# IBN KHALDÛN'S NOMADISM REVISITED IN DELEUZO-GUATTARIAN NOMADOLGY: A DECONSTRUCTIONIST READING

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**Abstract:** The current study examines the divergence of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's discourse of nomadology from Ibn Khaldûn's anthropological discussion of nomadism, exploring how such a shift reshaped postmodern thought and philosophy. In his magnum opus, *The Muqaddimah* (1377), Ibn Khaldûn provides a pioneering sociological study of the rise and fall of civilisations by referring to particular notions: *Badawa* (Bedouin), *Hadara* (civilisation) and *Asabiyyah* (group feeling), which are still discussed and developed in many fields to this day. In philosophy, Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987) is one of the works that revisited Ibn Khaldûn's anthropological framework of nomadism by concocting concepts, such as state, nomadology and the 'war machine.' The present paper examines how Deleuze and Guattari deconstruct and reinterpret Ibn Khaldûn's theorisation of *Badawa*, *Hadara* and *Asabiyyah* to more experimental notions to fit the postmodern context. To clarify, unlike Ibn Khaldûn's cyclical, historicist model, which privileges *Asabiyyah*'s role in dynastic renewal, Deleuzo-Guattarian nomadology posits the nomad as a destabilising force, the 'war machine' as anti-state resistance, and the state as a system of capture. Delving into the conceptual triad of state apparatus, nomad and 'war machine,' the paper finds that the Deleuzo-Guattarian nomadology is not only an appropriation of Ibn Khaldûn's treatise on nomadism but also a deconstructionist discourse. Deleuze and Guattari, in effect, dismantle and reshape Ibn Khaldûn's ideas on society, creating a philosophy of constant change and escape that challenges fixed notions of power and identity. This tendency manifests itself in different fields of postmodern society, which champions 'nomad thought' as a discourse to challenge dogma and orthodoxy.

*Keywords*: Asabiyyah, civilisation, deconstruction, Deleuze and Guattari, Ibn Khaldûn, nomadology, war machine

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## 1. Introduction

Postmodern philosophy significantly changed our perception of truth by disseminating multiple interpretations and decentring Eurocentric philosophy. It advocates the birth of a discourse that circumvents systematic shackles of formality, structuralism and dogma. Postmodernism encompasses deconstruction, which "goes under the name of poststructuralism" (Sim, 2001, p. 4). Although both trends are ubiquitous concepts that touch several fields, their original roots date back to Hegelian, Aristotelian and Nietzschean discourses. Oriental philosophers and thinkers, including Ibn Khaldûn—known for his seminal work *The Muqaddimah* (1377)—also influenced postmodern thought. Ibn Khaldûn is, arguably, one of the forerunners of poststructural and postmodern thought, for "he divulges the contradictions and inconsistencies in contemporary history, and carefully dissects and deconstructs ancient texts and the knowledge transmitted by them through generations" (Adem, 2005, pp. 129-30). His scholarship subsumes different fields, including science, politics and society as well as philosophy. Ibn Khaldûn's discussion of nomadism has been widely revisited in different postmodern and contemporary studies, namely in Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987). The present study re-engages with Deleuze and Guattari's nomadology and its intellectual indebtedness to Ibn Khaldûn's anthropological discussion of Bedouin lifestyle and *asabiyyah*, while developing postmodern concepts, such as war machine, nomad thought and nomadic/ sedentary dialectics.

