

## Evaluation of Ibn Khaldun's Muqaddima in Terms of Food Studies

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### Abstract

**The Purpose of the Study:** Food studies is a multidisciplinary academic field that examines the cultural, social, economic, and political dimensions of food. This study aims to evaluate Ibn Khaldun's Muqaddimah through the lens of food studies, thus providing a novel perspective on this classic text. The significance of this study is heightened by the fact that it is the first to analyze Ibn Khaldun's most important work, the Muqaddimah, from the perspective of food studies, thereby contributing substantially to the literature.

**Method:** The study utilized document review as the primary data collection tool, with content analysis employed for data evaluation. Relevant passages in the Muqaddimah about food studies were identified through document scanning and subsequently categorized into themes via content analysis. These themes were then interpreted and evaluated in the context of food studies.

**Result:** Content analysis of the identified passages revealed the overarching theme of "The effect of food on people and society." This primary theme was further divided into five sub-themes: (1) food, nutrition, and culture; (2) food, nutrition, and social structure; (3) food, nutrition, and geography; (4) food, political, and economic systems; and (5) food, nutrition, religion, and health.

**Conclusion:** The Muqaddimah offers a comprehensive examination of the effects of food on the economic and social structures of societies. It delves into the cultural, economic, and health dimensions of food, emphasizing the critical importance of food security for societal well-being and stability. Overall, this study provides a significant perspective on contemporary discussions and research in food studies, and it serves as a valuable resource for understanding the historical roots of this field.

**Keywords:** Ibn Khaldun, Muqaddimah, Food Studies, Gastronomy, Civilization.

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### Özgün Arařtırma Makalesi (Original Research Article)

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## ***İbn Haldūn'un Mukaddime Eserinin Gıda Çalıřmaları Aısından Deđerlendirilmesi***

### **Öz**

**Çalıřmanın Amacı:** Gıda çalıřmaları, gıdanın kültürel, sosyal, ekonomik ve politik boyutlarını inceleyen disiplinlerarası bir akademik alandır. Bu çalıřma, İbn Haldun'un Mukaddime eserinin gıda çalıřmaları aısından deđerlendirilmesini amalamakta ve böylece klasik metne yeni bir bakıř aısı sunmaktadır. Çalıřmanın İbn Haldun'un en önemli eseri Mukaddime'nin gıda çalıřmaları aısından deđerlendirilmesi bađlamında ilk olması literatüre katkı aısından önemini daha da artırmaktadır.

**Yöntem:** Çalıřmada birincil veri toplama aracı olarak doküman incelemesi ve verilerin deđerlendirilmesinde ierik analizi yöntemi kullanılmıřtır. Mukaddime 'deki gıda çalıřmalarını ilgilendiren pasajlar doküman tarama yöntemiyle belirlenmiř ve ierik analizi ile temalar halinde kategorize edilmiřtir. Oluřturulan temalar gıda çalıřmaları aısından yorumlanarak deđerlendirilmiřtir.

**Bulgular:** Belirlenen pasajlara ierik analizi uygulanmıř ve ana temanın "Gıdanın insanlar ve toplum üzerindeki etkisi" olduđu bulunmuřtur. Ana temanın (1) gıda, beslenme ve kültür, (2) gıda, beslenme ve sosyal yapı, (3) gıda, beslenme ve cođrafya, (4) gıda, politik ve ekonomik sistemler ve (5) gıda, beslenme ve din ve sađlık olmak üzere beř alt temaya sahip olduđu görölmüřtür.

**Sonuç:** Mukaddime gıdanın toplumların ekonomik ve sosyal yapıları üzerindeki etkilerini kapsamlı bir şekilde ele almaktadır. Gıdanın kültürel, ekonomik ve sađlık boyutları üzerinde durarak, toplumların genel refahı ve istikrarı için gıda güvencesinin önemini vurgulamaktadır. Sonuç olarak Mukaddime, gıda ile ilgili güncel tartıřmalara ve çalıřmalara önemli bir perspektif sunmakta ve gıda çalıřmalarının tarihsel kökenlerini anlamak için deđerli bir kaynak olarak öne çıkmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İbn Haldun, Mukaddime, Gıda Çalıřmaları, Gastronomi, Medeniyet.

### **1. Introduction**

Ibn Khaldun was a famous scholar, statesman, and historian who lived in the 14th century. He was born in Tunis in 1332 and died in Cairo in 1406. His life coincided with a period of great turmoil in the Islamic world, witnessing the decline of Islamic civilization and the rise of European powers. During this turbulent period, Ibn Khaldun lived a life full of academic pursuits and political struggles. He held various administrative positions in North Africa and Andalusia, and these experiences formed the basis of his groundbreaking works in the fields of history, sociology, and economics (Irwin, 2018).

### **His Life and Works**

Ibn Khaldun's life can be examined in four main stages: (1) Educational Period: He studied the Quran and sciences in Tunisia for twenty years. (2) Administrative and Political Period: He held administrative and political positions in Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria and Andalusia. (3) Writing Period: During this period, which lasted eight years, Ibn Salame concentrated on writing books in his castle and in Tunisia. During this period, he wrote his most important works, "**Kitāb al-'Ibar – كتاب العبر**"<sup>1</sup> and "**Al-Muqaddimah – المقدمة**". (4) Period of Judgeship and Lectureship: He worked as a judge and lecturer for fourteen years (Barrows, 2023).

### **Ibn Khaldun's Thought System**

Ibn Khaldun's thought system can be summarized in four basic themes: (1) the cyclical nature of civilizations; (2) the importance of geography and climate; (3) the role of states, and (4) the concept of "**Asabiyyah – عصبية – Solidarity**"<sup>2</sup> (Tahir & Nori, 2023). Arguing that civilizations go through periods of rise, peak, and decline, Ibn Khaldun emphasizes the effects of geographical conditions on the economy, social structure, and culture of societies (Gule, 2014). He states that a strong and effective state maintains social order and ensures the continuity of civilization. With the concept of asabiyya, he expresses that social solidarity, a sense of belonging, and unity around a common goal play an important role in the establishment and strengthening of states (Mirawdeli, 2015).

