

THE EMPIRICAL-DIALECTICAL METHODOLOGY OF IBN KHALDUN AND KARL MARX

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Contemporary sociology has tended to think of the empirical method in the tradition of neo-positivists such as George Lundberg as the basis of theory construction within the discipline. Dialectical methodology is often dismissed as a bagary of meta-physical notion, or, in the words of C. Wright Mills, as "either a mess of platitudes, a way of double-talk, a pretentious obscurantism—or all three."⁸⁵ In part, hostility to dialectical sociology results from its being identified with philosophy; with the feeling, for example, that Marx never really freed it from metaphysics. The fact is that the dialectic of Marx can be shown to be an historical generalisation which evolves from empirical observations. This generalisation, embedded as it is in empirical reality, can be abstracted from its context and be posited as a methodology in itself; hence we may speak of an empirical-dialectical methodology.

In order to see how this methodology is developed, it is first necessary to clarify its roots in the history of social thought. In particular we can see its clearest expression in the work of Karl Marx. However, it is possible to go back to the fourteenth century to the great Arab thinker Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406, to find the beginnings of such a methodology.

Social Science and Values

⁸⁵ The Marxists (New York : International Publishers, 1947), p. 130. Although in almost the same breath Mills (p. 129, says that "[Marx's] method is a signal and lasting contribution to the best sociological ways of reflection and inquiry available". It seems that Mills is taking issue with the "laws of dialectics". In this study we simply refer to the dialectic in terms of a principle of contradiction and interconnection. For further explanation of the meaning of dialectic see, or, example, Louis Schneider, "Dialectic in Sociology," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. XXXVI (August 1971).

Following Furfey, we can say that the social scientist may (1) choose values as subject-matter for research; (2) introduce statements of value as postulates into his own social system; (3) assign values to some particular approach to social science.⁸⁶ The first of these—values as subject-matter for research—presents no real problem as it does not necessarily involve the introduction of bias into research. For example, Marx studied the values of capitalistic society, especially in the form of ideology; and Ibn Khaldun studied the values common to the nomadic bedouins and sedentary peoples of Arabia and North Africa. Thus, any introduction of bias is due to the values which they hold themselves, which brings us to the second point of Furfey.

There are reasons which lead one to expect normative elements in Marx's work: "(1) his image of man as an active, goal-directed being, (2) his epistemology and the interplay of theory and praxis, (3) his messianic vision concerning future society, and finally (4) his notion of human self-realization."⁸⁷ Marx was quite explicit in his commitment to humanistic values and to future communist society. This has made it fashionable for the term "Marxist" to denote some preconceived or unscientific assumption on the part of the faithful adherent of "Marxism". On the other hand, a "Marxian" scholar may point to such a theme as class struggle without being labelled as an apocalyptic visionary, i.e. he can still be scientific. Marx's humanism has led at least one writer to dub his work as philosophic sociology, as a "humanistic attempt to bring Hegelian idealism into scientific form."⁸⁸ This is the essence of the Marxian emphasis on *praxis*, adequately summed in the dictum that "the philosophers have only

⁸⁶ Paul H. Furfey, "Sociological Science and the Problem of Values," in Llewellyn Gross, Ed., *Symposium on Sociological Theory* (Evanston, Illinois: Row, Peterson and Company, 1959), p. 509. W.H. Werkmeister also deals with values of the social sciences, values in the social sciences, and values for the social sciences, See his "Theory Construction and the Problem of Objectivity," in *ibid.*, pp. 497-507.

⁸⁷ Joachim Israel, *Alienation from Marx in Modern Sociology* (Boston : Allyn and Bacon, 1971), p. 67.

⁸⁸ Robert Cohen, "Marxism and Scientific Philosophy," *The Review of Metaphysics*, Vol. IV (March 1951), p. 442.

interpreted the world, the point is, to change it.”⁸⁹ In other words, Marx has rejected the speculative philosophy, but has substituted for it a form of scientific human-ism. Regardless of his philosophical beliefs, Marx was a strong proponent of the scientific derivation of truth. He had such an independent mind that he scorned the professional revolutionary who substituted dogmatic ideology for critical objective analysis, so much that near the end of his life he claimed “all I know is that I am not a Marxist.”⁹⁰ Marx and Engels’ conception of *falsches Bewusstsein* applies equally well to the dogmatic socialist. The Marxian emphasis on practical activity has led Lefebvre to admit that “Marx is not a sociologist, but there is a sociology in Marx”.⁹¹ It is especially evident that Marx became more and more the scientist in his later works such as the *Grundrisse* and *Das Kapital*, although even in his early work he states that “it is hardly necessary to assure the reader conversant with political economy that my results have been attained by means of a wholly empirical analysis based on a conscientious critical study of political economy.”⁹² In emphasising the scientific quality of Marx’s work we are not alone. Consider, for example, the following views of students of his work:

“ ... It is perfectly legitimate to take Marxism as a sociological theory. ”⁹³

“The point of the Marxist predictive theory is that it claims to have found

⁸⁹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology* (New York :International Publishers, 1947), p. 199.

⁹⁰ Related to Frederick Engels, "Letter to Conrad Schmidt," *Basic Writing on Politics and Philosophy*, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, edited by Lewis S. Feuer (New York: Anchor Book, 1959), p 396.

⁹¹ Henri Lefebvre, *The Sociology of Karl Marx* (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), p. 33.

⁹² Karl Marx, *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (New York: International Publishers, 1964), p. 63.

⁹³ G.A.D. Soares, "Marxism as a General Sociological Orientation," *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XIX (December 1965), p. 366.

similarities in the flux of apparently dissimilar social facts ... operationally close to Popper's own description of natural science procedure. . . ."94

. The general inclination of Marx's work, when it is traced from his earlier . . . clearly away from . a scientific theory of society, in the precise sense of a body of general laws and detailed empirical statements."95

These quotes, which represent only a few of many, attest to the growing awareness of the theoretical and scientific relevance of Marxian thought.

The third point of Furfey—assigning value to some particular approach in social science—appears to be an unavoidable part of any social science. Marx and Engels assigned obvious value to their own empirical-dialectical methodology but were quick to criticise the person, who, like Duhring,

“ ... offers us principles which he declares arc final and ultimate truths, and therefore any views conflicting with these are false from the outset; he is in possession not only of the exclusive truth but also of the sole strictly scientific method of investigation, in contrast with which all others are unscientific.”96

This, of course, is one of the core problems of metasociology, and, more generally, of the sociology of knowledge. Just as there is some problem in determining Marx's status as a scientist or reformer, there is conflict over whether or not Ibn Khaldun can be considered a social scientist. Mahdi interprets Ibn Khaldun as a disciple of the Islamic Platonic tradition of political philosophy:

“Ibn Khaldun seems to be the only great thinker who not only saw the problem of the relation of history and the science of society to traditional political philosophy, but also attempted to develop a science of society within the framework of traditional philosophy and based on its principle s.”97

Essentially Mahdi thought that Ibn Khaldun considered the end of the science of society to provide information to help the

⁹⁴ Cohen, op. cit., p. 454.

⁹⁵ T.B. Bottomore, "Karl Marx : Sociologist or Marxist?" *Science and Society*, Vol. XXX (Winter 1966), p. 15.

⁹⁶ Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dubring* (New York: International Publishers, 1939), p_ 36.

⁹⁷ Muhsin Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldun's Philosophy of History* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1957), p. 286.

beneficent king rule. But Ibn Khaldun was quite conscious of his bread with the past. After explaining his new science of human society he says:

“It should be known that the discussion of this topic is some-thing new, extraordinary, and highly useful. Penetrating research has shown the way to it. It does not belong to rhetoric . . . the subject of which is convincing words by means of which the mass is inclined to accept a particular opinion or not to accept it. It is also not politics, because politics is concerned with the administration of home or city in accordance with ethical and philosophical requirements, for the purpose of directing the mass toward a behavior that will result in the preservation and permanence of the (human) species. The subject here is different from those two disciplines which, however, are often similar to it. In a way, it is entirely original science.”⁹⁸

In addition to this, Walzer has contrasted the political thought of al-Farabi and Ibn Khaldun and concluded that the former followed the Platonic tradition of concern with the perfect or ideal state, while Ibn Khaldun represented the Aristotelian conception of political theory based on empirical reality.⁹⁹ With these points in mind we hold that Mandi’s thesis understates the scientific emphasis of Ibn Khaldun’s thought.