## 2. The Reception of Deleuze and Guattari's Nomadology and its Nexus with Ibn Khaldûn's Nomadism

Deleuze and Guattari's work received considerable attention in academia. Their text, *A Thousand Plateaus*, was deemed controversial from the earlier phases of its publication due to its representation of nomadology or the *nomas*. While to some, the work romanticises nomadism, to others, it represents an insightful discourse that reforms rigid systems of thought and power dynamics. Some critics, such as Christopher Miller (1993), have opined on using and abusing the 'nomad' in cultural studies, especially in Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*. Miller's article "The Postidentitarian Predicament in the Footnotes of *A Thousand Plateaus*: Nomadology, Anthropology, and Authority" (1993) assesses the adaptation of 'nomad thought,' in anti-colonial and anti-capitalist narratives, and its challenge to the state apparatus. As explained by Deleuze and Guattari, nomad thought goes beyond authoritarian and identitarian prisons, which means resistance to the representation of authority and state apparatuses that are both present and problematic. Miller (1993) writes:

> Like certain real nomads described by anthropologists, Deleuze and Guattari prefer to think of coercive authority as beyond their means, leaving it to an alien 'State' with which they are not complicit, so that they won't have to be responsible for it. (p. 190)

Miller highlights ironies in Deleuzo-Guattarian nomadology, arguing that its nomads are irresponsible in their non-authoritarian attitude. He further describes the actual indifference to ordered interiorities and authorities as a kind of "cosmopolitan arrogance" (Miller, 1993, p. 191). He strenuously ascertains that by adopting elements from several anthropological sources, Deleuze and Guattari romanticise the figure of the nomad, thereby inadvertently replicating the colonial strategy of subjugating the native they ostensibly oppose (see Bogue, 2004). While Miller unearths discrepancies in the Deleuzo-Guattarian discourse, he fails to consider their work from a postmodern perspective, wherein the word 'nomad' is no longer connected to the Orient or 'the colonized.' Deleuze and Guattari provide psychical nomadism that maintains two tendencies of lifestyle: nomadic and sedentary. Moreover, while individual acts performed outside the state's laws can cause chaos within the state apparatus,

they are not necessarily chaotic in nature. Historical instances show that individual acts of courage have pursued reform on different grounds. Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the 'nomad thought,' cannot be viewed pejoratively, since its sole attempt is to dismantle social hierarchies and prejudices. After all, critique of the state emanates from within the system, not outside its system of thought.

In "Nomadism, Nomadology, Postcolonialism: By Way of Introduction," John Noyes (2004) discusses the difference between the anthropological study of nomadism and its critical agenda pioneered by Deleuze and Guattari in their conception of nomadology, arguing that nomadism has always been considered as

> a social (dis)arrangement and a subjective (dis)order on the fringes of empire, as a regime of technological, social, and conceptual innovation that is fundamentally opposed to empire, but that can also serve as a repository of resources on which empire can draw for its own perpetuation. (pp. 160-1)

Traditionally, nomadism was associated with a peripatetic lifestyle, distinguishing it from the state. Noyes states that by the closure of the twentieth century, scholarship described "nomadic thought in a materialist sense" (Noyes, 2004, p. 162). Deleuze and Guattari's philosophical approach to defining nomadism, he maintains, provides an opportunity "to conceptualize a new mode of subjectivity where military technology changes hands between the State and its negative" (Noyes, 2004, p. 161). Deleuze and Guattari's nomadism challenges the myth of subjectivity in the context of state machinery, in which a nomad can resist the technological powers of both parties.