### **Ibn Khaldun's Contribution to Modern Social Sciences**

Ibn Khaldun's theories have had a great impact on the development of modern social sciences (Garrison, 2012). Roger Garaudy described Ibn Khaldun as the forerunner of Descartes and Montesquieu and the Marx of Islam, while Toynbee described him as the most brilliant interpreter of historical morphology (Meriç, 2023). Ibn Khaldun's views are considered the forerunner of sociology, philosophy of history, political sociology, and other social sciences

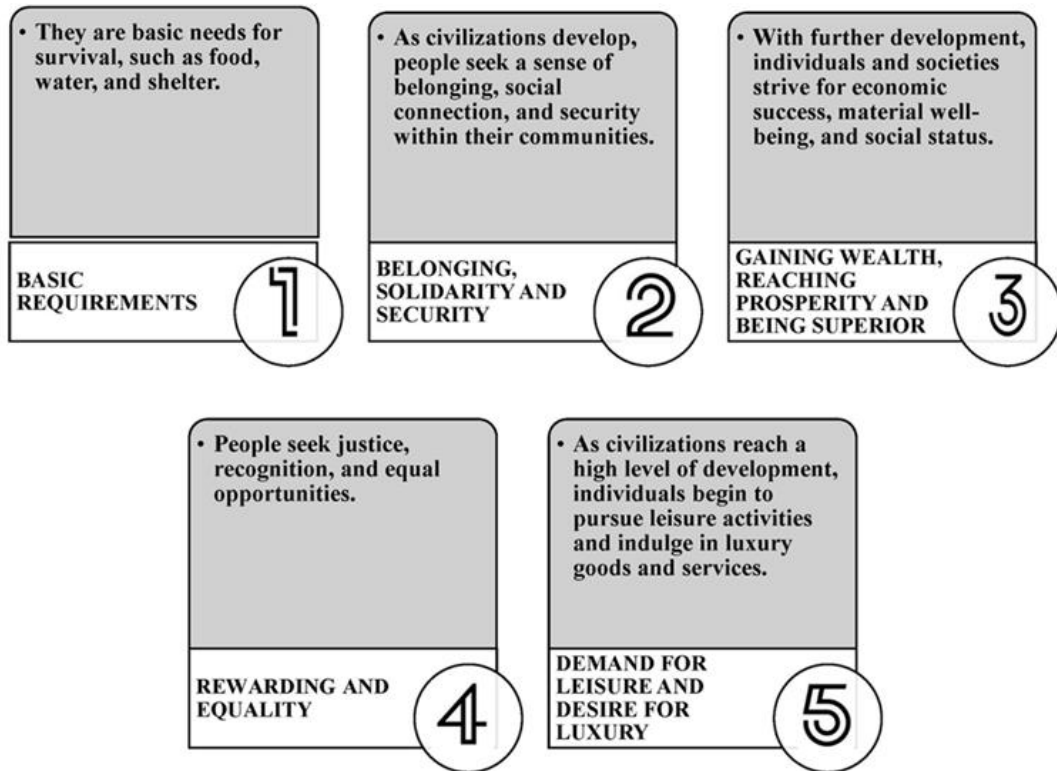
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<sup>1</sup> **Kitāb al-'Ibar – كتاب العبر**, also known as the *History of Ibn Khaldun*, is the monumental work in which Ibn Khaldun chronicles the history of the world. The first part of this work, famously known as the *Muqaddimah*, serves as an introduction. In the subsequent second and third parts, Ibn Khaldun narrates the history of humanity from the first man, Adam, to his era. This comprehensive work covers the prophets and societies preceding Islam, including ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome, Iran, and the pre-Islamic Arab states. It also delves into the period of the Prophet Muhammad and the various states established by Islamic societies up until Ibn Khaldun's time.

<sup>2</sup> **Asabiyyah – عصبية**: In Ibn Khaldun's system of thought, it is the fundamental social bond that enables societies to progress from primitiveness to civilization.

(Mowlana, 2024). His views on the emergence and development of societies, the effects of geographical and physical conditions, and the impact of population on social life can be traced in the works of many modern theorists.

When we examine Muqaddimah, we see that centuries before Abraham Maslow, Ibn Khaldun addressed human needs hierarchically in five stages, depending on the development of civilizations. Ibn Khaldun's five-stage hierarchy of needs is presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** The five-stage hierarchy of needs proposed by Ibn Khaldun  
Source: Created by the author.

Ibn Khaldun's theory suggests that human needs evolve as societies progress, and these needs are interconnected and influence each other. According to Ibn Khaldun, societies prioritize survival factors like food, water, and shelter, which are basic needs. However, Ibn Khaldun emphasizes in the preface that food is not merely a physiological need but also a crucial factor shaping the economic and social structure of societies (Haldun, 2007: 234-247).

Ibn Khaldun's concept of "Ilm of Umran – علم العمران"<sup>3</sup> is considered a fundamental science encompassing many branches of social sciences today. The muqaddimah is a comprehensive work that includes important ideas in many disciplines, and Ibn Khaldun's thoughts have greatly contributed to the development of modern social sciences. (Al-Dhawadi, 2024). (الذوادي, 2024).