A more difficult criticism to handle is the accusation that Ibn Khaldun let religious values enter into his work. This is articulated by Gibb who claims that Ibn Khaldun believed that “the course of history is what it is because of the infraction of the *sharia* (religious law) by the sin of pride, the sin of luxury, the sin of greed”; and, therefore, Ibn Khaldun’s “pessimism” has “a moral and religious, not a sociological, basis.”¹⁰⁰ However, this does not appear to be a biasing factor in Ibn Khaldun’s *Muqaddimah*. Although not denying the

⁹⁸ Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah, An Introduction to History*. Translated by Franz Rosenthal (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2nd Ed., 1967), I, 77-78.

⁹⁹ Richard Walzer, “Aspects of Islamic Political Thought: Al-Farabi and Ibn Khaldun,” *Orient*, XVI, 40-45,

¹⁰⁰ H.A.R. Gibb, “The Islamic Background of Ibn Khaldun’s Political Theory”, in Stanford J. Shaw and William R. Polk, Eds., *Studies in the Civilization of Islam* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962), pp. 173-74. For a detailed discussion of this problem, see Ali Wardi, “A Sociological Analysis of Ibn Khaldun’s Theory: A Study in the Sociology of Knowledge”—a dissertation, University of Texas, 1950.

influence of the super-natural in worldly affairs, Ibn Khaldun restricted his analysis to the social effects of religion¹⁰¹—he was essentially secular in his science of society, but held religious values. He did not attempt to realise his moral values through the use of science; he rejected, as we have seen, the notion of using science for the realisation of the “good” state.

Karl Marx: Methodology

In rejecting the abstract, speculative method, Marx turned to the materialism of Feuerbach. But at the same time he could not accept that aspect of Feuerbach’s materialism which says human activity is a flood of atomic perceptions: Marx simply wanted to portray man as a product of more earthly economic and social foundations and not as an instrument of pure thought. History is essentially a class struggle based on material interests¹⁰²; Feuerbach’s

¹⁰¹ Ibn Khaldun believes that religion strengthens group solidarity (*‘asabiyyah*). This idea is to a great extent similar to that of Machiavelli’s which “recognized the importance of religion in keeping people united”. Mohamed Abdel Monem Nour, “An Analytical Study of the Sociological Thought of Ibn Khaldun”—a dissertation, University of Kentucky, 1953, pp. 193-94. See also Umar Farrukh, *The Arab Genius in Science and Philosophy* (Washington, D. C.: The American Council of Learned Societies, 1954), p. 139 ; and Heinrich Simon, *Ibn Khaldun Wissenschaft Von der Menschlichen Kultur* (Leipzig : Otto Harrassowitz, 1959), p. 92.

¹⁰² It is important, however, that Marx not be labelled as an economic determinist, and as such, having a closed system of thought. Even when Marx says that social being determines consciousness, social being is not made synonymous with economic existence. See “Preface” to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economics*, in Marx and Engels, *Selected Works* (Moscow : Foreign Language Publishing House, 1962), p. 362. In the statements below we can see the sociological element in Marx’s thought:

"By social we understand the co-operation of several individuals, no matter under what conditions, in what manner and to what end. It follows from this that a certain mode of co-operation, or industrial stage, is always combined with a certain mode of co-operation, or social stage, and their mode of co-operation is itself a 'productive force' " (*The German Ideology*, p. 18).

We have to juxtapose the opposing ideas of determinism and free will and see them and their dialectical relationship to one another. As Israel states : "Man is certainly a product of social, especially economic, conditions, but it is man himself who creates and changes these conditions. There exists a dialectical interplay, seen in a historical perspective, between man

materialism is “mere perception” and “mere sensation”. For this reason Marx’s work can be called historical empiricism.¹⁰³ “Empirical observation must in each separate instance bring out empirically, and without any mystification and speculation, the connection of the social and political structure with production, . . . This method of approach is not devoid of premises. It starts out from the real premises and does not abandon them for a moment. Its premises are men, not in any fantastic isolation or abstract definition, but in their actual, empirically perceptible process of development under definite conditions.”¹⁰⁴

Succinctly stated Marx’s modification is that “Feuerbach, not satisfied with abstract thought, wants empirical observation, but he does not conceive the sensible world as practical, human sense activity.”¹⁰⁵ Marx’s respect for empiricism is also evident in the questionnaire which he published in the *Revue Socialiste* in which he exhorts workers to reply to the questionnaire “with full know-ledge of the evils they endure”. But his appeal is addressed to “socialists of all schools, who, claiming reform, must also desire *exact* and *positive* knowledge of the conditions in which the working class, the class to which the future belongs, lives and works.”¹⁰⁶ Here we see a curious example of his attempted synthesis of empiricism to a radical critique of society. This empiricism, more specifically, is the methodology of the natural sciences wedded to the dialectical method. In 1885 Engels wrote:

“Marx and I were pretty well the only people to rescue conscious dialectics from German idealist philosophy and apply it in the materialist conception of nature and history. But a know-ledge of mathematics and natural science is

as active, self-creating subject, and man as object of the conditions he creates” (op. cit., p. 68).

