

Reflections on the Evolution of Mediaeval Cairo in Light of Ibn Khaldun's Theories of Culture

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Abstract: The author's Master's thesis, which served as the study's basis, was utilized as the essential source. It is an attempt to understand a portion of the components that influenced the development of mediaeval Cairo and its formation drawing on Ibn Khaldun's concepts of society and social change. It depends on the idea that the actual development of a city mirrors the social factors that support the verifiable cycle. As a social observer, Ibn Khaldun explored the social factors behind verifiable occasions. He developed a theory of history based on a cyclical pattern of social development that leads to the rise and decline of political institutions. Because of progress, the city is accepted to follow this inescapable developmental example. In this review, a few parts of Cairo (Al-Qahirah) will be inspected considering Ibn Khaldun's perspectives. The review is divided into two parts: the first gives an overall synopsis of the hypothesis and its understandings utilizing Ibn Khaldun's Introduction (Al Muqaddimah) and scholastic papers by different students of history and social researchers who have concentrated on Ibn Khaldun. The thought is applied in the second part to numerous components of Cairo's advancement and formation, as found in its arranging attributes and authentic structures. The primary history specialist of Egypt at that time, Al-Maqrizi, composed itemized manuscripts that will be utilized to sort out the authentic subtleties of the city during that time.

Keywords: Medieval Cairo, Ibn Khaldun, Al-Maqrizi, Civilization, Historical Buildings, Asabiyah, Egypt, Social Change, Science of Culture

1. INTRODUCTION

At the outset of this paper, key terms are defined to help understand its specific meaning within the context of the research:

Asabiyah: is the social cohesion, group solidarity, or *esprit de corps* that binds people together and enables them to form and sustain a civilization. It's a feeling of a group or kinship based on their shared descent, interests, or experiences. In Ibn Khaldun's theory, it is the crucial "feeling" that drives the rise and fall of dynasties and civilizations.

Umrān: is the processes of social development, encompassing both the material and spiritual aspects of human society and its progress from a primitive state to a more sophisticated one. It includes social, economic, political, and cultural developments, essentially the entire human condition.

Hadara: is the organized life in a city (madina) synonymous with tamaddun (settled urban life), just as polis. It is characterized by permanent structures, established communities, and integration into broader societal systems in contrast with badawa (Bedouin or rural life) which is nomadic, reliant on livestock, and adapted to harsh desert environments.

The historical backdrop of social reasoning is credited with assisting Ibn Khaldun in planning the study of culture (Ilm al Umran). Ibn Khaldun proposes a verifiable hypothesis in light of his careful assessment of Middle Eastern and North African developments. This hypothesis is imbued with information on the idea of social cycles. Culture is concentrated on with regards to its social, monetary, political, and strict parts as well as its environmental and geological qualities. The central idea is the laid-out pattern of birth, development, and rot that underlies human progress in its appearances and characteristics, and which depicts the standard repetitive change from ancient to acculturated society and back once more. Ibn Khaldun infers that the driving force behind this development is the power of *asabiyah*, often described as social cohesion or collective solidarity. He observed this pattern particularly in the regions of North Africa and the Middle East, areas positioned between desert life and advanced civilizations. Specific components that grow at the same time with development's advancement, like the express, the city, monetary life, artistic expression, and technical disciplines, show this example of civilization's extension. It very well may be guaranteed that the city has a physical and verifiable association with the powers and regulations that oversee the course of social turn of events. Utilizing verifiable information, this thought might be evaluated both hypothetically and for all intents and purposes. Ibn Khaldun's beliefs are concurrent with the establishment of major Muslim towns in North Africa, such as Fez, Tunis, and Cairo, and in the Middle East, such as Damascus, Aleppo, Baghdad, and Jerusalem. Cities visited by Ibn Khaldun and mentioned in his work can be used to describe various complicated processes underlying the formation of the city, both culturally and physically. The text(s) of Al-Maqrizi, who lived contemporaneously with Ibn Khaldun and documented the places he visited, including Cairo, will give the historical material required to comprehend the features of the city under consideration. As a result, the study will be divided into two parts: examination and application. The study of culture will be featured in the main area. Following that, critical thoughts on this subject are presented, for example, social sorts and the progressive change starting with one kind and then onto the next; the idea of *asabiyah*; the ascent and breakdown of development; and the idea of the city. The

following section explores the early development of the Arab communities and the establishment of Cairo as a fortified city under the Fatimids, analysed through Ibn Khaldun's theoretical framework. The last part will conclude by presenting new perspectives for further inquiry, addressing both theoretical and practical aspects.