### **Introduction and Interdisciplinary Approach**

The word **Muqaddimah** is of Arabic origin and means "to go ahead – قَدَمًا المضي" (Khaldun, 2015). The term "**muqaddimat al-jaysh – مقدمات الجيش**", which is used to refer to the vanguard of the army, has also been used over time for the preface or introductory sections of books and scientific texts. The word, which is used in the sense of "premise proposition" in logic, theology, and jurisprudence, later acquired the meaning of "preface" or "introduction" (Demirtaş, 2023). **Muqaddimah** is divided into two: "**muqaddimat al-kitâb – الكتاب مقدمة – preface**" introduces the purpose, subject, sections, and method followed by the author of the work; while "**muqaddimat al-ilm – مقدمة العلم – introduction**" contains the basic information of the relevant branch of science (Gülşen, 2017). These terms provide preparatory information for the subject of the work and emphasize the importance of the work. Ibn Khaldun is best known for his masterpiece, the Muqaddimah. The Muqaddimah presents comprehensive theories on history, society, and economics, and combines various disciplines. The work consists of six main sections: (1) human civilization, (2) nomadic (**Bedouin – Al Badavi – البدو**) civilization, (3) political systems and cultural cycles, (4) urban (**Al-Hadari – الحضاري**) civilization, (5) production methods and crafts, and (6) sciences. These sections deal with different aspects of social phenomena and events (Khaldun, 2015). Ibn Khaldun emphasizes the necessity of social life with the term "**umran – عمران**" and examines the rise and fall of civilizations, the influence of geography and climate on societies, and the role of government in shaping social and economic life (Razak et al., 2020).

Ibn Khaldun's Muqaddimah is an important text that encompasses many branches of social science and asserts that he founded a new science. Today, disciplines such as economics, sociology, history, and geography are considered separate fields, each with its sub-branches. However, the Muqaddimah is a work in which these disciplines are considered and evaluated as a whole. The work covers areas such as geography, history, sociology, economic theory, and the history of science (Khaldun, 2015).

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<sup>3</sup> **Ilm of Umran – علم العمران**: The epistemology of history as a field of knowledge intersects with the ontology of history as a realm of existence because this discipline seeks to comprehend humanity and society in a broad sense.

The Muqaddimah has often been narrowly addressed through the lens of sociology, and Ibn Khaldun's economic views have been interpreted differently by various ideologies (Salvatore, 2016; Cörüt, 2021). When addressing social issues such as labor and the division of labor, the Muqaddimah emphasizes the importance of the state's non-interference in the market (Smolo, 2024). It is an important reference work for modern social sciences, reflecting both the academic heritage of its time and providing significant perspectives for contemporary studies. Ibn Khaldun's ideas have had a lasting impact on scholars and thinkers in various disciplines. His works have been studied and analyzed by historians, sociologists, economists, and political scientists (Kholiq et al., 2022). His insights into the dynamics of social and political change continue to be relevant today.

### ***The Muqaddimah and Food Studies***

While traditional historical narratives often focus on political events and the rise and fall of empires, a more comprehensive understanding of human history can be gained by examining the interconnectedness of various aspects of life. From the agricultural revolution to the cultural and economic influences that continue today, food has played a significant role in shaping civilizations. In contemporary studies of history and culture, it is increasingly important to include food as a central focus of analysis (Doğan, 2023a).

Ibn Khaldun's Muqaddimah is a rich source of information that inspires interdisciplinary scholars in the fields of history and sociology. While the work is known for its social dynamics and historical theories, it also provides valuable insights into the economic, cultural, and ecological factors that shape civilizations. Food is implicitly and explicitly addressed in the Muqaddimah as a basic human need and a central aspect of social life (Khaldun, 2015). Therefore, examining the Muqaddimah from a food studies perspective can provide a more comprehensive understanding of Ibn Khaldun's thoughts and contribute to the growing interdisciplinary research on food studies.

### ***Ibn Ibn Khaldun's Holistic Approach***

Ibn Khaldun's multifaceted perspectives, such as social, economic, and geographical, reflect his holistic approach to history (Khaldun, 2015). Ibn Khaldun's holistic approach to history is one of the main reasons why the Muqaddimah should be considered in food studies. He emphasized that economic, social, and ecological conditions contribute to the rise and fall of civilizations. Food production, distribution, and consumption are integral parts of these conditions. By examining the role of food in Ibn Khaldun's historical analysis, we can gain valuable insights into the interconnectedness of societies (Khaldun, 2015).

The Muqaddimah offers different perspectives on the economic foundations of societies, including agriculture, trade, and consumption. Food is closely linked to these economic activities. An evaluation of the Muqaddimah in terms of food studies can provide insights into how food production and consumption have shaped economic systems throughout history and contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between food and economic development (Ridlwan & Mawardi, 2019).

### ***The Cultural and Social Role of Food***

Food plays an important role in shaping cultural identity and social traditions (Doğan, 2022b). The Muqaddimah provides valuable insights into the cultural and social dynamics of various societies (Verza, 2021). This work can help us understand how food is used to build and maintain social hierarchies, reinforce cultural values, and facilitate social interactions.

Ibn Khaldun also recognized the importance of ecological factors in shaping human history. Food production and consumption are closely linked to the environment (Al Mamun et al., 2022). An evaluation of the Muqaddimah from the perspective of food studies provides an understanding of how ecological conditions affect food practices and shape societies. This can contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between food, culture, and the natural environment.

Ibn Khaldun's Muqaddimah provides a comprehensive analysis of the social, economic, and cultural structures of societies (Ahmad & Sahimi, 2022). When examining this work from the perspective of food studies, we can evaluate how societies approach issues such as food production, consumption, dietary habits, agriculture, and trade. This study can contribute to a deeper understanding of Ibn Khaldun's "**Ilm of Umran**" and a more comprehensive understanding of the complex interactions between food, culture, and society.

This study aims to evaluate Ibn Khaldun's Muqaddimah from the perspective of food studies, thus providing a new perspective on the classic text. As a multidisciplinary academic field that examines the cultural, social, economic, and political dimensions of food that go beyond its nutritional purpose, food studies play an important role in revealing the rich perspectives in Ibn Khaldun's work.

