taxation or some other injustice perpetrated on citizens. A state needs its citizens and the backbone of citizens is wealth. The road to wealth is through prosperity and the road to prosperity is through justice. In Ibn Khaldun's view, one of the clearest forms of justice is economic justice. State oppression can go beyond an unjust taxation policy to a situation where all trade is in the hands of the ruling power and all private wealth is subject to confiscation. The Fatimid regimes in the Maghreb were notorious for this type of economic injustice,

especially in regard to labour costs and workers' rights.

One of the worst types of economic injustice is the conscription of labour without due reward since labour is one of the principal wealth-creating factors and earning one's living a fundamental right in society.

- 3 -

Now that we are at the beginning of the 3rd millennium what is the relationship between tribe, state and economy in Arab Islamic society?

The relationship has become globalised and subsumed into the modernisation process; in short, it has become part of consumer society. Nevertheless, the link between tribalism and power is still strong and affects policy making

to the detriment of modernisation. At a deeper level, tribalism is a state of mind and, in spite of appearances to the contrary, the tribal mentality is still a strong influence in people's lives. All the indications are that the road to true modernisation in Arab Islamic society will be a long and winding one.

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