2. PART I-EXAMINATION OF THE THEORY

This part doesn't intend to decipher the components or practices of social science. The emphasis will primarily be placed on topics relevant to the process of urbanization. Keeping that in mind, I'll restrict my conversation to explaining Ibn Khaldun's perspectives as they are introduced in *Al Muqaddimah*, the essential hotspot for this examination. To additionally make sense of some of Ibn Khaldun's thoughts, extra sources will likewise be counselled.

Background: Ibn Khaldun, born in 1332 in Tunis, is recognized as a foundational thinker in both the fields of history and humanism in the Muslim world. His work left a profound mark on the study of societies, their formation, and development. Throughout his life, Ibn Khaldun sought both security and influence, navigating the complex demands of political and scholarly circles. His full name reflects his distinguished lineage: Abdurahman bin Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Al-Hasan bin Jabir bin Muhammad bin Ibrahim bin Abdurahman bin Ibn Khaldun. According to his own accounts, his family traced their roots to Hadramout in Yemen, and he asserted ancestry from Wa'el ibn Hajar, a prominent member of a renowned Arabian dynasty, as recorded by Ibn Hazem. However, the credibility of these genealogical claims has been widely debated among historians, partly because of the political implications such assertions carried out during his time. Ibn Khaldun received a comprehensive education befitting his family's traditions, initially under the guidance of his father, an academic who had chosen not to engage in administrative affairs as his ancestors had. His studies included memorization of the Qur'an and mastery of subjects such as grammar, Islamic jurisprudence, Hadith, rhetoric, philology, and poetry. By late adolescence, he had obtained credentials in multiple disciplines. His formative years were shaped by his pursuit of knowledge, but at age 19, his academic journey was disrupted by an epidemic that spread from Samarkand to Mauritania, a crisis that would precede his entry into public service (Khaldun).

Science of Culture: Ibn Khaldun's main contribution to social thought is the development of the science of culture, known as *Umran*. He argued that understanding history and human society requires a clear and systematic study of the causes and nature of social phenomena, including customs, institutions, and arts. Using logical reasoning and examples from history, he showed how this new science could explain the development of civilizations. He also noted similarities between this approach and fields like rhetoric and political science, which address related questions.

The Concept of Asabiyah: The foundation of Ibn Khaldun's theory of history and society rests on the concept of asabiyah. This term is notably complex and has been subject to varied interpretations, especially by Western scholars. For example, Monteil often translates it as "esprit de corps" or "group spirit," while Rosenthal describes it as "group feeling." However, equating asabiyah directly with Durkheim's idea of mechanical solidarity is problematic, as Ibn Khaldun's notion represents a more dynamic form of social cohesion. Other terms used to explain asabiyah include "community spirit," "national idea," "collective will," and "social solidarity". Ultimately, Ibn Khaldun's understanding of asabiyah is nuanced and cannot be reduced simply to mechanical solidarity or uniform social bonds. To put the theory of asabiyah in contrast with other theories from modern and classical domains, Ibn Khaldun's theory of *asabiyah* highlights the role of kinship-based group solidarity that cyclically drives the rise and decline of societies. This stands in contrast to Durkheim's approach, which centers on social cohesion arising from social roles and the division of labor within a community. Tönnies highlights the qualitative change in social bonds from intimate to impersonal, while Mumford stresses the organizational and technological foundations of social cohesion. Each theory offers a distinct lens on social solidarity grounded in different social realities and historical contexts. According to Ibn Khaldun, a particular element or motivating force is necessary for the sense of collective involvement to be stronger among certain individuals compared to others. He calls this element *asabiyah*, a term he adapted from traditional usage and gave a positive significance. This sense of belonging is strongest toward one's own group or clan, typically composed of those sharing common ancestry. However, *asabiyah* can also extend beyond blood relations, developing among individuals who, through prolonged interaction and close association, form bonds of solidarity within a group. He quotes:

"Blood ties lead to affection for one's relations and blood relatives, no harm ought to befall them nor any destruction come upon them."(Khaldūn, 1967)

A portion of the elements that permit 'asabiyah to be compelling and dynamic are as under (Önder & Ulaşan, 2018):

- *Methods of living (al-Ma'ash)*: The feeling of being in a gathering in a similar expert occupation would be estimated on a similar size of the requirement for affiliation.
- *Power (al-Ghalaba or al-Malaka)*: The aspiration for power and authority is one of the variables that drives a crude local area toward civilisation.
- *Leadership (al-Riyassa)*: Ibn Khaldun's central matter was that a pioneer could keep up with their, influential place by fortifying their *asabiyah*.
- *Religion (ad-Deen)*: Resolving matters based on religious beliefs is a fundamental duty within human communities. Religion is largely responsible for shaping much of the moral values as well as the spiritual and social cohesion in society. Ibn Khaldun explains that the rapid expansion of Islam during the time of the Prophet and his early followers was largely due to the strong ancestral *asabiyah* that united the Arab tribes.