## **2. Method**

The fact that the study is one of the first to evaluate Ibn Khaldun's most important work, Muqaddimah, in terms of food studies further increases its importance in terms of contribution to the literature. Qualitative research methods were used as the study design, and this method is a study method that takes the entire subject into consideration with an interdisciplinary holistic perspective and addresses the problem of the research with an interpretive method.

In the study, document review was used as the data collection tool, and the content analysis method was used in the evaluation of the data.

The document review method aims to define the relevant information and classify the information for reporting, and in this direction, it covers the stages of review, recording, and evaluation (Doğan & İ kibudak, 2023). The scope and objectives should be clearly defined before starting the document review. The main source of the study was the 5th edition of Muqaddimah, translated from Arabic to Turkish by Süleyman Uludağ and published by Dergah Publications in 2007 (Haldun, 2007). One of the most advantageous aspects of the document review method is the high reliability of the data collection process since the text has not undergone any changes (Doğan & Yaşlıca, 2022).

Content analysis used in the evaluation of data is a method based on making systematic, repeatable, and valid inferences from a text (Doğan & Öztürk, 2023). To ensure the validity and reliability of the results, attention was paid to obtaining the data objectively, and the results were given to three different researchers who are experts in the subject, and the inferences were compared (Doğan & Vatandost, 2023).

The topics related to food studies in the Muqaddimah were determined by the document scanning method and categorized as themes by content analysis. The created themes were interpreted and evaluated in terms of food studies. Ibn Khaldun's Muqaddimah is considered a rich source in terms of food studies. Identifying and systematically analyzing the topics related to food studies in the Muqaddimah will make a significant contribution to the field of food studies. It is also certain that it will form the basis for future research.

## **3. Results**

Within the scope of the study, a document review was conducted in Ibn Khaldun's Muqaddimah; passages related to food studies were determined and are given in Table 1.

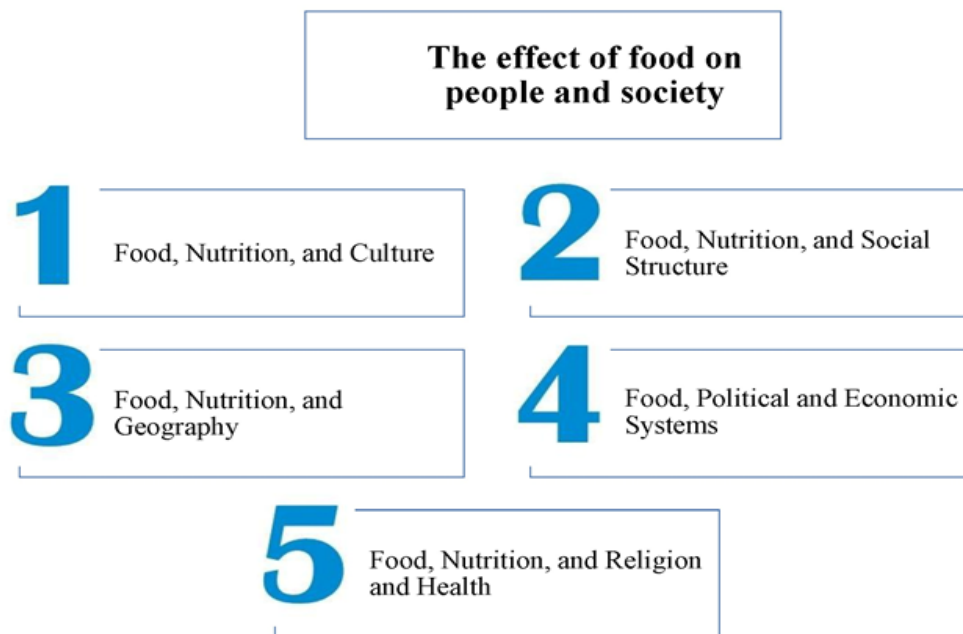


**Table 1.** Passages related to food studies in Ibn Khaldun's Muqaddimah

| <b>Subject</b>           | <b>Page Numbers</b>  | <b>Main Ideas</b>  |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| Food Production          | 269, 271, 273, 274, 323, 324, 336, 366, 570, 637, 650, 656, 657, 658, 695, 698, 715, 718, 742                                | Cultivation areas, livestock, grain production                 |
| Food Consumption         | 68, 117, 118, 157, 213, 214, 264, 267-275, 304, 324, 325, 348, 441, 484, 552, 563, 567, 637, 655-658, 661, 698, 716, 740-742 | Dietary habits, the importance of food in human life           |
| Economic Dimension       | 209, 368, 570, 652, 654, 660, 693-762  | Food trade, grain warehouses, the place of food in the economy |
| Geography and Climate    | 636, 637, 650, 658, 716, 937, 938  | Irrigation, climate conditions affecting agriculture           |
| Human Body and Nutrition | 563, 740, 741  | Digestion of food, effects of nutrition on health              |

**Source:** Created by the author.

The data in Table 1 show how important food, nutrition, agriculture, animal husbandry, and livelihoods in general are in the work. Content analysis was applied to the identified passages, and the main theme was found to be **"The effect of food on people and society."** It was seen that the main theme of the effect of food on people and society had five themes: **"Food, Nutrition, and Culture," "Food, Nutrition, and Social Structure," "Food, Nutrition, and Geography," "Food, Political and Economic Systems,"** and **"Food, Nutrition, and Religion and Health."** The identified themes are given in Figure 2, and the themes and sub-themes are given in Table 2.



