

Online Lecture Series

ReOrienting the Global Study of Religion

History, Theory, and Society

9:00— 10:15 AM (EST/UCT -5)

Syed Farid Alatas

National University of Singapore

Ibn Khaldun and

Autonomous Knowledge Production

In order for theory to be relevant to the Third World/Periphery/South it needs to be challenged. The nature of that challenge is the deparochialisation of theory. The discipline of sociology and other social sciences have been slow to do this. Recently, however, there have been efforts to address the problem by way of the critique of canons and foundational theories of the discipline. This paper is a contribution in the direction of such critique to render the disciplines less parochial. This paper is divided into three parts. First it introduces the theme of silencing that manifests itself in the recounting of the voyages of discovery that began mere decades after the death of Ibn Khaldun. The paper then turns to the reconstruction of Khaldunian theory in the context of modern historical and area studies. The idea here is to provide a structure that may be used to construct social theory from the works of those thinkers from the South that are considered to be potential sources of alternative, non-Eurocentric theory. The thinker under consideration here is Ibn Khaldun. The paper ends with a discussion on autonomous knowledge as a more productive and critical way of thinking about knowledge production as opposed to the decolonization of knowledge. Ibn Khaldun is seen to be relevant to the challenge of hegemonic orientations other than Eurocentrism.

10:30—11:45 AM (EST/UCT -5)

Heba Raouf Ezzat

Ibn Haldun University, Istanbul, Turkey

The Tribe and the *Nomos* of the Earth:
The Relevance of Ibn Khaldun

The work of Ibn Khaldun has been read in many ways, focusing often on his notion of *'asabiyyah* and the nature of the social bond in tribal societies that motivates power exercise, territorial expansion and the rise of dynasties. The spatial ordering of society plays a crucial role in this vision. This presentation attempts to explore the notion of order and its configurations in space in the *Muqaddimah*, and how Ibn Khaldun's political imagination was based on an understanding of the *nomos* of the earth on three levels: the cosmic *nomos*, the material/spatial *nomos* and the sociological *nomos*. While a dominant approach to the reading of Ibn Khaldun was understanding tribal societies as hierarchical, or history as cyclical, I will try to examine heterarchy in the three levels of the *nomos*. To relate the above to contemporary debates in political theory, Carl Schmitt is invited to this discussion where his understanding of the *nomos* as the order of appropriation, distribution and production in every society is highlighted. I will also refer to Michel Maffesoli and his work on neo-tribalism.

Hosted on Zoom: <https://mcgill.zoom.us/j/85088959718>

Chaired by: Armando Salvatore, McGill University

Nov 18

9:00-11:45 AM

EST/UTC -5



McGill

Armando Salvatore
Barbara and Patrick Keenan Chair
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Robert Wisnovsky
James McGill Professor
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