Some of the main causes of the deterioration and decline of *asabiyah*'s proficiency include:

- 'The ruler's' misuse of authority' (*Istibdad*) destroys *asabiyah*. In *Al-Muqaddimah*, Ibn Khaldun illustrates that the abuse of power undermines and weakens the social framework, resulting in conditions that inhibit the formation of *asabiyah*
- According to Ibn Khaldun, another important reason that inhibits 'asabiyah is the gathering of a large sum of money (*Tharwa*). Extravagance and luxury diminish and devitalize men's creative and active talents.

The Rise and Decline of Civilization: Ibn Khaldun describes the progression of cultural change as a cyclical pattern consisting of four phases, encompassing the 'rise' and 'decline' that underpin the evolution of human civilizations (Ahmed, 2002) (Table 1).

- *Asabiyah*, the force that unites the tribe, is what keeps the tribe together in the first phase of primitivism (*Badawa*). Ibn Khaldun states that the goal of *asabiyah* is to establish royal power (*Mulk*). This leads the tribe to conquer and enslave neighbouring tribes to strengthen their *asabiyah*.
- *Asabiyah* is at its peak at the second level, which he referred to as the stage of royal authority, or Kingship. To fulfil the inherent drive connected to authority, known as civilization, leadership (*Riyasah*) possesses the extensive power (*Malakah*) required for the creation and organization of cities (*Hadara*).

- The third progressive phase was known as the phase of development by Ibn Khaldun (Hadara). It is when "Umran" arrives at its most state-of-the-art achievements and fills in as the way of life's definitive objective. At this phase of the cycle, Umran arrives at a position of fulfilment. Toward the finish of this stage, both the rulers and the management have lost their innovation. They continue in the strides of their predecessors in participating in life's delights, and 'Asabiyah, the vital consider the advancement of civilization, begins to decline.
- The state has entered its mature stage and is destined to slowly progress through the final, fourth phase of the cycle. According to Ibn Khaldun, this time period indicates the point at which the power structure is crumbling, and another government is poised to take over. This ultimate stage of development was referred to as the "time of dotage" by Ibn Khaldun (Haram). When indications of infirmity develop, they cannot be treated or forced to disappear.

Table 1(a): Comparison of Hadara and Badawa Lifestyles

Hadara (Urban)	Badawa (Rural)
The Final And Most Advanced form of Society Represents the Highest and Ultimate Stage of Civic Institutions, States, and Communities, often Described as Cultivated or Sophisticated Civilization.	The initial and most basic form of society, marking the dawn of civilization, states, and communities, is often referred to as barbaric life. This stage is characterized by a simple and undeveloped way of living, which precedes the emergence of more complex social structures
Lavishness, Luxury, and a Pleasant Living	Low income, self-sufficiency, and the minimum essentials of life
The High Populace and Greater Density, The Formation of Urban Communities,	Low populace and density, migrants and Bedouins' way of life
The Obligation of Reason (Asabiyah of Reason), Nonattendance of Blood Virtue, Less Accentuation of Genealogy, Many Bond Types (Religion, Country, Bunch Ties), and An Absence of Gathering Cohesiveness	Blood tie (blood-based), major areas of strength for the relationship between family individuals, the high significance of blood immaculateness, the higher significance of ancestry, solid feeling of gathering fortitude, tribalism
Indulgences, Decayed Virtues More Intellectual, Less Genuine, Shrewd, Less Fearless, More Reliant, Gentler Person	No negative behaviour patterns Less astute, more legit, more valiant, fearless, self-sufficient, uncultured character

Table 1(b): Comparison of Hadara and Badawa Lifestyles

Hadara (Urban)	Badawa (Rural)
Religion, Customs, and Traditions are Given Less Prominence.	Strong devotion to religion, rituals, and traditions
The Less Significance of Nobility and Honour, High the Value of Money	Dignity and honour are more valued as compared to money
The Less Compliance With Formal Principles, the More Regulations by Authorities	The dependability on casual social principles, less conventional guidelines and fewer disciplines by authorities
The Interest in Literacy, Advanced Education Level	The pervasiveness of ignorance or insignificant instruction
Profoundly Fluctuated Open Positions (Expressions, Creates, Style, Sciences And So on.)	No heterogeneity in the workforce, and few occupations that provide for basic needs (animal husbandry and agriculture)

City in Ibn Khaldun's Theory: According to Ibn Khaldun's concept of *Umran*, the city (*Madina*) is viewed as an integral aspect of human civilization's unique development. He regarded the city as a natural and essential phase within the continuous process of societal evolution, symbolizing the advancement of social organization.