**Figure 2.** Sub-themes of the main theme of “The effect of food on people and society”

|   | Themes                                   | Sub Themes   |
|---|--|--|
| 1 | Food, Nutrition, and Culture             | Traditions and Dietary habits<br>Food Preparation and Cultural Differences   |
| 2 | Food, Nutrition, and Social Structure    | Nomadic and Settled Societies<br>Food and Status and Class Relations   |
| 3 | Food, Nutrition, and Geography           | Climate, Agriculture, Agricultural Production and Farming  |
| 4 | Food, Political and Economic Systems     | Food Production, Trade and Distribution<br>Food Prices and Their Economic Impacts  |
| 5 | Food, Nutrition, and Religion and Health | The Relationship Between Food and Religion<br>Food Waste and Hunger<br>The Paradox of Abundance and Scarcity and Its Impact on Health, Religion and Civilization |

**Table 2.** Themes and subthemes of the main theme “The effect of food on people and society”

**Source:** Created by the author.

Ibn Khaldun's Muqaddimah provides a comprehensive view of the role of food in society, encompassing its cultural, economic, and health dimensions (Haldun, 2007). His work demonstrates a profound comprehension of the interplay between food and broader social factors. We believe the insights presented in this groundbreaking work will resonate with current debates on food studies. Ibn Khaldun's analysis is notable for its holistic approach, considering not only the physiological effects of food but also its economic and cultural dimensions. His work reflects a deep understanding of how food affects and is affected by the broader social context. The themes identified through the content analysis are further elaborated, discussed, and evaluated under specific headings.

### ***Food, Nutrition, and Culture***

According to Ibn Khaldun, food consumption transcends mere physiological necessity, serving also as a cultural activity (Haldun, 2007). The dietary preferences, culinary techniques, and dining etiquettes of people across various regions reflect the cultural attributes of their societies. By highlighting the psychological and cultural dimensions of food consumption, Ibn Khaldun demonstrates the profound integration of food practices within societal structures. His perspectives on the evolution of societies offer a significant example of evolutionary thought in contemporary cultural anthropology.

### ***Traditions and Dietary Habits***

In his Muqaddimah, Ibn Khaldun explores the development and establishment of dietary habits and traditions among individuals (Haldun, 2007). The work delves into the habituation of certain foods and examines the consequences of both overeating and hunger. Ibn Khaldun discusses the beneficial effects of fasting or eating less on both the body and the mind, contrasting these with the negative impacts of overeating on religious and moral life. He details the challenges associated with changing dietary habits and underscores the importance of gradually adapting to dietary changes to avoid health issues (Haldun, 2007).

Ibn Khaldun posits that differing dietary habits reflect varying value judgments (Haldun, 2007). For instance, he notes that Bedouin societies, which consume plain and natural foods, lead simpler and more modest lifestyles. In contrast, Hadari societies, with their more diverse and sophisticated diets, tend to embrace more luxurious and comfortable ways of living. This distinction illustrates how dietary practices shape a society's cultural identity, with the disparate dietary habits of Bedouin and Hadari societies serving as integral components of their communal identities (Alatas, 2014).

The consideration of nutrition as a social and cultural phenomenon holds significant weight in Ibn Khaldun's work (Haldun, 2007). The dietary practices of different societies reflect their historical, economic, and social structures. For example, agricultural societies predominantly consume plant-based foods, while hunter-gatherer societies primarily rely on meat. These dietary differences directly influence the economic activities and social frameworks of these societies (Ali, 2006).

In the Muqaddimah, Ibn Khaldun also emphasizes the roles of food prices, luxury, and abundance in urban settings, along with their effects on urban culture (Haldun, 2007). He examines how luxury and abundance influence dietary habits and the consequent health implications. Ibn Khaldun's observations highlight how economic conditions shape cultural practices, providing valuable insights for contemporary research into the ways different cultures are molded by their economic environments (Alwagdani, 2020).

### ***Food Preparation and Cultural Differences***

Ibn Khaldun's Muqaddimah delves into the cultural significance of food, exploring the diverse approaches of various societies to food production, preparation, and consumption (Haldun, 2007). His observations on culinary practices offer valuable insights into the rich tapestry of regional cuisines. The text provides information on the food preparation methods and dietary habits of different cultures, highlighting distinctions between urban and desert societies. While settled populations employ a wide range of ingredients and intricate cooking techniques, desert dwellers often favor simpler, more natural methods (Alatas, 2017). Ibn Khaldun's analysis underscores the intricate interplay between environment, lifestyle, and food consumption and how these factors contribute to the overall physical and mental well-being of individuals and societies.

### ***Food, Nutrition, and Social Structure Nomadic and Settled Societies***

Ibn Khaldun emphasizes that food production and consumption, one of the basic needs of man, play a key role in the formation and development of human societies. Individual efforts to obtain food are insufficient, and cooperation is needed (Haldun, 2007). This shows that agriculture and food production processes are social activities.

Ibn Khaldun classifies societies as nomadic and settled and discusses the effects of these different lifestyles on food production and consumption (Haldun, 2007). The fact that nomadic

societies deal with animal husbandry and settled societies deal with agriculture and trade affects the dynamics of food production and consumption. For example, it is stated that Bedouin societies that live a nomadic life have a less complex social structure, whereas Hadari societies that have settled have more complex social organizations (Demirel, 2024).

While discussing the differences between nomadic and settled societies, Ibn Khaldun states that nomadic societies deal with animal husbandry and settled societies deal with agriculture and trade (Haldun, 2007). Bedouins are accustomed to living a free and independent life. The crowded and orderly life of cities may restrict the personal freedoms of Bedouins (Alatas, 2014).

### ***Food and Status and Class Relations***

According to Ibn Khaldun, societies turn to more complex needs after meeting their basic needs, which leads to developments in areas such as art and trade (Haldun, 2007). Ibn Khaldun's analysis of the effects of urbanization on social and cultural change provides an important perspective in a period where urbanization continues rapidly today. Ibn Khaldun states that people engaged in different economic activities belong to different social classes (Rizkiah & Chachi, 2020). Food production and distribution play an important role in the formation of class differences in society. Factors such as land ownership and access to water resources determine the access of different social groups to food. This situation leads to the emergence of rich and poor classes in society. Those who own land are richer and have a higher position in society because they own the means of production (Haldun, 2007).

