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TWO CONCEPTS OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY:
IBN RUSHD AND IBN KHALDUN[*]

Political philosophy has an important role in the Arab-Islamic philosophic tradition. Although a fully clear concept of this kind can be found after the first conflicts related to caliph's title, the political philosophy becomes properly established and integrated in the works of *Falāsif* (philosophers). Amongst them, Ibn Rushd holds a special place as his work presents the closing phase of this branch of philosophy that was based on Greek philosopy schools, especially Plato and Aristotle.

Although a significant time frame separates Ibn Rushd and Ibn Khaldun, it is possible to study comparatively their political concepts, both from the aspect of similarity and the aspect of differences of their teachings. The necessity for studying the relationship between the two arises from the fact that these two philosophers, in a way, individually present the essence of comprehensive philosophers' approach. In spite of the fact that their concepts are somewhat different in their nature, even contradicting, it is possible to establish certain relations between their teachings and link these two philosophers. The necessity to study this relation is also a result of recent views that there is no significant link between Ibn Rushd and Ibn Khaldun.[1]

To understand Ibn Khaldun's work it is necessary to keep in mind that his work represents the closing phase of Arab-Islamic philosophy, that did not simply end in his thought, but appears in Muqaddima in a qualitatively new fashion. In this way his work comprises the most important and most substantive products of Arab-Islamic philosophy.

Discussing Ibn Khaldun's predecessors, one can say that besides historians, the most important role is the one of the thinkers called philosophers. The latter are to be credited for Ibn Khaldun's familiarity with Greek phi-

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[*] See: "Dva koncepta političke filozofije". In: *POF XXIV/1974*, Sarajevo, 1976, pp. 133-139.

[1] Taking into consideration only external impressions, Nāssif Nassar maintains that Ibn Khaldun (Ibn Ḥaldūn) understood Ibn Rushd exclusively as Plato and Aristotle analyst. Furthermore he defines early Ibn Khaldun studies and summaries based on the studies as follows: "Les resumes des ouvrages d'Ibn Rušd n'ont donc valeur reduite, plus pedagogique que proprement, philosophique" (Nassif Nassar, *La pensée realiste d'Ibn Khaldun*, Presses universitaires de France, Paris, 1967, p. 27).

losophy, and political philosophy in particular. Basic issues tackled by these thinkers are the following: prophet, caliph, law, state, power, citizen, happiness, virtue, perfection, and it is therefore not pure coincidence that that majority of these issues we find in the works of Ibn Rushd and Ibn Khaldun. These issues, in fact, are the backbone of not only Arab-Islamic political philosophy, but of political philosophy in general.

One should keep in mind that Ibn Khaldun did not honour the theories of some Islamic philosophers. For instance, Ibn Khaldun was not appreciative of Al-Farabī's concept of an ideal state. On the contrary, he criticized it harshly, the same as Ibn Bagg and Ibn Tufayl's "*robinsoniads*". He was also not dedicated to the idea of reformism and related concepts directed towards construction of new positions exclusively based on reason and its constructions. However, one of the philosophers supporting this teaching was Ibn Rushd himself, but his critical approach brings him closer to Ibn Khaldun. Although Ibn Rushd's criticism is of a totally different nature from Ibn Khaldun's, one should keep in mind that the author of *Muqaddima* inherited a lot from the thinkers whose theories were critical insights of social reality.

Commenting Plato's and Aristotle's work, Ibn Rushd indicated imperfection of the then existing social-political situation − Maghrib in particular. Particularly inspiring for this criticism is an analysis of imperfect state.