"City" in Ibn Khaldun's system follows the topical pattern of development, expansion and abridgement overseeing civilization. Subsequently, the powers that add to its advancement are regular those associated with the development of the state (*Dawla*) and thus civilisation. Ibn Khaldun characterizes the city as a part of human progress. In this sense, one could recognize four phases comprising the existing pattern of the city (Korkut, 2008).

- The primary stage is foundation and advancement comparable to the longing for solace and comforts. Subsequently, the development cycle starts in two principal perspectives: the first is monetary, connected with the creation and the techniques for earning enough for basic survival; the second is political, connected with regal power and the ascent of the state.

- The city's second stage involves its growth and expansion. During this period, urban society undergoes transformation and strives to achieve strength and stability. This process of change and consolidation stems from the evolution of the original *asabiyah* within the community into new forms of social bonds. The ancestral *asabiyah* gradually shifts toward other types of group affiliations.

- When a city reaches a stage of extravagance and prosperity, its inhabitants gradually indulge in luxurious lifestyles. This prompts the deficiency of physical and moral ethics.

- The annihilation of society becomes inescapable because of their dive into extravagances and luxuries. At this stage, goes the full circle of the city lined up with progress.

3. PART II: APPLICATION-THE PHYSICAL FORMATION

One may claim that, while considering the rise and fall of the city over its lengthy history, mediaeval Cairo had evolved across a theme pattern of evolution (Held et al., 2018). Cairo had been controlled by several dynasties, each of which left its mark on the city's physical landscape (Ahmed & Kamel, 1996). Regardless of how much each dynasty influenced the city, I contend that they all experienced a similar exponential rise and decline. The city has always been the place where this evolution process has materially shown itself, running parallel to it. This part of my study seeks to support the theory by drawing on the previous section's examination of Ibn Khaldun's ideas about culture and civilization as a lens through which to understand various aspects of medieval Cairo's environment. It is important to note that this section does not aim to provide a complete historical account of Cairo. Rather, its purpose is to highlight the potential relevance of Ibn Khaldun's concepts in interpreting certain real-world forces that shaped the city's physical and social landscape. Additionally, the city's developmental pattern will be analyzed following the four stages of foundation, growth, stability, and decline as outlined earlier. To achieve this, the works of Al-Maqrizi, a fifteenth-century historian of Cairo, will be referenced to supply relevant insights.

Physical Environment-Foundation: The first administrative city (*Dar Imarah*) established in Egypt served as the initial stage in a series of four successive urban centers founded by successive ruling dynasties. These cities include Al Fustat, Al Askar, Al Qata'i, and Al Qahirah. Each of these settlements originally consisted of distinct quarters designated for the ruler and his court, his slaves, and his military. Moreover, they functioned as the political and administrative capitals of Egypt under the authority of the Caliph, who resided either within Egypt during the Fatimid period or in distant Islamic capitals such as Medina under 'Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, Damascus under the Umayyads, and Baghdad under the Abbasids. Although the location of al-Fustat reflected an understanding of the natural conditions, Al-Maqrizi considered it less than ideal. Following Caliph Omar Ibn Al-Khattab's directive to prevent water from separating the city from the capital in Madinah, the disadvantaged site, influenced by the

prevailing environmental factors, resulted in poor air quality that adversely affected the city's climate (Fig. 1).