Edward Said (1993) pinpoints the affinities between nomadism and post-colonialism in *Culture and Imperialism*. He writes, "As the struggle for independence produced new states and new boundaries, it also produced homeless wanderers, nomads, and vagrants, unassimilated to the emerging structures of institutional power, rejected by the established order for their intransigence and obdurate rebelliousness" (Said, 1993, pp. 402-3). By dwelling on the Deleuzo-Guattarian perspective—notably their conception of nomadology and the war machine—Said perceives the idea of the *flaneur* (or dweller) as resisting the state's doctrine (Said, 1993, p. 402). He contends that the power of the war machine "is not only its nomadic freedom but also its metallurgical art," characterised by continuous change (Said, 1993, p. 402). Noyes (2004) argues that Said correlates intellectual flexibility to nomad thought as it bestows a degree of rejection to institutionalised doctrines (p. 166). Besides Said, Noyes (2004) affirms that other scholars treat nomadism and nomadology as a benchmark for postmodern thought, including Jean Baudrillard (1929-2007), Jacques Derrida (1930-2004), Michael Hardt (1960) and Antonio Negri (1933) (p. 163). He concludes that equating the social interpretation of nomadism, that is to say homelessness and its critical implication, is quite problematic (Noyes, 2004, p. 167), for "it is not good enough to make the common distinction between 'peoples or cultures that are literally nomadic' and nomadism as a critical consciousness divorced from the political economy of nomadism" (p. 165). While Noyes's perspective in representing the subjective nomad is valid—mainly being viewed as a third party in a conflict—he fails to acknowledge that the nomadic system of thought as well as lifestyle are different. Instead of looking at the subjective nomad as a sponsor of war, Deleuze and Guattari regard nomadology and nomad thought as a possible path to peace and negotiations. In its lifestyle, nomadism operates outside the state's regulations. Thus, nomad thought remains misrepresented in socio-political discussions.

Ronald Bogue, considered one of the apologists of the Deleuzo-Guattarian approach alongside Stephen Muecke and Paul Patton, argues that some thinkers and theorists have misread Deleuze and Guattari's nomadology. In "Apology for Nomadology," Bogue (2004) comments on Miller's study, postulating that it fails to comprehend the essence of the philosophy (p. 170). He states:

> The nomadic and sedentary are pure tendencies that are real, yet that are experienced only in various mixed states. They are qualitatively different tendencies co-present across diverse social and cultural formations. This is a fundamental aspect of the concept of 'nomadism', and one generally ignored by critics of Deleuze and Guattari like Miller. (Bogue, 2004, p. 173)

Bogue, referring to traditional readings of nomadism, indicates that a nomadic lifestyle is almost indispensable in every fluid space. He juxtaposes sedentary and nomadic tendencies, whether referring to anthropological or philosophical perspectives on nomadology.

One of the foremost disciples of Deleuze and Guattari is Rosi Braidotti, who wrote several works about the Deleuzo-Guattarian discourse through the close association of nomadology with feminism. As demonstrated in her particular book entitled *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*, Braidotti (2011) argues that Deleuze and Guattari's nomadic discourse proposes a defiant attitude against regimentation and despotic authorities. It pursues an "authoritative shift away from hegemony, whatever its size and however 'local' it may be" (Braidotti, 2011, p. 26). Deleuzo-Guattarian nomadology is a mode of liberation from corporate thinking through embracing a nomadic counterpart that eludes the state's mechanisms of control.

Other scholarly works examine the influence of Ibn Khaldûn's discourse of nomadism on Deleuze and Guattari's nomadology. Inspired by Ibn Khaldûn's dichotomy of "urban" and "centralized civilization," Deleuze and Guattari examine the production of a liberating space inside robust systems (Ciavolella, 2015, p. 25). Magid Shihade (2015) discusses the intersection between nomadology and settler colonialism, contending that reframing the Palestinian question as a global rather than a regional one is necessary. In developing his argument, Shihade utilises Ibn Khaldûn's conception of nomadism and mobility "as a corrective to its misappropriation by Deleuze & Guattari" (Shihade, 2015, p. 5). He maintains that Deleuze and Guattari initially "borrow the concept of the nomad from Ibn Khaldoun" (Shihade, 2015, p. 5), further claiming that their "framing and exceptionalizing the nomad, either as a violent conqueror or as a world traveler, is in both senses a misconception of the original concept offered by Ibn Khaldoun" (p. 6). He condemns Deleuze and Guattari's nomad to be a mere misrepresentation and a romanticised version of Ibn Khaldûn's nomad, confining its meaning "to one aspect, central as it is, that focuses on the relationship between the individual and the state, specifically in the context of violence and war-making" (Shihade, 2015, p. 5).

