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EVERY STATE HAS A LIMITED LIFESPAN: AN ANALYSIS ON IBN KHALDUN

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ABSTRACT: Ibn Khaldun is a Muslim thinker who lived in North Africa in the Middle Ages. The places where he lived were in a geography where tribal management systems were dominant and political turmoil and wars were never lacking. It is possible to see the traces of the geography and era in which Ibn Khaldun lived in the shaping of his political views. At that time, due to the fact that the tribes were constantly at war with each other, the administrations changed hands frequently, some states were destroyed and some new ones were established in their place. These observations led Ibn Khaldun to liken the life of states to human life. According to him, every state is born, develops and dies just like people. The destruction of states is an inevitable end. Ibn Khaldun has been criticized by some thinkers because of these views. In fact, his book *Mukaddime* was banned in the Ottoman Empire for a while on the grounds that it led the people to pessimism. This study was created by examining the original works of Ibn Khaldun with the exploratory method and interpreting his views.

INTRODUCTION

Ibn Khaldun lived in North Africa between 1332–1406. His place of birth is Tunisia and his place of death is Cairo. Its origin is thought to be based on the Hadramut region of Yemen (Uludađ, 2021). He received a good education from an early age. He has been interested in political issues

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since his youth. Thanks to his brilliant mind and oratory ability, he attracted the attention of the administrators and he was appointed to important positions even though he was still at a very young age (Ibn Khaldun, 2011).

There are studies that examine Ibn Khaldun's life by dividing it into various periods (Sati al-Husri, 2001; Talbi, 1979). Considering the common aspects of these studies;

- First period: It is the period from birth to the age of twenties. This period is mostly the period of learning science and getting education.
- Second period: It is the period from the beginning of the twenties to the middle of the forties. During this period, he was engaged in politics and led a turbulent life.
- Third period: It is the period from the age of forties until death. In this period, he was mostly busy with works such as madrasah teacher and kadi.

Especially in the second and third periods of his life, Ibn Haldun did not get rid of trouble both because of the duties he carried out and because of his political preferences, and he often found himself in intrigues against him (Ibn Haldun, 2011). For example, when his side was defeated in a war between tribes, he was captured and imprisoned. After twenty-seven months in prison, he was released after the death of the head of state (Andıç and Andıç, 2009). In another period, when the Hafsi tribe, which he was a supporter of, seized power, Ibn Khaldun became the chief vizier (Çilingir, 2009).

There is no tradition of writing autobiographies in the medieval Islamic world. On the other hand, Ibn Khaldun told his life story in his book called *Hatıralar* (2011). It is possible to reach his views on other subjects from his work *Mukaddime* (2020).

Although Ibn Khaldun was a pragmatic person in terms of politics, he did not compromise on some principles. For example, he opposed the appointment of unqualified people to the state level. During his term as a judge, he did not discriminate against influential people and did not accept bribes from anyone. For this reason, create those who love him as well as those who dislike him. He was dismissed from the position of judge

five times, to which he was appointed five times, due to conspiracies by people who did not like him (Ibn Khaldun, 2011).

Ibn Khaldun formed his views mostly on the basis of his concrete observations. For this reason, he compared the life of states to the life of people. Most of the states he observed around him were established as a result of great difficulties and wars. However, when these states became prosperous after a while, they moved away from their founding principles and abandoned the understanding of “asabiyyah” (passion, loyalty) that held them together. Thus, when the prosperity and wealth that they aimed to achieve were seized, they moved away from their original values and were driven to collapse.

Ibn Khaldun’s organismic approach to the state is one of the elements that made him famous. However, it should be noted that he also had views that can be considered pioneering on many issues. For example, he is considered the founder of sociology because he states that concrete events and observations should be used as criteria for understanding the structure of societies (Öncü, 2008; Adıvar, 1940). There are those who accept him as the first political scientist in the modern sense, as he argues that state affairs should be carried out according to the reality of the world, not according to religious rules, as if opposing the strict rules of the period in which he lived (Hassan, 2019). He thinks that only the narrations of historians should not be trusted in the evaluation of historical events. If what historians say is against observable events, objective criteria and the ordinary course of life, it should be regarded with suspicion. His views in this direction have led him to be called the founder of historical science and philosophy of history (Şulul, 2020). There are also those who think that he prioritized Karl Marx by using concepts such as *division of labor*, *cooperation*, *labor*, and *surplus value* in the field of economy (Bilgili, 2008). There are those who accept him as the first city planner because he tells where cities should be established and explains the features to be considered when establishing cities with objective criteria (Uludağ, 2021).