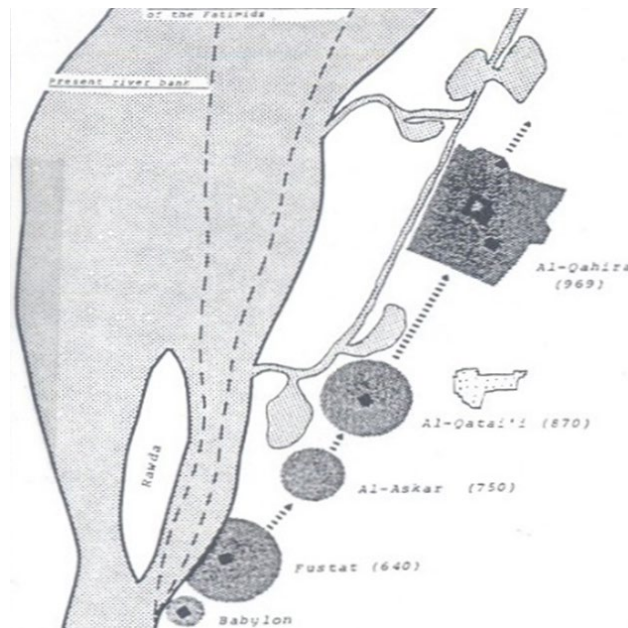


Figure 1: The Four *Muslim* Settlements (Source: Al-Sayad, the Streets of Islamic Cairo)

In accordance with the actual environment of al-Fustat, it is important to note that the mosque was constructed first to fulfill essential needs for shelter and worship. Surrounding the mosque, members of the 'Muslim Army' were settled into distinct neighborhoods (*Khitat*) based on their genealogical and ethnic backgrounds. Each clan or ethnic group was allocated a specific area where they established their respective quarters. Consequently, these neighborhoods were named after the clans or groups residing within them. The organizational pattern described above reflects the nature of society within the early Arab settlement. Although a strong collective solidarity or religious spirit played a dominant role and contributed to its success, smaller groups of *asabiyah* were also active and influenced the character of the community residing in the early settlement. Ibn Khaldun argued that the existence of multiple *asabiyah* within different groups does not exclude the presence of a larger overarching *asabiyah*. In the early Islamic period, the two forms—kinship-based *asabiyah* and religious spirit—were not so much in conflict as they were complementary, functioning alongside one another. Following the ancestral progressive system inside the occupants of the city, the quarters were coordinated and arranged (Whitcomb, 2017). As such, a commonplace association of a quarter comprising of one clan would genuinely encompass the home of the top of the family or clan, while the individuals would stay around the

head's home in various levelled requests. This morphological example would bring about a bunch of quarters isolated by open spaces. The actual setting of the various quarters mirrored a specific level of order as far as closeness from the mosque given the place of the clan in the military (AlSayyad, 2011). Those two parts of the early settlers were the chief factors which, I accept, added to the arrangement of the metropolitan texture of al-Fustat. Regarding the factors involved, I recognize two kinds of influences that played a crucial role in shaping the city. The first was based on the placement of the mosque and the preference of various groups to settle close to it. Secondly, the rising power demonstrated a deep-rooted tribal independence shaped by the inherited bonds of *asabiyah*, reflecting original social solidarity based on shared ancestry. This power appears to have begun the process of separating the quarters from one another. The necessity for new dwellings and the growth in people have caused this expansion since the process was dynamic and evolutionary rather than linear. While this course of development could have been unique from one quarter to the next, it appeared by limiting the spaces isolating the quarters. However, the cycle could have involved specific progressive degrees of dynamic in favour of occupants and in favour of some managing regulations, I may as yet keep up with that the 'road design' was profoundly affected by societal cycles. The course of socialization and social change from crude (ancestral) to acculturated (metropolitan) because of the change of 'asabiyah' could be shown on account of al-Fustat (Baali, 1988). At the point when individuals got more familiar with the existence of the city, ancestral *asabiyah* started to weaken and change into different forms because of the new sorts of affiliations that emerged. This development toward social soundness and homogeneity has reflected itself in the development and proximity of the quarters of the city. Applying Ibn Khaldun's insights, the collapse of the Umayyad dynasty led to the decline of the city's human development. The new ruling dynasty aimed at creating an alternate civilization that emerges or evolves from the previous one (Renima et al., 2016). Al-Fustat faced a new social transformation following the establishment of al-Askar in 750 A.D., which represented a natural phase in Cairo's development. Al-Askar was a fortified military district designed to separate the common people from the ruling elite. A mosque was constructed there in 785 A.D., and by the time al-Maqrizi documented the area, the city had expanded to encompass multiple large markets and residential neighborhoods, eventually connecting with al-Fustat (Naiem, 2018). The decline of al-Askar resulted from the appointment of a powerful governor. According to Al-Maqrizi's accounts, in 868 A.D.,