¹⁰³ O. Loyd Easton, "Alienation and Empiricism in Marx's Thought," *Social Research*, Vol. XXXVII (Autumn 1970), pp. 402-27.

¹⁰⁴ Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, pp. 13-15.

¹⁰⁵ Karl Marx, *Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy*. Ed. T.B. Bottomore (New York : McGraw-Hill, 1956), p. 68.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 203,

essential to a conception of nature which is dialectical and at the same time materialist.”¹⁰⁷

Marx used the dialectic to universalise the class struggle and the progressive transformation of human nature to full individual self-realisation. The class struggle is something which was subject to empirical observation and verification ; the transformation of human nature postulate is more philosophical and speculative in nature. Easton considers Marx’s use of dialectic as an example of rationalism and places it in opposition to his (Marx’s) empiricism, saying that at different times and in different writings Marx would favour one or the other.¹⁰⁸ However, this is subtly mis-leading as empiricism and rationalism are integrally related in the work of Marx. McKinney writes that with rationalism “the criterion of truth is not sensory but intellectual and deductive. Rationalism assumes the universality of natural laws; hence it appeals to sense perception only in its search for particulars.”¹⁰⁹ Indeed, Engels has defined dialectics as “nothing more than the science of the general laws of motion and development of Nature, human society and thought.”¹¹⁰ However, Marx’s use of the dialectic is analogous to rationalism only in that it makes use of rationalistic mental constructs which have been formed after perception of empirical reality. The goal of any science is to find, eventually, that there are general laws in human history, but Engels goes further than Marx in claiming that these are identical to the laws of nature. We have established that Marx’s use of the dialectic was not wholly deductive but is rooted in objective social conditions of man and did not, as with Hegel’s use of it, “descend from heaven to earth”. In other words, empirical methodology alone makes the dialectical framework meaningful. At times there was a noticeable tendency for Marx and Engels to postulate the dialectic almost as a metaphysical principle of contradiction in nature. This was not their intention, however. The element of conflict in the

¹⁰⁷ Engels, op. cit., p. 15.

¹⁰⁸ Easton, op. cit , p. 410.

¹⁰⁹ John C. McKinney, "Methodology, Procedures, and Techniques in Sociology," in Howard Becker and Alvin Boskoff, Eds., *Modern Sociological Theory* (New York: The Dryden Press, 1957), p. 190.

¹¹⁰ Engels, op. cit., p. 155.

dialectic is derived from observation of the class struggles: the dialectic did not create the class struggle.¹¹¹

Ibn Khaldun: Methodology

For our purpose here, it is a useful distinction to designate the term “methodology” as a body of philosophical principles underlying research and the term “methods” as more the specific procedures of carrying out the research.¹¹² It is possible to speak both of the methodology and the methods of Ibn Khaldun more so than is the case with Marx. Both of these will be discussed below.

In terms of methodology, there would be little sense in imposing upon the *Muqaddimah* an eighteenth-century philosophical scheme such as empiricism or idealism and discussing it in those terms. But for lack of more adequate terms we can use them for heuristic purposes to see how Ibn Khaldun handled the equivalent trends of his time. In his refutation of philosophy Ibn Khaldun rejects the abstract, speculative philosophy:

“There are (certain) intelligent representatives of the human species who think that the essences and conditions of the whole of existence, both the part of it perceivable by the senses and that beyond sensual perception, as well as the reasons and causes of (those essences and conditions), can be perceived by mental speculation and intellectual reasoning. They also think that the articles of faith are established as correct through (intellectual) speculation and not through tradition, because they belong among the intellectual perceptions. Such people are called ‘philosophers’... Philosophers think that happiness consists in arriving at perception of all existing things, both the *sensibilia* and the (things) beyond sensual perception, with the help of (rational) speculation and argumentation. . . . It should be known that the (opinion) the philosophers hold is wrong in all its aspects the insufficiency lies in the fact that conformity between the results of thinking—which, as they assume, are produced by rational norms and reasoning—and the outside world, is not unequivocal.”¹¹³

¹¹¹ See, for example, Irving M. Zeitlin, *Marxism: A Re-Examination* (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand, 1967), p. 8.