According to Ibn Khaldun, food consumption is used as an indicator of social status. Luxurious foods, special meals, and table arrangements are presented as symbols of a lifestyle belonging to the upper classes in society. Ibn Khaldun argues that food deepens inequalities between different social classes and reinforces class divisions. In particular, he states that differences in access to different types of food determine social status (Haldun, 2007). Inequalities in food production and distribution deepen social injustices. Ibn Khaldun emphasizes that access to food is unequal for different social classes and that this affects power relations in society. While the rich have healthier and stronger bodies thanks to their access to abundant and diverse foods, the poor are fed with limited and low-quality food, which limits their physical and mental abilities. This deepens social inequalities and can cause unrest in society. According to Ibn Khaldun, inequality in access to food is an important cause of political instability in society (Haldun, 2007).

Ibn Khaldun emphasizes the differences in the nutritional habits and health status of people in different social classes (Haldun, 2007). This situation is also related to the research conducted today on the effects of income inequality on health. Ibn Khaldun emphasizes the effects of society's consumption habits, income distribution, and cultural factors on prices (Kholiq et al., 2022). This situation is related to the studies conducted in areas such as marketing and consumer behavior (Haldun, 2007). Ibn Khaldun examines the relationship between the social structure of cities and people's lifestyles. This situation parallels studies such as urban sociology conducted in the field of sociology today.

Ibn Khaldun emphasizes in the Muqdamah that sustenance (**rizq – رزق**)<sup>4</sup> should be distributed fairly. However, it is stated that this distribution is not only related to divine providence but also human effort (Haldun, 2007). This provides an important perspective on food security and social justice (Doğan & Özaltın, 2022). He also states that earning unjust profits is incompatible with the concept of sustenance. This emphasizes honesty and justice in food production and distribution. Ibn Khaldun relates food production and consumption to the general development and decline of civilizations. He argues that a society's ability to secure a reliable food supply is essential to its prosperity and stability (Al Mamun et al., 2022). Conversely, food shortages or disruptions can lead to social unrest and even the collapse of states (Doğan, 2022a).

Ibn Khaldun considers food to be an important social marker reflecting the wealth, status, and cultural values of a society. He observes that the types of food consumed, the way it is prepared, and the etiquette surrounding meals vary significantly across different social strata (Haldun, 2007). It offers insights into the social customs and etiquette associated with meals, including eating practices, table manners, and the role of food in hospitality.

### **Food, Nutrition, and Geography**

#### ***Climate, Agriculture, Agricultural Production and Farming***

Ibn Khaldun discusses the impact of climate and soil fertility on food production and prices. He observes that regions with fertile soil and favorable climatic conditions tend to have lower food prices due to higher agricultural productivity and lower production costs. Conversely, regions with harsh climates and unproductive soils face higher food prices due to increased hardship and production costs. This observation extends to the physical

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<sup>4</sup> **rizq – رزق**: According to Islam, things that are beneficial to humans are edible, drinkable, and other material and spiritual things that Allah has granted to everyone and from which they can benefit.

characteristics and health of animals, and he notes that those in harsher geographic and climatic conditions are generally more resilient than their counterparts in fertile regions (Haldun, 2007).

The relationship between agriculture and economic stability is another important aspect of Ibn Khaldun's analysis. He emphasizes that agriculture is the cornerstone of the economic structure of societies (Haldun, 2007). The prosperity and stability of a society are directly linked to its agricultural productivity. On the other hand, political instability can seriously disrupt agricultural activities, leading to reduced production, food shortages, and ultimately famines. Ibn Khaldun notes that political turmoil reduces farmers' security and motivation to produce and increases the severity of famines when governments fail to implement measures such as grain stockpiling (Al Mamun et al., 2022).

Ibn Khaldun also studied and reflected in his work on the broader effects of geographical and climatic conditions on social characteristics and development (Haldun, 2007). He argues that people's dietary habits, shaped by their environment, affect their physical and mental characteristics as well as their cultural and social development. For example, he notes that people in hot climates tend to consume lighter, more refreshing foods, while people in colder climates prefer more fatty and filling foods. These dietary preferences also affect their physical strength and intellectual acuity (Mauludiyah & Warsidi, 2023).

Ibn Khaldun also emphasizes the differences in living standards between those living in fertile lands and those living in barren lands (Haldun, 2007). Those living in fertile areas generally enjoy greater prosperity and material wealth, while those living in more difficult environments face economic hardship. Interestingly, he argues that an abundance of resources can lead to moral and physical degradation, while scarcity fosters resilience and sharper intellect. Ibn Khaldun's insights into the interaction between geography, agriculture, and society provide valuable insights into the factors that influence economic and social stability (Ali, 2006). His analysis remains relevant in contemporary debates on food security, the effects of climate change on agriculture, and the socio-economic development of nations.

### **Food, Political, and Economic Systems** **Food Production, Trade, and Distribution**

In the Muqaddimah, Ibn Khaldun discusses the importance of agricultural activities in food production. He details the role of these activities in shaping the economic and social structures of societies (Haldun, 2007). Ibn Khaldun distinguishes between the agricultural

practices of nomadic farmers (bedouin farmers) and settled urban dwellers (hadari) and identifies the place of agriculture in various areas of civilization (umran) (Binti Adnan, 2018).

Ibn Khaldun divides the agricultural activities that take place in food production into two main branches: (1) food production, which includes the cultivation of grains such as wheat, barley, and lentils; and (2) horticulture, which focuses on the cultivation of fruit trees such as olives and dates (Haldun, 2007). Nomadic farmers, who rely on their products for their livelihood, often exchange their surplus products with urban dwellers in exchange for tools and equipment. In this exchange, urban dwellers, especially blacksmiths and carpenters, meet the nomadic farmers' need for agricultural tools (Von Sivers, 1980).