As can be seen, Ibn Khaldun is a colorful thinker who has expressed opinions in many different fields. The feature that makes it important is that it accepts observation, science and the facts of life as criteria instead

of hearsay. Thanks to this feature, it affected large masses both during his life and after his death.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a qualitative and theoretical research in which Ibn Khaldun's views on state and politics are tried to be explained. Research designed using the qualitative method aims to explore the examined subject, event or facts in depth and to clarify the perception about that situation (Morgan, 1996). In qualitative research, data collection techniques such as observation, interview, speech and document analysis are generally used (Merriam & Grenier, 2019).

In accordance with the qualitative research method and data collection techniques, source and document scanning was carried out. The findings were also explained using the content analysis (interpretation) technique. Content analysis is a scan made according to certain criteria in order to understand the features such as perspectives, philosophies, language, expression in documents (Karasar, 2021).

SOCIETY AND STATE

According to Ibn Khaldun (2020), it is obligatory for people to live in communities. The meaning of other philosophers' definition of man as a civilized being, according to Ibn Khaldun, is that man is a social being. He explained this necessity for three reasons:

1. Humans cannot produce or obtain all the foods necessary for their survival alone. For this purpose, they have to cooperate with others.
2. People cannot meet their protection needs alone. In order to be protected from wild animals in the world and other dangers in nature, they must act together.
3. People have spiritual needs such as making friends, feeling love, chatting. A person can satisfy such needs only if he interacts with others.

According to Ibn Khaldun, since it is necessary for people to live together, the existence of the state as a mechanism to govern the society is also necessary. However, unlike most of the other Islamic thinkers, Ibn Khaldun adopted the idea that it is not necessary for the state to be governed by religious rules. As a justification for this thought, he shows that there are just states in the world that do not have a religious character (Ibn Haldun, 2020).

Ibn Khaldun has been compared with thinkers such as J.J. Rousseau, Thomas Hobbes and Machiavelli because of his ideas that the state is compulsory. Although there are similarities between them, it is difficult to say that Ibn Khaldun's views overlap with these thinkers. For example, Rousseau bases the formation of the state on people coming together and agreeing on certain conditions and signing a contract on this issue (Rousseau, 2019). However, according to Ibn Khaldun, the formation of the state is not a result of individual preferences or human will; the formation of the state is compulsory. People don't have a choice not to want it. According to Thomas Hobbes, people are constantly at war with each other due to their interests. The state is necessary as a force to instill fear in them and prevent them from harming each other. (Hobbes, 2019). Similarly, in Machiavelli, if the government is not supported by a force, people become defenseless against each other (Machiavelli, 2021). Contrary to Hobbes and Machiavelli, Ibn Khaldun did not act from people's war with each other, but from the need to help each other.

Ibn Khaldun lived in a region and time period where tribal-style governments were common. He was aware that not every tribal government is a state government in the modern sense. According to him (2020), the following conditions are necessary for a government to become a true state:

1. It should bring its people under its authority, by force if necessary. It should be able to force people to abide by the rules it has set.
2. It must have income. The state should be able to collect goods and taxes from the people in order to generate income for itself.
3. It should be recognized by other states. The criterion for this is to be able to send ambassadors to other states.

4. It should be able to protect its borders. It must have enough military power to protect both its people and its lands.
5. There should be no power above the state power. Because if there is such a power, the power changes hands and the state collapses.

Since the establishment of the state is a necessity, it is also imperative to elect a caliph or president to rule the state. This is a situation that can be understood logically. If there is no president who can meet the needs of the people living together and resolve the conflicts between them, there will be turmoil in the society. This situation leads to problems that will lead to the collapse of the state and the extinction of the human race in time. This should never be allowed. For this reason, the existence of a competent president who will rule the state is mandatory (Ibn Haldun, 2020).

According to Ibn Khaldun (2020), it is not obligatory for the management style to be caliphate in non-Muslim states. On the other hand, in states whose people are Muslim, the head of state must be the caliph. The qualities that a caliph should have are as follows:

1. To have knowledge: The caliph must have command of both worldly sciences and religious sciences. Because if the caliph does not know the laws set by Allah, it is not possible to apply them.
2. Being fair and honest: The caliph is the person who will distribute justice to the society. Therefore, he should be fair in his decisions and honest in his actions.
3. Having acumen: The caliph is the person who will apply the laws and punishments. It is among the duties of the caliph to take the decision of war when necessary. The caliph must be resilient and courageous enough to take and implement these difficult decisions.
4. Being free: The caliph should not be under any domination that would limit his freedom. The caliph, dependent on others, cannot make his own decisions.
5. Being healthy: The caliph should not have any obstacles that would hinder his work. There should be no problems with his mental features, seeing, hearing and speaking. Apart from these, he should not have any other illness that would prevent him from going to work.