Ibn Rushd is particularly known for his attempts to defend philosophy from theology, especially from criticism coming from al-Ghazali. That conflict smouldered till the emergence of Ibn Khaldun, and is reflected and noticeable in *Muqaddima*. This is because Ibn Khaldun, on one hand, criticises the philosophy, and on the other, affirms the most important feature of that philosophy − criticism.[2]

Besides that, Ibn Khaldun is getting closer to Ibn Rushd when discussing the problem of prophets and their social and political role. Both thinkers, in fact, believed that the state could be established without holly investiture or without holy of revelled law, which was considered by the theologians to be a basic precondition for forming a state. Ar-Razi's criticism of prophetic doctrine was even more intensive, as he considers prophets absolutely unnecessary. Therefore, it can be assumed that ar-Razi influenced Ibn Khaldun in this regard. However, as far as Law is concerned, Ibn Khaldun and Ibn Rushd have different approaches, in particular when defining its social function. Ibn Rushd's opinion is that law is a foundation and base for a state, while Ibn Khaldun gives priority to real social factors such as *wazi'* (*custodian authority*) and *'asabiyya* (*group solidarity*). Ibn Khaldun finds his research motivation not in the requirements incorporated in religious law, but in reality. The motivation is contained in his aspirations to make society and its history an object of an independent science and ensure self-

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[2]   "Philosophic thinking, determined by the fact that is thinking, means that it has to be fully based and consequent, etc which means − in its essence it has to be critical". (Muhamed Filipović, "Filozofija kao kritika", *Odjek*, no. 6, 1973, p. 4).

-cognisance of own society. By this he made a step aside from Ibn Rushd, as there is no moralising, idea of happiness as an ultimate good. Hence, he was not interested in what the state and society should look like, but more in what they are in reality and what is necessary for the establishment thereof, what are constitutive elements of a society, social quality and state. While Ibn Rushd analyses a citizen, conditions for achieving happiness and human perfection, Ibn Khaldun looks for real driving force in interpersonal relationships. That is why their understanding and interpretation of Aristotle's theory on human as political being is not unambiguous. Ibn Rushd interprets this Aristotle's theory more ethically and philosophically, whereas Ibn Khaldun introduces real economic and political determinants of social quality. In fact, Ibn Rushd considers that necessity of sociability lies in the fact that human beings can achieve their own ethical and conscious perfection only in perfect state. So from one side Ibn Rushd looks for sources of sociability in extrasocial facts, and on the other side realisation of sociability is possible only in a state. Hence, Ibn Rushd assumes that being a citizen is part of human essence. Despite the fact that their concepts of the role of prophets and law are different, both of them are, in fact, critical. This is because these concepts were extremely dangerous at the time of the general view that the state is not achievable without a prophet.

By trying to resolve the problem of relationship between religion and philosophy and spare philosophy from criticism expected from theologian circles, Ibn Rushed practically created a chance for Ibn Khaldun to establish a historic and realistic doctrine of society and its history. Based on the conflict between the religion and philosophy, Ibn Khaldun came to two important conclusions.

1. Philosophical concepts that were trying to overcome contradictions in society in an ideological way could not really resolve problems and issues that were imposed by his *époque.*
2. Proper understanding of a society and sociability has to be critically directed to theology and history and philosophy.

The starting point in Islamic theologians' doctrine is that this world and its history are only of temporary nature and, in fact, mere preparation for an eternity. Therefore, discussions about problems of this world are not worth scientific research, and in fact are very dangerous for religious life.

However, Ibn Rushd thinks that it is theologians', lawyers' and philosophers' task to consider and discuss this world's issues.[3] Unfortunately he did not succeed in a thorough analysis of this very important view. Ibn Khaldun took over this Ibn Rushd's view as starting point in his studies of society and history.

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[3] Ibn Rušd, *Kitābu faṣli al-maqāli wa taqrīru mā bayna š-šarī'ati wa al-ḥikma min al-ittiṣāli*, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1959, p. 8.

So, Ibn Rushd's studies and work open the world of real society problems and the phenomenon for Ibn Khaldun. However, one needs to know that Ibn Khaldun does not insist on the realisation of the state, which would be in compliance with reason, but rather the object of his research is the real state, its origin, development and fall, as well as other elements influencing power and size of a state.