Caliph al-Mu'tasim appointed Ahmad Ibn Tulun, of Turkish descent, as the governor of Egypt. Ibn Tulun quickly progressed from a mere governor to the de facto ruler of Egypt and Syria. Finding al-'Askar inadequate to accommodate himself and his large army, he established a new district for himself and his officials and commissioned the construction of al-Qata'i (fiefs) for his soldiers. This new settlement, named al-Qata'i, was located to the northeast of al-'Askar. The creation of al-Qata'i marked a significant shift in governance, coinciding with the formation of the Tulunid state (*al-dawla al-Tuluniyah*) in Egypt and Syria. It was designed to serve as the administrative center and residence for Ibn Tulun and his administration. Al-Qata'i flourished during Ibn Tulun's rule but began to decline under his successors, who were unable to maintain their authority. The downfall started with excessive spending on lavish construction and enhancements to the palace and its surroundings by Khumarawayh, Ibn Tulun's son and immediate heir. Al-Maqrizi offers a detailed account of the conditions in al-Qata'i during this period of rapid leadership changes, highlighting the rulers' indulgence in luxury and extravagance. This lifestyle significantly shortened their reigns and ultimately contributed to the city's destruction by Abbasid forces in 904 A.D., less than 40 years after the dynasty's establishment. This pattern exemplifies the classic "Khaldunian" cycle, both in its structure and its typical duration within Cairo's history. It closely parallels similar developments seen in several North African cities during Ibn Khaldun's era, reinforcing the validity of his theoretical framework. A key feature of this cycle is its span of approximately three to four generations. Typically, after the founding leader passes away, their successors gradually lose the unifying force of *asabiyah*, which weakens their grip on power. Eventually, their rule collapses, giving way to a new ruling dynasty that initiates a fresh cycle.

The Rise of 'Al Qahirah': The decline of the Abbasid dynasty in the tenth century created favorable conditions for the Fatimid regime to successfully take control of Egypt. Established in Tunisia in 909 A.D. by Al-Mahdi, the Fatimids addressed the Shi'i philosophy of Islam and utilized this philosophy to cover their political purposes (Lewis, 2019). They used a time of misery between the Egyptians and the Ikhshidid which caused them to show up as heroes as opposed to usurpers (Mahmoud et al., 2019). To accomplish that the Fatimids required additional allies from inside the populace they expected to run the show. The rise of the Fatimid Caliphate in Egypt marked the establishment of Al-Qahira, the fourth prominent city in the sequence of historical capitals (Naylor, 2021). This time, the city became the seat of the caliphate (*Daru Khilafah*) as well as an administrative

center (*Daru Imarah*). Furthermore, the Fatimids aimed to build a city that could rival Baghdad, the Abbasid capital, and serve as the political heart of the ambitious Fatimid Empire (Al Husaini, 2022). As noted earlier in this review, the founding of Al-Qahira represented a 'natural stage' following the dynasty's consolidation of royal authority (*Mulk*) and the establishment of a Shi'i state (*Dawla Shi'iyyah*) within the broader Islamic history.

Jawhar al Siqili constructed the city with a wall to isolate the city (Al Khassah) from an external perspective (Al- 'Ammah) representing the power and strength of the new system and simultaneously because the Fatimids had a strict implication (Ali, 2020). Within the city walls, Jawhar established a collection of royal structures centered around the Eastern Palace (Al-Qasr Al-Sharqi), which included several smaller splendid residences known as the Blooming Palaces (Al-Qusur Al-Zahirah), the al-Azhar Mosque (Al-Jami' Al-Azhar), as well as designated quarters for slaves, guards, and the military. The wall featured gates on all four sides, controlling entry so that only the caliph and his officials could freely pass beyond them (see Fig. 2).



Figure 2: Quarters and Elements of the City of al-Qahirah (Source: Al-Sayad, Streets of Islamic Cairo)

Every one of the previously described representative components served the purpose of spreading the Fatimids' rigorous symbolism. The Eastern Palace became the city's focal point owing to its styled spaces (Qa'at), the most important of which was Qa'at ad-Dhahab (Karam, 2019). After it, the Western Palace for the harim was constructed and placed next to the Eastern Palace along Qasaba's main spine. (Pradines, 2020). An infinite