Nevertheless, in his polemical aim to critique Deleuze and Guattari's nomadology, Shihade overlooks how Deleuze and Guattari revisit Ibn Khaldûn's nomadism from a postmodern perspective, rendering it global through the concept of nomad thought. Contrary to Shihade's argument, the current study asserts that the Deleuzo-Guattarian nomad is a contemporary figure that espouses nomad thought and orchestrates a lifestyle distinct from the sedentary counterparts, such as hippies and contemporary digital travellers. By upholding nomad thought, the nomad creates a war machine that attempts to deviate from the city's lifestyle. This deterritorialised tendency of the nomad transforms the war machine from a violent tool to a force that unsettles static structures by their mere existence (Brzeziński, 2022, pp. 165-6; Barker, 2022, p. 23; Farr, 2024, p. 54).

Similarly, Bogue (2024) further develops Shihade's polemical criticism in his recent article "Ibn Khaldûn and *Esprit de Corps* in Deleuze and Guattari." He investigates Deleuze and Guattari's (mis)interpretation of Ibn Khaldûn's discourse of nomadism. Throughout his article, Bogue attempts to clarify how Deleuze and Guattari misunderstood Ibn Khaldûn's *asabiyyah*, such as when both French critics think that Ibn Khaldûn associates *asabiyyah* to nomadism, which stands in opposition to the sedentary counterpart. Bogue (2024) that Deleuze and Guattari "creatively appropriate Ibn Khaldûn for their own purposes" (p. 352), leading to problematic misinterpretations. Despite his attempt to investigate how Deleuze and Guattari misrepresent Ibn Khaldûn's theory of nomadism, in general, and *asabiyyah*, in particular, he overlooks how Deleuze and Guattari's primary purpose is to depart from Ibn Khaldûn's anthropological study. Deleuze and Guattari revisit Ibn Khaldûn from a postmodern perspective, introducing the concept of nomad thought and war machine, which are initially influenced by Ibn Khaldûn's *asabiyyah*. The current study reflects on how Deleuze and Guattari revisit Ibn Khaldûn's nomadism and—to borrow Julie Sanders' term (2006)—appropriate his thoughts to postmodern context, particularly *asabiyyah* and nomadism. It is critical to stress that the primary emphasis of the present study is that while Ibn Khaldûn advocates group spirit, which subverts the Western proclivity for individualism, Deleuze and Guattari employ group feeling to maintain nomad thought and war machine. Consistent with Deleuze and Guattari's argument, individuals as well as groups can emanate such nomad thought and war machine, leading to transnational negotiations between Eastern and Western philosophies.

While already conducted scholarship provides valuable insights into the reading of the Deleuzo-Guattarian nomadology, particularly in its application to different discourses, including colonialism, post-colonialism and feminism as well as its connection to Ibn Khaldûn's nomadism, it fails to perceive their work as a postmodern deconstruction and appropriation of Ibn Khaldûn's thought. Notwithstanding the similarities, the ephebe—to borrow Harold Bloom's term (1997)—deconstructs Ibn Khaldûn's anthropological discourse and recontextualises it to fit the postmodern context. Hence, the current study employs a twofold approach: it demonstrates Ibn Khaldûn's influence on Deleuze and Guattari's discourse of nomadology and how the French philosophers, by turn, de/reconstruct the Arab historian's thought, particularly the idea of *asabiyyah*, nomadism and the sedentary/Bedouin dialectics. The paper is divided into three sections: it initially provides a meticulous elucidation of the theoretical framework of post-structuralism, in general, and Derridian deconstruction, in particular. It then moves to scrutinising sedentary and nomadic dialectics, as elucidated by Ibn Khaldûn, and demonstrating how Deleuze and Guattari deconstruct such discourse. Finally, it probes into Ibn Khaldûn's rationale concerning Bedouin life, the concept of *asabiyyah* and its appropriation by Deleuze and Guattari in postmodern and philosophical contexts.