¹¹² Abraham Kaplan, *The Conduct of Inquiry* (San Francisco: Chandler 1964), p. 23.

¹¹³ Ibn Khaldun, op. cit., IIf, 246-51.

Ibn Khaldun's empiricism, like that of Marx, is rooted in the concrete social and economic conditions of man.¹¹⁴ The science of society has as its object the study of all human social behaviour.¹¹⁵ The empirical *methods*, or principles of historical criticism, used to determine the record of human society are delineated in Ibn Khaldun's exposition on the sources of error in historical writing. These errors include exaggeration, partisanship towards a creed or opinion, overconfidence in one's sources, the failure to understand what is intended, a mistaken belief in the truth, the inability to rightly place an event in its real context, and the desire to gain favour of those of high rank.¹¹⁶ This is analogous to the critical thinking expressed by Marx. The most important error, however, is

“...ignorance of the laws governing the transformations of human society. For every single thing, whether it be an object or

an action, is subject to a law governing its nature and any changes that may take place in it. If, therefore, the historian understands the nature of events and of changes that occur in the world, and the conditions governing them, such knowledge will help him more than anything else to clarify any record and to distinguish the truth it contains from falsehoods.”¹¹⁷

For this reason, Ibn Khaldun criticised the “tradition-bound” historians who “disregarded the change in the conditions and in the customs of nations and races that the passing time has brought about.”¹¹⁸

Although an analysis of the substantive contributions of Ibn

¹¹⁴ This is indicated, for example, in Ibn Khaldun's statement that "difference of conditions among people are the result of different ways in which they make their living" (ibid., I, 249).

¹¹⁵ Ibid., I, 13-14, 77-78, 79-93. See also Charles Issawi, *An Arab Philosophy of History* (London: John Murry, 1950), pp. 36-37; Nathaniel Schmidt, *Ibn Khaldun: Historian, Sociologist and Philosopher* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1930), pp. 27-33; Howard Becker and H.E. Barnes, *Social Thought from Lore to Science* (New York: Dover Publication, 1961), I, 271-76; Sati al-Husari, "La Sociologie d'Ibn Khaldun," *Actes du XVE Congress Inter-national de Sociologie* (Istanbul, 1952), pp. 285-91; Abd El Aziz Ezzat, *Ibn Khaldoun Science Sociale* (Cairo: Imp. C. Tsoumas and Co, 1947), pp. 55-63 ; P.A. Sorokin, et al. *A Systematic Source Book in Rural Sociology* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1930), I, 54-55.

¹¹⁶ Issawi, op. cit., pp. 27-29.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 28.

¹¹⁸ Ibn Khaldun, op. cit., I, 9.

Khaldun and Karl Marx to the study of social change is not central to this paper, some discussion is necessary. We are relatively familiar with Marx's dialectical conception of the transformations which take place in human society in different historical epochs. Western scholars are less familiar, however, with the conflict approach to social change of Ibn Khaldun. Essentially, Ibn Khaldun analysed the change in the mode of living from *badawa*, or nomadic desert life, to that of *badara*, or sedentary life. The clash between nomads and sedentary people results in a cyclical rise and fall of dynasties which is also dialectical in that each new stage arises from the conflicting contradictions of the previous stage.¹¹⁹ The change in dynasties is due to a complex dialectical interplay between the economic base of society and such factors as *'asabiyyah*, usually translated as group solidarity.¹²⁰ No strict causal determinism can be found in Ibn

¹¹⁹ Ibid.. pp. 344-55 ; Muhammad Mahmoud Rabie, *The Political Theory of Ibn Khaldun* (Leiden, Netherlands : E.J. Brill, 1967), p. 42 ; Mohammed Aziz Al-Hababi, "Isalat al-Manhajyya ind Ibn Khaldun," in *Ibn Khaldoun: Colloque* (Casablanca: Faculte des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines, Universite Mohammed V, 1962), pp. 11-12. Rabie (op. cit., p. 45) sums these conflicts concisely :