expanse was left between the two castles to be used for feast events. This imperial expanse is known as 'Between the Two Palaces' (Bayn al-Qasrayn) was meant to be so large that 10,000 soldiers could march across it (Fulton, 2022). The perspectives of the successive Sunni rulers toward the Fatimids and their architectural legacy gradually reshaped Bayn al-Qasrayn over time, as different dynasties took control of the city. The design of the rooms inside the wall was mostly completed using al-detailed Fustat's ethnic model. Quarters were referred to as because of Al-Qahira, which was not at all like Al-Fustat (Harat pl. of Hara). Each hara was given a name based on the faction or group it belonged to. Al-Maqrizi described the *hara* as a district where people gathered and lived near one another (Mahdy, 2017). He identified fifteen such quarters within Al-Qahira, which formed the core of the city's development inside its walls. Over time, despite the increasing number of these quarters, they retained their original tribal names (Lombard, 2017). The progress occurring within the city's fortifications reflected similar growth beyond them. According to Al-Maqrizi's description of the city's boundaries outside the original Al-Qahira walls, the expansion taking place inside the walls was accompanied by parallel development outside the city limits. Like Al-Fustat, Al-Qahira was initially inhabited by the ancestral and ethnic groups who accompanied Jawhar Al-Siqili during the conquest of Egypt. After constructing the city walls and determining the locations for major buildings, Jawhar assigned the remaining land to these groups so they could establish their own neighborhoods and build their quarters. The city's physical layout thus reveals the processes of social interaction and cultural growth that shaped its development. To emphasise this point, I'd want to discuss how security and peace under a powerful government translated into new types of organisations. As tribal ties weakened, occupational groupings began to emerge. The physical qualities of both horizontal and vertical development were a representation of Al Qahira's level of civilisation (Enab, 2018). As a result, the causes that initially drove the construction of quarters faded and were finally absorbed by the effects of population growth and civilization development. Ibn Khaldun gives the theoretical foundation for comprehending this occurrence. When Al-Qahira was founded, it was seen as a closed political and administrative center, a feature that made the Shi'i caliphs perceive their predicted alienation from Sunni society and the incomparability of Misr over Al Qahira. Nonetheless, the caliph's exclusion from the community appears to have significantly undermined the Fatimids' reputation and influence. (Syed & Ali, 2021). Consequently, the caliph likely recognized the need to be more visible to the public during certain occasions by hosting grand banquets in the palace and participating

in official Shi'i celebrations held in the royal square of Bayn al-Qasrayn. My analysis of the Fatimids highlights the central role of Shi'i authority in legitimizing their caliphate. The Shi'i Fatimids, who asserted descent from Ali, employed various strategies to strengthen their claim to power. Among these tactics was the selective interpretation of Quranic verses, which they used to justify and validate their rule over the predominantly Sunni population of Misr. (Fig. 3&4).



Figure 3: Central Niche of a Triple Mihrab Ikhwat Yousuf Moseleum (Source: Survey of Egypt, Index to Map of Cairo Showing Mohammedan Monuments (Cairo, 1951) no.301)



Figure 4: A Panel with the Names of Mohammad and Ali in Al Aqmar (Source: Discovering Al-Aqmar: One of Egypt's First Hanging Mosques by Rania Kamaly, Community)

The fundamental power in uniting individuals and exciting contention among them keeps on being strict shading. To prevail upon and keep up with the faithfulness of the general population locally established on the law, the ruler should either display a strict connection or genealogy, similarly to the Fatimids, or strict devotion and ideals, just like with the Mamluks. This insight allows us to grasp how the Fatimids leveraged architecture to promote their sense of *asabiyah* and assert control over the Sunni population in Egypt.

The reasons for political and governmental disintegration, in my opinion, are weak leadership and/or vocal opposition. When it came to Al Qahira, the Fatimids were on the decline and the Crusaders were a menace to the entire Muslim hegemony. Thus, the Fatimids participated in the Crusades wars, which began about 1167 A.D., in addition to their collapse (Arthur, 2018). Furthermore, the Turks who lived in Al Qahira had gained strength and power that enabled them to take control of the city's most strategic and vulnerable areas. Ibn Khaldun's theory on the inevitable cyclical rise and fall of civilizations helps illuminate the intriguing developments in the city. In the case of the Fatimids and their capital, Al-Qahira, the predicted pattern of growth followed by decline proved insightful. Ultimately, the city advanced as a center of imperial power, embodying ideas of strength and authority.

These dynamics also sparked challenges to the legitimacy of the local ruling dynasty. Consequently, the concept of *asabiyah*—the social cohesion that underpinned their rise—needed to be actively reinforced. To support this, the Fatimids employed *Da'wa Diniyah*, a form of religious propaganda, as a strategic tool to strengthen their social solidarity and political dominance.