6. Being from the Quraysh Tribe: Most of the ancient Islamic scholars refer to the Hz. Muhammad Prophet of Islam as since was from the tribe of Quraysh, they adopted the idea that the caliphs who would come after him should also be from that tribe. Ibn Khaldun does not agree with this idea. According to him, such a condition may have been adopted because the Quraysh Tribe was strong in the past, but for now, the balance of power has changed. Therefore, he thinks that this condition is not valid for his time.

As can be seen from the discussion in this last item, Ibn Khaldun adopts the idea that the caliph or president should be from a powerful tribe. A strong presidency is only possible with a strong “asabiyyah”. Although “asabiyyah” is a very broad concept, it can be defined as “support given by relatives” in the context of Ibn Khaldun’s political theory.

Ibn Khaldun formed his views on the need for asabiyyah in order to strengthen the presidency, based on his observations. According to him, if there is a disagreement among the tribes about who will be the president, the parties with strong nervousness win this fight. In other words, whichever tribe is stronger, more crowded, and has more cooperation, gets the right to choose the chief among themselves (Ibn Haldun, 2020).

According to Ibn Khaldun (2020), the president maintains his power as long as the support of his compatriots is behind him. On the other hand, if the president gathers power in his own hands and removes his relatives from the state administration, this situation may harm him.

1. Treating the people harshly: Treating the people harshly harms the state. Because the people who are exposed to violence and bullying begin to hold grudges against their state.
2. The President’s dealing with commerce: If the President is involved in commerce, he forgets his main business. At the same time, his influence leads to unfair profits in trade. This hurts the public. Therefore, the president should not be interested in commerce.
3. Reducing social benefits: The people, whose social benefits are decreasing and who have problems in accessing basic services, begin to question where the taxes are spent. After a while, they look for ways not to pay taxes.

LIFE CYCLE OF STATES

According to Ibn Khaldun (2020), the final destination of the tribal organization is the state structure. Because, with the expansion of the borders and the increase in the population, it is imperative that the tribal type administration based on face-to-face and close relations becomes more professional. It is also a good thing to have government and property. If it were not so, Allah would not have given states and administrators to his most distinguished servants, the prophets. However, as it is told in the Qur'an and other holy books, the Almighty Allah, gave very powerful kingdoms to David and Solomon (Qur'an, p. 17–40).

Ibn Khaldun mentioned three types of state and power in terms of the way of governing (Ibn Khaldun, 2020):

1. Natural power: This management style is based on power and coercion. In this management style, a single person holds the power and everything the manager wants happens. The head of state governs the people according to his own arbitrary wishes and purposes. This form of power is a form of government in which the animal side of man is at the forefront.
2. Political power: It is the style of power in which the guidance of the mind is applied. In this form of power, the aim is to meet the worldly needs of the people and to protect them from harmful things. This power is the version of "natural power" developed through experience. This administration adopts a secular understanding.
3. Caliphate administration: This government works to meet both worldly and spiritual needs of people according to religious rules. This management style depends on people's preference. Because people can live in the second management style. However, if the society adopts Islamic rules, the management style they will be happy with is the caliphate.

According to Ibn Khaldun (2020), all states experience five different periods from the moment they emerged until they collapse:

1. Victory and Invasion Period: In this period, there is an invasion or forcible seizure of a country or region belonging to another state

or tribe in a defensive position. At this stage, the head of the invading state is a powerful example for those around him. During this period, the president collects taxes and does not hesitate to use his authority. He is also aware of the value of the *asabiyyah* and his compatriots who brought him victory. In this period, although the positive elements of *asabiyya* were preserved, it can be observed that it did not form with all the organs of the state.

2. **The Period of Oppression and Loneliness:** In this period, the head of state begins to concentrate the administration and power only in his own hands. While gaining victory, he slowly moves away from his kinsmen who support him. He gets new guys to replace them. Thus, he wants to intimidate his own kin. In this period, the President aims to keep them under control by increasing the pressure on his compatriots. As he increases the pressure on his kinsmen, his own loneliness increases.
3. **Rest and Comfort Period:** In this period, the head of state fully achieved his power and became a complete ruler. In this period, the aim was no longer to develop or preserve power. Now the head of state has begun to experience the comfort of being in power. In this period, the tax revenues of the state increase. The monarch builds artistic buildings in various parts of his country as a sign of economic growth. The ruler, who distributes gifts to those around him, is very generous in this period. He especially wants to increase their loyalty by giving good salaries to his soldiers. It shows the image of having a strong army against such other states.
4. **Opinion and Peace Period:** The head of state, who is in power in this period, prefers to be content with what his ancestors earned rather than gaining something himself. It does not aim to fight and gain new places. For this reason, he gets on well with other heads of state with equal power and lives in peace. In this period, the state tradition is now well established. For this reason, it is important for the head of state to follow the customs established by his ancestors.
5. **Period of Waste and Extravagance:** In this period, the head of state spends the wealth inherited from his ancestors in pursuit of entertainment without reckoning. In this period, the sultan was sur-

rounded by people of bad character. With their influence, the sultan leads an extravagant life. The only thing that the Sultan cares about is his own entertainment. He ignores the needs of his people and soldiers. For this reason, the military power of the state weakens and the state faces a deadly disease.