According to Ibn Khaldun, agricultural activities are a fundamental activity for both nomadic and settled populations. Hunting and shepherding are more characteristic of nomadic shepherds, while agriculture is a more common practice. In particular, grain cultivation is essential for the livelihood of both groups. However, the importance of agriculture declines with the development of urban centers (Haldun, 2007).

Nomadic farmers and urban dwellers use different agricultural techniques. Nomadic farmers rely primarily on rain-fed agriculture due to limited labor and resources, while urban dwellers have access to more advanced irrigation systems. This disparity in agricultural practices affects the division of labor and overall productivity (Von Sivers, 1980).

Ibn Khaldun's analysis of agriculture highlights the profound impact of agriculture on the economic and social structures of societies (Haldun, 2007). Comparisons of nomadic and settled agricultural practices shed light on the evolution of agricultural techniques and the relationship between agriculture and urbanization. Ibn Khaldun's insights continue to be important in understanding the historical development of societies and the enduring importance of agriculture (Karim, 2020).

Ibn Khaldun's in-depth analysis of bread production provides an extremely important perspective for understanding the formation and functioning of societies (Haldun, 2007: 213-214). The complex process required for just one slice of bread to reach our table highlights the importance of division of labor and specialization, which are fundamental building blocks of societies and are presented in Table 3.



| <b>Concept</b>                       | <b>Explanation</b>   | <b>Relationship Today</b>   |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| Division of Labor and Specialization | People using different talents and skills to produce more efficiently.   | With globalization, the internationalization of production processes has enabled experts from different countries to collaborate. |
| Complexity of Production Processes   | Even a seemingly simple product like bread production is a complex process that goes through many stages and involves different sectors. | Today, production processes have become more complex with technological developments and globalization.                           |
| Importance of Tools                  | The effect of tools used in production processes on efficiency and quality.  | Thanks to technological developments, the tools used in production have become more sophisticated and efficiency has increased.   |
| Social Relations                     | The effect of production processes on social relations, cooperation of different professional groups.                                    | With globalization, the coming together of people from different cultures to produce has increased cultural richness.             |
| Sustainability                       | The ecological effects of production processes and sustainable use of resources.   | Today, sustainable production has become an important agenda item to find solutions to ecological problems.                       |

**Table 3.** Ibn Khaldun's analysis on bread production

**Source:** Created by the author.

Ibn Khaldun's analysis of bread production is not only of historical importance but also provides an important framework for understanding contemporary economic and social problems. This analysis provides us with valuable information on issues such as the complexity of production processes, the importance of division of labor, and the role of social relations.

### ***Food Prices and Their Economic Impacts***

Ibn Khaldun, in his seminal work, *Muqaddimah*, elucidates the fundamental principle of trade as deriving profit from buying goods at a lower price and selling them at a higher price (Haldun, 2007). Foodstuffs, particularly grains, livestock, and other edibles, constitute a significant sector within this realm. Recognizing the universal human need for sustenance, Ibn Khaldun highlights the inevitable expenditure on food. Consequently, fluctuations in food prices and the occurrence of famine exert a profound impact on both economic and social life (Nisak, 2022).

Ibn Khaldun identifies two primary causes of famine (Haldun, 2007: 507, 570).

1. **Natural Disasters:** Adverse climatic conditions, such as diminished rainfall, can adversely affect agricultural production, leading to food shortages and famine. In such circumstances, individuals often rely on stored provisions. However, inadequate storage capacity can exacerbate the severity of the famine.

2. **Political Instability:** Excessive taxation, particularly during the decline of dynasties, can stifle production and contribute to famine. High taxes may discourage agricultural endeavors, resulting in reduced food supply and inflated prices.

Ibn Khaldun's insights into the profit-driven nature of trade and the pivotal role of food remain relevant today. His analysis of the interplay between economic and social factors, particularly the impact of natural and political factors on famine, continues to inform contemporary economic discourse.

### **Food, Nutrition, and Religion and Health** ***The Relationship Between Food and Religion***

Ibn Khaldun's views on the effects of food on a person's physical and mental state are one of the main topics of food studies. The effect of food on a person's character, morality, and religious beliefs is an important point that Ibn Khaldun draws attention to (Haldun, 2007: 507, 570).

In the Muqaddimah, Ibn Khaldun also examines the effects of food on religious beliefs and practices. In particular, he draws attention to the impact of hunger and satiety on religious feelings. According to Ibn Khaldun, hunger and patience strengthen religious feelings, while excessive satiety can lead to religious indifference. He also states that there are various rules regarding nutrition in different religions and sects, and those rules shape social life (Haldun, 2007).

### **Food Waste and Hunger**

Ibn Khaldun emphasizes that food waste and hunger can coexist and that this is a great contradiction. According to him, the excessive consumption and waste of the rich in societies causes the poor to struggle with hunger, which negatively affects social welfare (Haldun, 2007). The excessive consumption of the rich leads to an unjust distribution of resources, making it difficult for the poor to meet their basic needs (Doğan, 2022c).

Ibn Khaldun states that this situation is a great problem both morally and economically. From a moral perspective, waste and excessive consumption contradict human values and the ethical structure of society. This not only disturbs the conscience of individuals but also prevents the achievement of social justice. From an economic perspective, the inefficient use of resources reduces the general welfare of society and leads to economic imbalances (Doğan, 2023b). These imbalances can trigger social unrest and financial crises.

Ibn Khaldun argues that every segment of society should take responsibility for solving these problems. He emphasizes that the rich should reduce waste and adopt a more sharing and fair consumption habit, while the poor should be supported and their basic needs should be met. In this way, moral values are preserved in society, and general welfare can be increased by achieving economic balance (Haldun, 2007).