## 3. Derridian Deconstruction: Revisions and Reconstructions

Post-structuralism is a philosophical trend of thinking that emerged in the 1960s and remains the kernel of contemporary society. It came as a reaction to the static limitations imposed by structuralism that confined the mind's assimilation to a specifically constructed binary between the signifier and its pre-determined signified. Poststructuralists unveiled the unsteady essence of signification, which asserts that the sign is no longer a unit with two fixed sides but relatively open to multiplicities in meanings, identities, and perspectives (Seldon et al., 2005, p. 145; Smaili, 2020, p.27). In post-structuralism, the signifier creates "chains and cross-currents of meaning with other signifiers and defies the signified's orderly requirements" (Seldon et al., 2005, p. 145). Post-structuralism no longer considers totalities but is open to an interconnected interplay of meanings.

To defy this, poststructuralist thinkers contend that the "core's" authenticity is no longer dependable (Williams, 2005, p. 2). The core's limitations are unstable and in a continuous flux and displacement, for "the limit is not defined in opposition to the core; it is a positive thing in its own right" (Williams, 2005, p. 2). Accordingly, the "disruption of settled positions" has a positive connotation, which brings forth unlimited "production of new transformations and differences" (Williams, 2005, p. 4). Post-structuralism unequivocally thrives with the readings of myriad discourses to uncover "the textual interplay behind power politics" (as cited in Devetak, 2013, p. 194). The Derridian conceptualisation of 'text' supersedes the insertion of words to create sentences, for the world turns into a text that includes specific, powerful structures (Devetak, 2013, p. 194). Overall, the input the mind fathoms of the outer discourse is ontological and thus ideological.

Jacques Derrida's deconstruction maintains a discourse that decentres the centre and destabilises fixed concepts and definitions (Derrida, 1967/1978, p. 279). In Derrida's understanding, "conceptual oppositions are never simply neutral but are inevitably hierarchical" (Devetak, 2013, p. 195). Words are not merely a denotation of one meaning but tend to have different connotations that may lead to a convoluted network of interpretations. Assuming the bluntly arbitrary relation between the word and its meaning blurs our understanding because no aspect is characterised by purity; therefore, the myth of absoluteness is seldom achieved, for "there is a certain amount of 'play', or 'give', in the structure of the opposition" (Devetak, 2013, p. 196). The key aspect of both post-structuralism and deconstruction is to obliterate the rigidness that confines certain concepts and unveil a space that reconsiders their applications to different disciplines.

While Derrida's understanding of 'text' is purely poststructuralist, the critic does not suggest blurring all centres and being left with none. Essentially, the Derridian perspective of deconstruction is both deconstructionist and reconstructionist. Derrida's reading of the world and its manifestations questions the static substance of origins but does not maintain chaos. With each deconstruction of a rigid structure, another one emanates. The new centre is displaced, since it does not constitute absolute truth. Meaning is no longer perceived from the standpoint of "totalization" but as a "supplement" to complete signification (Derrida, 1967/1978, p. 289). In this respect, Deleuze-Guattarian discourse of nomadology is deconstructive as it departs from the anthropological study of Ibn Khaldûn's nomadism, thereby creating the potential for a rhetorical nomadism that is omnipresent in the modern age.

## 4. Sedentary/Nomadic Dialectics: Between Sociology and Philosophy

In his socio-political study of the rise and fall of civilisations in *The Muqaddimah*, Ibn Khaldûn (1377/1969) highlights the existence of two different civilisations: Bedouin and sedentary. While Bedouin is located in the desert, mountains, "hamlets" and "outlying regions," the sedentary is situated in urban spaces, including "cities, villages, towns, and small communities that serve the purpose of protection and fortification by means of walls" (Ibn Khaldûn, 1377/1969, p. 43). One can assume that the definition of 'sedentary' implies its limitations by 'walls' while that of the desert is spacious and limitless. Although both sedentary people and Bedouins are "natural groups that exist by necessity" (Ibn Khaldûn, 1377/1969, p. 92), they differ in their lifestyles; the former affords a more comfortable lifestyle than that of the Bedouins, for their existence extends beyond achieving necessities to reach a luxurious mode of living (Ibn Khaldûn, 1377/1969, p. 93). Notwithstanding, the Bedouins tend to have a more "natural" relationship with their surroundings, characterised by lingering in the wilderness (Ibn Khaldûn, 1377/1969, p. 94).