As far as the individual is concerned, both philosophers paid due attention to this topic in their works. However, there is a big difference between the two, because Ibn Rushd understands an individual and his/hers role rather in philosophic, if not even theological way, whereas Ibn Khaldun's approach is more realistic and social. Ibn Rushd maintains that function and purpose of the state is to realise human happiness, and that happiness and perfection can be achieved only in a perfect state organised in accordance with the law. Ibn Khaldun understands the individual not as an imaginary person but a specific person who needs to understand and determine his/her place in a society through the understanding of a wider social processes. Although Ibn Khaldun mostly argues the global social process and phenomena, the central point of his discussions is man. Overlooking the entire opus of Ibn Khaldun and Ibn Rushd, one can note that political philosophy is an integral part of their theories. Their approach to political issues is so clear and coherent so there is no need to apply deduction to their general concepts. Ibn Khaldun's work clearly indicates that political issues are vividly present as there is no major political issue of his time that was not been discussed or given opinion about. And exactly those elements that appear to be common in the works of Ibn Rushd and Ibn Khaldun's philosophy indicate certain differences that distinguish these two thinkers. Ibn Rushd did not discuss a society as such, but rather the state. Even when he elaborates on the origin of the state, he differs from Ibn Khaldun, as he never understood the importance of 'aṣabiyya, which was the main point of criticism by Ibn Khaldun.[4]

Having in mind that *Falāsifa*, in a way, represents a doctrine in between theological-legal, on one side, and historic-realistic doctrines on the other, it is not a coincidence that one of Ibn Khaldun's central topics is the law This is not necessarily the revealed law, but the law that should rule the state. The creator of the law could be a philosopher- a king.

In this regard, Ibn Rushd's doctrine on the law is, in fact, pure application of Plato's idea in Arab-Islamic world. We see that Ibn Khaldun does not really respect the law, regardless the fact it is revealed or created by the philosopher.

Ibn Rushd's concept of the state is a monarchy as monocracy, while Ibn Khaldun discussed only a monarchy or its forms that actually existed at his time. That is the state, based on force, according to Ibn Khaldun. There-

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[4] Ibn Ḥaldūn, *Muqaddima*, Maktaba al-madrasa wa dār ul kuttāb al-Lubnānī, al-tabʻa al-ṯāliṯa, Bayrut, 1967, p. 236.

fore, for Ibn Rushd the main constituency of the state is the law, and for Ibn Khaldun it is force, including actual social powers formed on the basis of spontaneous nomad sociability – ʿaṣabiyya that gains a new role and importance.

Theologian believed that the law has two main characteristics: otherworldly and mundanely. The latter is in the function of the former, as the law should regulate relationships in the way that people are well prepared for the eternal world. In that regard, al-Ghazali defined Islamic state, stressing out that its main function is good organisation of religious life. Ibn Rushd assigns similar importance to the law, whereas Ibn Khaldun understands state as a social fact that is of no primary social importance. In fact, for Ibn Khaldun *wāziʿa*, *riyāsa* and ʿaṣabiyya are of much higher priority then the law.

Ibn Rushd and Ibn Khaldun take Islamic state of the first caliphs established on the revelled law as the starting point of an ideal state. The difference between them lies in the fact that Ibn Rushd believed in the realisation of A state, which, according to him, would be identical to Plato's ideal state. Ibn Khaldun as a thinker with extraordinary talent for history, did not believe in the possibility of return to prior stages and he doubted the success of any possible reforms. Society inevitably moves ahead and is submissive to the laws. Furthermore, as the state is only a form of society, it necessarily moves in accordance to certain laws that have been described in detail by Ibn Khaldun. Just because of being turned towards real state, Ibn Khaldun repeatedly emphasised the importance of the economic factor. Insisting on economic factor was so strongly present in his work that some interpreters of his doctrine wrongly called it econometrical. He was the first to introduce economic issues in the analysis of the society and the state. Theories that were mainly tackling the needs were not capable, by their nature, to come to a pint of getting involved in economic ideas and matters. Therefore it was no coincidence that Ibn Rushd did not recognise the importance of economic issues in the state development process.