According to this cycle, the basic element that establishes a state is the feeling of cooperation within the tribe. Thanks to the courage and cooperation provided by this feeling, the tribe takes possession by invading other tribes or lands. However, if the head of state succumbs to his personal ambitions and moves away from the tribal solidarity that brought him to power, he loses his real power and some of his virtues. When the pursuit of pleasure and entertainment becomes the primary goal of the head of state, it is inevitable that the state will weaken and eventually collapse.

Ibn Khaldun argued that there is a parallelism between the life of states and the life of people. He stated that in one of Hz. Muhammad's words, stated that the average human lifespan was sixty-seventy years, but as an exception, people living up to the age of one hundred and twenty were seen in some societies. For this reason, the lifetime of states is around one hundred and twenty years at most (Ibn Khaldun, 2020).

Ibn Khaldun reaches the same conclusion by making the calculation about the life of the states with another method. According to him (2020), the last limit of the growth and development age of a person is the age of forty. After this age, people begin to age and approach death. So a generation is forty years. The life span of a state cannot be more than three generations. Ibn Khaldun presented two proofs about why the human generation should be forty years. The first of these is a verse of the Qur'an: "... It takes thirty months for her to be carried and weaned (during pregnancy). When he finally reached his strong age and reached the age of forty, he said: My Lord, inspire me to be grateful for the blessings you gave to my parents and to do a good deed that you will be pleased with; give me righteousness in my lineage. Indeed, I have repented and turned to you, and indeed I am one of the Muslims" (Qur'an, 46/15). The second is that the Israelites spent forty years in the desert of Tih. According to Ibn Khaldun, this period is the time required for a generation to perish and

be replaced by a generation that has not seen humiliation and is not accustomed to it. This is the equivalent of a human lifetime.

According to Ibn Khaldun (2020), three generations rule in states:

First generation: The generation in which the brutality and harshness of the tribal lifestyle continues. During this period, coping with difficult living conditions and fighting skills are preserved. For this reason, the state instills fear in other states and its own people. Compared to the five periods of the states above, this generation corresponds to the whole of the first period and the beginning of the second period.

Second generation: This generation achieves wealth and prosperity. It is a period of change from poverty to abundance. During this period, most managers get used to laziness and comfort. Therefore, the basic virtues of the first period that established and sustained the state began to weaken. But despite the moral weakening, some good traits continue to protect themselves during this period. Compared to the five periods of states, this generation is more similar to the third period. On the other hand, there are aspects similar to the second and fourth periods.

Third generation: They have lost all the toughness and warlike characteristics of that period, as if they had never lived as Bedouins in the past. They have not made any new gains as they are busy consuming the wealth their ancestors inherited. As they lost their fighting qualities, they became unable to defend themselves and began to hire mercenaries to defend themselves. This period is a period of extravagance and showing off. When foreigners who are influential in the state administration are added to this, the collapse of the state becomes inevitable. This generation corresponds to the fifth period when compared to the five periods that the states spent. It also bears traces of the fourth period.

CONCLUSION

Plato is the first thinker to establish a similarity between man and the state in the history of thought. He likened the state structure to the human body. He stated that there are managers in the state for the head in the human, guards for the body and workers for the feet (Platon, 2019). On

the other hand, it is difficult to say that Ibn Khaldun's understanding of the state is similar to Plato's. Because Plato's analogy is that the class structure in society also exists in the state. Ibn Khaldun's analogy is that states also have a life span similar to that of humans.

It must be admitted that Ibn Khaldun's views on the life of states are original and interesting. On the other hand, neither the criteria used to define a human generation as forty years nor the criteria used by states to say that the life span is three human generations are objective. It is also known that there are states that have lived for more than one hundred and twenty years. For this reason, it is necessary to accept Ibn Khaldun's views as a result of his experiences and limited observations, which he could obtain within the possibilities of his time.

On the other hand, the invalidity of his theory on the life of states from today's point of view does not diminish the value of Ibn Khaldun. Because, as mentioned in the introduction, he put forward original ideas on many subjects from sociology to economy, from history to architecture, from religion to education and politics, and in this respect, he is a thinker who transcends his age.

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