The Bedouin civilisation preceded all sedentary cultures; the Bedouins' existence is entrenched in having "basics" and essentials while city people care for "secondary" matters (Ibn Khaldûn, 1377/1969, p. 94). The Bedouins, to Ibn Khaldûn, are likely to have the upper hand over sedentary people. While the latter's souls indulge in the pursuit of worldly matters, shallowness and wealth, the Bedouins, however, prioritise these only in cases of necessity (Ibn Khaldûn, 1377/1969, p. 94). The city man's materialistic interest insinuates into his soul "all kinds of blameworthy and evil qualities," which make it hard for them to arrange a decent life in their gatherings and assemblies (Ibn Khaldûn, 1377/1969, p. 94).

Deleuze and Guattari retain Ibn Khaldûn's binary opposition but interpret it through the lens of chess and Go. The state apparatus, typified in the chess game, is an "institutionalized, regulated, [and] coded" system (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/2013, p. 411). This definition shares some affinities with Ibn Khaldûn's characterisation of sedentary space as fundamentally bounded by walls and limitations. The Go pieces, on the other hand, referred to as *nomas,* inhabit an "open space" that is not coded but is in a constant process of being deterritorialised and reterritorialised (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/2013, pp. 411-12). While the sedentary space is striated and structured, the war machine embraces the deconstructionist approach as "another justice, another movement, another space-time" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/2013, p. 412). In this sense, nomadic life bestows a Derridian quality that obliterates the totality and rigidity of space as an enclosed area controlled by the *polis* or state apparatus.

Deleuze and Guattari appropriate Ibn Khaldûn's sociological opposition between sedentary and nomadic life by manoeuvring a different approach in their discourse, introducing the concept of 'nomad thought' as the nucleus of nomadism, which helps to uphold nomadic exteriority in regard to sedentary spaces (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/2013, p. 354). Nomad thought, in essence, "does not repose on identity; it rides difference. It does not respect the artificial division between the three domains of representation, subject, concept, and being; it replaces restrictive analogy with a conductivity that knows no bounds" (Massumi, 2013, pp. x-xi). Nomad thought indicates a radical model of reflection that challenges pre-suppositional Western metaphysics. It overcomes conceptual and representative boundaries of the state philosophy, as it is neither structured nor defined. Its pith is creative and transitional, unbound by past representations or images. For this reason, it generates several discourses, cultivating an exterior mode of reflection, namely the war machine.

The conception of nomad thought, in the Deleuzo-Guattarian discourse, deconstructs the anthropological study of Ibn Khaldûn and provides a philosophical dimension to the figure of nomad that may eventually resist Eurocentrism. The telos of Deleuze and Guattari's distinction between nomadic lifestyle and sedentary counterpart is not to "systematize received anthropological taxonomies; [but] rather, it is to articulate two tendencies – the nomadic and the sedentary – that have each a certain inner coherence and that manifest themselves in various mixed forms" (Bogue, 2004, p. 172). Certain tendencies predominate humanity, which define a nomadic lifestyle as opposed to its sedentary counterpart. One notices a rupture/ disruption of a centre which—to use Derrida's words—emanates "when the structurality of structure had to begin to be thought, that is to say, repeated" (Derrida, 1967/1978, p. 280). Deleuze and Guattari 'repeat' Ibn Khaldûn's anthropological discourse only to recontextualise it within a postmodern context, rendering it philosophical and entirely rhetorical. Thereby, nomad thought defines any assemblage or body that questions state apparatuses and epitomises heterodox potential (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/2013, p. 492).