At the end, we can conclude that there are similarities between Ibn Rushd and Ibn Khaldun, mostly in their starting points, while development of thought and conclusions are essentially different. For sure, Ibn Rushd had influenced the creation of Ibn Khaldun's criticism, his viewpoint on prophet and caliph, but the author of Muqaddima went further in the considerations of an actual society matters. This is easily recognised in their views on "asabiyya". Ibn Rushd never recognised the importance of this social fact, as his top priority was religion, whereas Ibn Khaldun assigns the top priority to ʿaṣabiyya and puts religion into a function of ʿaṣabiyya. There are some other issues treated specifically and differently by these two thinkers. For instance, issues of perfection, happiness as the biggest benefit, etc., cannot be found in Ibn Khaldun's work in the way these issues were treated by Ibn Rushd. Despite this, we cannot dispute certain links connecting these two thinkers and their theories.

DVA KONCEPTA POLITIČKE FILOZOFIJE:
IBN RUŠD I IBN HALDUN

SAŽETAK

Ovaj rad počinje od pretpostavke da je moguće izvršiti komparativnu studiju političkih postavki Ibn Rušda i Ibn Halduna, i u pogledu sličnosti i u pogledu razloga njihovih učenja.

Što se tiče intelektualnih pretpostavki u Ibn Haldunovom radu, sigurno je da najznačajnije mjesto pripada grupi mislilaca koji su se nazivali "filozofima" (Falāsifa). Upravo je kroz taj intelektualni pokret ustanovljena bitna veza između spomenuta dva mislioca.

Imajući na umu Ibn Haldunov izuzetno kritički Um, upravo je takav kritički stav naslijedio od Ibn Rušda, iako je njegova kritika, u usporedbi sa Ibn Rušdovom, drugačija. U tom smislu, Ibn Haldun se približava Ibn Rušdu i u razmatranju pojave poslanstva. Upravo su oba mislioca smatrali da se država može stvoriti i ustanoviti bez Božijeg poslanja, odnosno bez Božijeg predanja i zakona. Za razliku od Ibn Rušda, Ibn Halduna nije zanimalo pitanje kakvo društvo treba biti, već kako treba da se realizira u stvarnosti, šta mu je suština, koji su sastavni dijelovi društva, zajednice i države.

Ibn Rušd je Ibn Haldunu omogućio priliku da stvori u suštini historijsku i realističnu teoriju društva i njegove historije. Iz sukoba vjere i filozofije Ibn Haldun je mogao izvući dva bitna zaključka: 1. da filozofski koncepti, koji pokušavaju na idealan način prevazići sukobe u društvu, ne mogu zaista objasniti problem i pitanja koja se tako bitno nameću u njegovom vremenu, i 2. da istinska studija društva i zajednice mora biti kritički orijentirana, bilo ka teologiji ili ka historiji i filozofiji.

Pojedinac uživa vrlo značajno mjesto u radovima oba mislioca. Međutim, među njima postoji suštinska razlika: Ibn Rušdov tretman pojedinca i njegove uloge više je filozofski, ako ne i više teološki, dok je Ibn Haldunov više realističan i više sociološki.

Gledana u cjelini, politička filozofija ne predstavlja sastavni dio teorija Ibn Rušda i Ibn Halduna. Kad su u pitanju osnovne teme političke filozofije, najočiglednija razlika je u tretmanu zakona. Zakonu, došao on poslanjem ili ne, Ibn Rušd pripisuje puno veći značaj, dok Ibn Haldun naglašava *wazijju, rijasijju* i *asabijju.*

Ibn Rušd i Ibn Haldun kreću od činjenice da je idealna država, zapravo, islamska država prvih halifa, ustanovljena na osnovu zakona poslanja. Razlika je u tome da je Ibn Rušd vjerovao u mogućnost uspostavljanja države koja bi bila identična Platonovoj idealnoj državi. Ibn Haldun, kao mislilac koji je imao izuzetan osjećaj za historiju, nije vjerovao u mogućnost regresije. Po njemu je vrijeme idealne države prošlo.