4. CONCLUSION

The use of Ibn Khaldun's social theories in analyzing the development of Medieval Cairo served a dual purpose. On one hand, his ideas helped uncover and explain the underlying social dynamics—the 'internal implications'—behind the external historical data provided by Al-Maqrizi. This involved interpreting the detailed accounts of the city's physical features as well as its social, political, and economic realities.

Ibn Khaldun's reflections were, of course, employed to examine and assess the validity and relevance of certain arguments related to this study.

It is important to differentiate between the city as a physical entity shaped by external forces common to its nature—the tangible framework—and the city as a lived experience that evolves over time, following cyclical patterns of rise and decline like those of civilizations. To support this view, I will highlight several challenges observed in the city's later stages of urban development that can be analyzed through the lens of Ibn Khaldun's theories.

Cairo's growth unfolded through a series of recurring cycles that reflected the city's inherent qualities of stability and order as fundamental characteristics. Each cycle corresponded to a ruling group whose authority and level of development were evident in the daily life of the city. The strength of *asabiyah*—social cohesion and group solidarity—enabled societal progress and the rise of ruling power simultaneously. Therefore, since each ruling dynasty possessed a distinctive *asabiyah*, the imprint of their influence should be visible in the city's physical and social fabric.

When no new cities were established, the ruling powers typically adapted the existing conquered urban centers to suit their needs. Both the Ayyubids (1171–1250 A.D.) and the Mamluks (1250–1517 A.D.), as successors of the Abbasid Sunni tradition, did not found new cities. However, under the Ayyubids, Cairo underwent a significant transformation with a more unified structure. The construction of the Citadel and the enclosure of al-Qahira and Misr within a continuous defensive wall reinforced the city's fortified position against Crusader threats. Additionally, the Ayyubids introduced new architectural and cultural landmarks, such as madrasas—Islamic schools established following the example of their Sunni counterparts in Iraq and Iran. These institutions aimed to promote Sunni Islamic teachings, marking the establishment of Abbasid-aligned Sunni authority in Egypt after the fall of the Shi'i Fatimid dynasty.

Another significant action taken by the Ayyubids in Cairo, reflecting their complete rejection of Shi'i rule, was their determined effort to erase the legacy of the Fatimid city and its architecture. They focused on transforming the once magnificent and garden-like appearance of Fatimid Al-Qahira into a more practical urban environment. Over time, the city evolved into a densely populated area characterized by intensified commercial activity and a concentration of markets. A further example is the Ayyubids' approach to the Fatimids' grand square, Bayn al-Qasrayn, which experienced substantial architectural development during both the later Ayyubid period and under their successors, the Mamluks (Fig. 5).



Figure 5: The Complex of Sultan Qalawun and Nasr Mohamed in Bayn Al Qasrayn Area (Source: www.minaretsofcairo.wordpress.com)

The Mamluks, originally slave soldiers who accompanied the Ayyubids during their conquest of Egypt, emerged as the Sunni successors to the Ayyubid dynasty. Consequently, the city's development continued along a similar ideological path. The Mamluks did not undertake major reconstruction or alter the city's core structure. The Citadel remained the seat of government, while the most notable changes were the city's physical expansion and economic growth. The fundamental part of the Mamluks examined in this study is the source of their *asabiyah*. Since they originated as slaves without religious status, noble lineage, or a prestigious family to legitimize their rule, they needed to express their virtues to gain the support and trust of the community. Qualities such as devotion, generosity, and grandeur were essential for a Mamluk Amir to justify his leadership. These values were embodied in architectural landmarks that served social and religious functions. For example, a madrasa bearing the Amir's name would be dedicated to educating the public in Islamic teachings and various sciences. Attached to the madrasa, a *Sabil-Kuttub*—a combination of a public water fountain and a Qur'an school—would be constructed. The Amir's name was prominently inscribed on the building, allowing passersby to drink water, listen to Qur'anic recitations from a window above the main street, and pray for blessings upon the Amir. Through such structures, Mamluk patrons engaged directly with the community, reinforcing their virtues and strengthening social ties (see Fig. 6).



Figure 6: Sabil-Kuttab of Al-Ghuri (Source: Sultan AL-Ghuri Complex, From Wikipedia; the Free Encyclopaedia)

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am grateful to my colleagues and mentors at the American University of Ras Al Khaimah, UAE for helping me in carrying out research throughout my work.

6. DECLARATIONS

Funding

No funding sources are reported

Conflict of Interest

Author does not have any conflict of interest

Author Contributions

The author has contributed to writing, designing, compiling and editing the final manuscript

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