## 5. Ibn Khaldûn's *Asabiyyah* Reconsidered: The Deleuzo-Guattarian War Machine

One of Ibn Khaldûn's socio-political concepts is *asabiyyah*, a pervasive term in *The Muqaddimah* for which a clear definition is not provided. There are multiple translations of *asabiyyah*; the dominant ones are "group feeling," (Lawrence, 2005, p. xiv) or "feelings of solidarity" (Ritter, 1948, p. 13). Ibn Khaldûn's *asabiyyah* is a sui generis theory that explains the rise and fall of political groups, dynasties and civilisations. It derives from the word "Asaba," which implies "to bind" (Kayapinar, 2008, p. 379). It also entails a "spirit of kinship" in the family or tribe (Gabrieli, 1958, p. 681). Ibn Khaldûn deconstructs the linguistic/cultural signification of the word *asabiyyah*, which was often viewed negatively in Islam. The thinker uses the term to "unite people politically" despite their lack of shared kinship ties (Binti Ismail & Binti Abdul Rahim, 2018, p. 291). Ibn Khaldûn can be regarded as a proto-poststructuralist thinker insofar as he radicalises and appropriates the word *asabiyyah*, shifting it away "from classical usage" and imbuing it with "a new positive meaning" (Sumer, 2012, p. 257). By dismantling the traditional phraseology of *asabiyyah*, Ibn Khaldûn opens a dimension in the socio-political studies that attempts to uncover the tenets, which instigate societies, dynasties and governments to perpetuate their unity over the span of decades and centuries. The recontextualisation of *asabiyyah*, through its removal from its original framework and reformulation as "technical" concept, permits Ibn Khaldûn to introduce it "as the basic political parameter, which is thought to be applicable to all cases of collective political action in various forms and scales" (Kayapinar, 2008, p. 382). Unlike the Western appraisal of individuality, Ibn Khaldûn bequeathed a particular prominence to group feeling and cohesion.

Group feeling is strong and effective whenever a group or a house keeps its descent pure; its prestige and nobility are only a reverberation of individual qualities and "an additional advantage" (Ibn Khaldûn, 1377/1969, p. 102). The continuity of a substantial house depends on the existence of group feeling as long as it remains within the Bedouin lifestyle (Ibn Khaldûn, 1377/1969, p. 102). However, upon moving to sedentary spaces and adopting a sedentary lifestyle, group feeling disappears, for it is only associated with Bedouin/nomadic life. In this case, if a house, residing in a sedentary milieu, has the qualities of nobility and prestige without group feeling, its destiny is decay (Ibn Khaldûn, 1377/1969, p. 105). To prevent such generational decadence, a tribe needs to maintain a strong group feeling by designating a leader, who belongs to a common descent of the tribe and possesses superiority of group feeling; the latter needs to be influential and rigorous (Ibn Khaldûn, 1377/1969, p. 101). Royal authority serves as the locus of group feeling, crystallised through solidarity and compassion and rooted in kinship and common descent (Ibn Khaldûn, 1377/1969, p. 109). To foster *asabiyyah*, it must be ascribed to Bedouin life rather than its sedentary counterpart; when societies espouse a life of luxury, bravery and superiority of group feeling inevitably decline (Ibn Khaldûn, 1377/1969, p. 107).