"This theme can be found in the background of many of his arguments. There is first his principal conflict between primitive and civilized ways of living . From it several subordinate conflicts spring. Primitive groups collide till the one which leads the roughest way of life and thereby acquires the strongest feelings of group solidarity, wins and presides over other groups. The next conflict is that taking place between this newly unified tough group and a neighboring established civilized culture, which sooner or later results in a take over by the more vigorous and dynamic group. Personal ambitions and unfamiliar situations facing their newly founded political regime, en-gender a new conflict of power rivalries within the group itself. This unavoidably leads to estrangement between the members of the group and their leader who tries to consolidate and monopolize power in his hands. To strengthen his power against his own kinsmen, he imports mercenaries for military support. The new situation brings another conflict into being, i.e, between the excluded group and the mercenaries. This last conflict proves to be fatal since the old group not only withdraws its support and devotion to the common cause, but it becomes increasingly involved in conspiracies with other forces in order to effect a new change to its own benefit. Economic chaos and troubles aggravate the situation, which offers ample opportunity to another fresh and tough group seeking glory and urban luxury. With the downfall of the state and its conflicting factions, a new regime establishes itself in power, and the cycle goes on."

¹²⁰ On another level of analysis the relationship of ideational, political, religious, and economic variables to each other in the process of change in a theoretical problem in itself.

Khaldun's study of *'asabiyyah* (group solidarity) in the *badalt'a* (nomadic life) and *hadara* (sedentary life). In the transition from *badawa* to *hadara* causes become effects and effects become causes.¹²¹ In Marxian theory, this is formulated as the difference in the material base of society and its superstructure. Suffice to say that for Ibn Khaldun there are two basic conditions underlying the dialectical basis of change:

- (1) There should be a sort of polarisation in the value systems of the two cultures between which the dialectical interaction takes place. Each culture should possess certain characteristics that the other normally lacks. Thus, a cyclical movement may arise as a result of the desire of each culture to seek in the other what it lacks in itself.
- (2) There should also be a polarisation, within each culture, between what it possesses and what it lacks...¹²²

Conclusion: Convergence in Methodology

Thus, Ibn Khaldun and Karl Marx converged in their scientific methodology, which can simply be called empirical-dialectical. This methodology is abstracted from their analysis of the material, or empirical, base of society and the interaction between this base and non-economic factors such as *'asabiyyah* (group solidarity), which, in turn, is wedded to a conception of change and contradiction in society. Sociology has in the last decade¹²³ emphasised again the importance of social change and conflict in society. However, empiricism alone has not provided us with a methodology which can adequately be used to study the flux of society. Speaking of the consequences of employing the dialectical reasoning, Tucker writes:

“Many of our theoretical problems could be solved if this method were used. The first problem is attributing universal ‘cause and effect determinism’ to social behavior. If one takes the dialectic seriously, this *type* of determination is seen as impossible. One becomes concerned with a process of relationships. A concern with how *relationships* affect other *relationships* eliminates the interest

¹²¹ Rabie, op. cit., pp. 54-55 ; Mandi, op. cit., p. 268.

¹²² Wardi, op. cit., pp. 459-560.

¹²³ This paper was written in 1972-Ed.]

regarding which is the 'cause' and which is the 'effect'."¹²⁴

This methodology in particular avoids the dilemma of functionalism by emphasising more historical, or changing, variations in society. Unlike dialectical sociology, functionalism sees society as the independent variable, or objective reality, with emphasis on social institutions and social structures as components of society. In this sense functionalism is a reified methodology.¹²⁵ Karl Marx and Ibn Khaldun, on the other hand, proceed from a dialectical synthesis of sociological and psychological assumptions and are non-reified in their approach, yet still avoid any psychologistic or reductionist tendencies. From this perspective, functional and dialectical sociology are not mutually exclusive approaches to the study of social phenomena, but differ as to the level of critique of which they operate.

Karl Marx and Ibn Khaldun used an empirical-dialectical methodology with great success in the historical epochs in which they lived. Modern social science can benefit immensely by refining this methodology to the point where it could lead to the development of a social theory more isomorphic to changing societies.

¹²⁴ Charles W. Tucker, "Marx and Sociology: Some Theoretical Implications," *Pacific Sociological Review*, Vol. XII (Fall 1969), p. 90.

¹²⁵ See Israel, op. cit., p. 328 ; Peter Berger and Stanley Pullberg, "Reification and the Sociological Critique of Consciousness," *History and Theory*, Vol. IV (1965), p. 196.