Ibn Khaldun's views are still valid today and offer an important perspective on sustainable development and social justice. Reducing food waste and more equitable distribution of resources are among the important issues that modern societies should also focus on (Doğan, 2021).

### ***The Paradox of Abundance and Scarcity and Its Impact on Health, Religion, and Civilization***

Ibn Khaldun examines the relationship between food abundance and the prevalence of disease, particularly in the context of sedentary populations. He compares the diets of city dwellers, who often consume complex, spicy foods that lead to health problems, to the simpler, healthier diets of desert dwellers. He also discusses the effects of overeating and starvation on the body and mind. He notes the positive effects of undereating on cleansing the body and mind and discusses the negative effects of overeating on religious and moral life (Haldun, 2007).

Ibn Khaldun states that most diseases are caused by food and cites the saying attributed to the Prophet Muhammad, "The stomach is the seat of disease" and "Diet is the main medicine." He explains how improper digestion and excessive food intake lead to health problems. He discusses digestive problems as the root of stomach health and disease (Haldun, 2007).

He reflects on modern nutritional principles by emphasizing the importance of moderation in diet and the connection between digestive health and general well-being. Ibn

Khaldun provides an important perspective on healthy eating by emphasizing the effect of diet on disease (Haldun, 2007).

Ibn Khaldun's observations reflect an early understanding of the impact of nutrition on public health and the differences between urban and rural dietary practices. He sheds light on the modern understanding of health and nutrition by emphasizing the effects of overconsumption and hunger on health and morality.

He discusses how the quality and quantity of food affect people's physical and mental characteristics (Haldun, 2007). He notes that those who consume simple, frugal diets are generally healthier and more intellectually sharp. He discusses the positive effects of undereating on health and the harmful effects of overeating. Ibn Khaldun presents a sociocultural perspective on nutrition, linking dietary practices to physical and mental characteristics. This can be seen as an early form of nutritional sociology. Ibn Khaldun examines the effects of hunger and satiety on religious feelings, arguing that hunger and patience strengthen religious feelings, while oversaturation can lead to religious indifference. This reveals the effects of dietary habits on religious beliefs and rituals.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Ibn Khaldun, who lived in the 14th century, witnessed the decline of Islamic civilization. His various administrative roles laid the groundwork for his pioneering contributions to history, sociology, and economics. Central to his thought system are the cyclical nature of civilizations, the impact of geography on societies, the regulatory function of states, and the concept of *asabiyya*, or social solidarity.

Ibn Khaldun's seminal work, the *Muqaddimah*, is composed of six main sections that analyze the structure of civilization and is regarded as a precursor to modern social sciences such as sociology, the philosophy of history, and political sociology. The work examines the economic and cultural foundations of societies by integrating diverse disciplines. The *Muqaddimah* also explores the effects of food on civilization, providing insights into how elements such as agriculture, trade, and consumption shape the social, economic, and cultural structures of societies. In this respect, the work transcends classical historical narratives and offers an interdisciplinary perspective on the relationship between societies and their environment, as well as the social functions of food.

This study makes a significant contribution to the literature by being the first to evaluate Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah* from a food studies perspective. Utilizing an interdisciplinary and

holistic approach with a qualitative research design, the study relies on document review and content analysis methods. The primary source for data collection was the Süleyman Uludağ translation of the Muqaddimah. The reliability of the document review method was enhanced by the fact that the text has not undergone any alterations. The themes identified through objective data collection and expert evaluation in the content analysis systematically present rich content on food studies in the Muqaddimah. This study serves as an important resource for the field and has the potential to lay the groundwork for future research.

In this examination of Ibn Khaldun's Muqaddimah, document review, and content analysis were applied, focusing particularly on passages related to food. Themes were identified, revealing that the Muqaddimah addresses topics such as food production, agricultural areas, animal husbandry, and grain production. It emphasizes the importance of food consumption, nutritional habits, and the significance of food in human life. Additionally, economic aspects such as food trade, grain storage, and the role of food in the economy are scrutinized. The study also investigates how irrigation and climatic conditions affect agriculture within the context of geography and climate, and it discusses issues related to the human body and nutrition, including digestion and the health impacts of food.

These topics are organized into the main themes of food and culture, food and social structure, food and geography, food and political-economic systems, food and religion, and food and health. Food consumption is evaluated not merely as a physiological need but also as a cultural activity. Ibn Khaldun observes that food preferences, preparation methods, and dining practices reflect the cultural characteristics of different societies. He examines the differences between nomadic and settled societies to analyze the impacts of food production and consumption on their social and economic structures.

According to Ibn Khaldun, food production and distribution are crucial factors in determining the class structure of societies. Variables such as land ownership and access to water resources influence different social groups' access to food, leading to the emergence of rich and poor classes. Food consumption serves as an indicator of social status, and disparities in food access between social classes exacerbate inequalities, which Ibn Khaldun identifies as a significant source of political instability.

Ibn Khaldun's works thoroughly explore the effects of food on the economic and social structures of societies. By emphasizing the cultural, economic, and health dimensions of food, he highlights the importance of food security for societal well-being and stability. His work provides valuable insights into contemporary discussions and studies on food, offering a historical perspective on food studies. Ibn Khaldun's multidisciplinary approach underpins

today's food studies by elucidating the connections between food, geography, history, sociology, and politics.

Ibn Khaldun's perspectives on food in his Muqaddimah offer valuable insights for modern food studies, illustrating that food is not merely an individual necessity but a phenomenon significantly influencing the development of societies and civilizations. His multidisciplinary and holistic approach provides a foundational understanding of contemporary food studies, highlighting the interplay between food, geography, history, sociology, and politics. Consequently, Ibn Khaldun's work is an essential resource for comprehending the historical roots of food studies and for better understanding the cultural and social dimensions of our dietary habits.

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