Pored toga, Ibn Haldun jasno naglašava značaj ekonomskog faktora, koji se kod Ibn Rušda uopće ne primjećuje.

Autor zaključuje da su sličnosti između Ibn Rušda i Ibn Halduna češće u njihovim početnim stavovima, dok im se u kasnijem razvoju ideje razilaze. Ibn Rušd je u svakom slučaju imao utjecaja na stvaranje Ibn Haldunove kritičke orijentacije, na njegov stav prema Poslaniku i halifi, ali autor *Muqadime* ga je prevazišao upravo u onim idejama koje su okrenute stvarnim društvenim problemima.

TWO CONCEPTS OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY: IBN RUSHD AND IBN KHALDUN

SUMMARY

This paper starts with the assumption that it is possible to do a comparative study of political conceptions of Ibn Rushd and Ibn Khaldun, both from the point of view of similarities and differences in their teachings.

As far as the intellectual assumptions of Ibn Khaldun's work are concerned it is certain that the most important place belongs to the group of thinkers called the *falāsifa*. It is through this intellectual movement that a significant relationship between these two thinkers can be established.

Bearing in mind that Ibn Khaldun had an autstandingly critical mind, it is exactly this critical attitude which he inherited from Ibn Rushd, although his criticism is of a different nature compared to that of Ibn Rushd. In this sense Ibn Khaldun approaches Ibn Rushd in dealing with the phenomenon of prophetship as well. Thus both thinkers held that the state can be created and established without the sacred investiture, i.e., without the sacred or revealed Law. Unlike Ibn Rushd, Ibn Khaldun was not interested in the problem of what society ought to be like but in how it ought to be realized in reality, what its essence is, what are the constitutive elements of society, sociality and the state.

Ibn Rushd created the opportunity for Ibn Khaldun to form an esentially historical and realistic theory of society and its history. From the conflict of religion and philosophy Ibn Khaldun was able to draw two important conclusions: 1. that the philosophical concepts which attempted to overcome the conflicts within society in an ideal way cannot really explain the problem and issues so urgently imposed by his era, and 2. that a true study of society and sociality must be critically oriented, whether toward theology or toward history and philosophy.

The individual also occupies an important place in the works of both thinkers. However, there is an essential difference between them here, because Ibn Rushd's treatment of the individual and his role is more philospohical, if not more theological, whereas Ibn Khaldun's is more realistic and more sociological.

Taken on the whole, political philosophy does not form an integral part of the theories of Ibn Rushd and Ibn Khaldun. As far as the basic themes of political philosophy are concerned, the most obvious difference lies in the treatment of the Law. To the Law, whether it be revealed or not, Ibn Rushd attributes a much larger significance, whereas Ibn Khaldun emphasizes *wāziʿa, riyāsa* and *ʿaṣabiyya.*

Ibn Rushd and Ibn Khaldun start from the fact that an ideal state is in fact the Islamic state of the first caliphs, established on the revealed Law. The difference is in that that Ibn Rushd believed in the possibility of constituting such a state which, in his opinion, would be identical to Plato's ideal state. Ibn Khaldun as a thinker who had an extraordinary sense of history did not believe in the possibility of regression. According to him, the time of the ideal state had passed.

In addition, Ibn Khaldun strongly emphasizes the importance of the economic factor, whereas in Ibn Rushd it is not at all noticeable.

The author concludes that the similarities between Ibn Rushd and Ibn Khaldun are most frequent in their initial positions, whereas in further developments their ideas diverge. Ibn Rushd certainly had an influence on the creation of Ibn Khaldun's critical orientation, on his attitude toward the Prophet and the Khalif, but the author of the *Muqaddima* surpassed him in just those ideas which look toward the real social problems.