Ibn Khaldûn deconstructs the classical usage of *asabiyyah*, or group feeling, by associating it with a more socio-political discourse and detailing how group feeling is related to Bedouins that champion compassion and bravery, especially when rooted in common descent. Ibn Khaldûn's Bedouin nomads are distinguished by "their mode of life and *group solidarity* that brings various heterogeneous persons and families together" (Nail, 2011, p. 193). The paper contends that Ibn Khaldûn's system of power, *asabiyyah*, which is closely linked to Bedouin life, is appropriated to a more Nietzschean postmodern context, wherein one witnesses the upsurge of a Deleuzo-Guattarian war machine that is in a constant state of flux. Insofar as collectivism and individualism are concerned, the study further argues that while Ibn Khaldûn departs from the Western idolisation of individuality and underlines the

prominence of 'esprit de corps,' Deleuze and Guattari's war machine, however, resists the sedentary life and sustains nomad thought on both collective and individual levels. Operating as a deconstructionist force, nomad thought affirms neither the superiority of the group nor that of the individual.

References to Ibn Khaldûn's theorisation of nomadic life permeate *A Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/2013, p. 417, pp. 426-428, p. 653). In fact, "Deleuze and Guattari extract their 'nomad war machine' from Ibn Khaldun's nomad, in a handful of references" (Idris, 2019, p. 228) (also see Molino-Machetto, 2021). Deleuze and Guattari perpetually identify the concept of solidarity with "its nomadic origins and its role in the creation of a 'collective body' (*le corps collectif*) opposed to the State, Family, or Party body" (Nail, 2011, p. 193). By adopting the concept of Ibn Khaldûn's group solidarity, Deleuze and Guattari showcase how the war machine constantly permits political bodies to solidify as a form of resistance against the state. Bands, political bodies and groups, which are exterior to the state, "are of the rhizome type, as opposed to the arborescent type" that revolve around bodies of authority (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/2013, p. 417). While the state relies on a hierarchical system of power, an amorphous and unmediated potency is distributed to other relays connected through esprit de corps or group solidarity in bands or revolutionary movements. In this context, "it is the secret power (puissance), or strength of solidarity, and the corresponding genealogical mobility that determines its eminence in a war body" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/2013, p. 427). Deleuze and Guattari employ Ibn Khaldûn's *asabiyyah*, or group solidarity, as a key aspect to nurture the essence of a political body or "war body." It is precisely what defines the political body's exteriority to the state and its becoming-war machine. An insurgent movement's continuity and immanency are closely related to different "conditioned" elements, and Bedouin solidarity is being one "without the outside prodding of territory, family, or state" (Nail, 2011, p. 195). Following Ibn Khaldûn's definition of group solidarity, Deleuze and Guattari generate a discourse on the externality of bands and revolutionary bodies through having a body system that defies hierarchy and reveres 'esprit de corps.' Deleuze and Guattari reconfigure Ibn Khaldûn's concept of *asabiyyah* to theorise war machine as a socio-political formation.

Similar to Ibn Khaldûn's discourse, wherein the tendency of *asabiyyah* is ascribed to Bedouin nomadism, the Deleuzo-Guattarian war machine is linked to nomad thought. The assemblage perpetuates its exteriority because it differs from the state in nature and origin (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/2013, pp. 410-11, p. 413). The war machine serves as "the invention of the nomads (insofar as it is exterior to the State apparatus and distinct from the military institution)" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/2013, p. 442). A nomad's existence in a particular space implies the subsequent existence of the war machine (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/2013, p. 451). Indeed, "each time there is an operation against the State—insubordination, rioting, guerilla warfare, or revolution as act—it can be said that war machine has revived, that a new nomadic potential has appeared" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/2013, p. 450). Through Ibn Khaldûn's demonstration of *asabiyyah* and the postmodern appropriation of the concept from the Deleuzo-Guattarian perspective, one concludes that nomadic solidarity advocates "infinite connection (bridging) of shared concrete actions by two or more heterogeneous political conditions (never merging but becoming more or less transversally identical)" (Nail, 2011, p. 198). Extending Ibn Khaldûn's dialectics of nomadic/sedentary opposition, Deleuze and Guattari theorise the war machine's nomadism through its state-exteriority, sustained by group spirit or *asabiyyah* that enables its relays on a collective level.

Bedouin *asabiyyah* degenerates upon sedentarisation, leaving only the residual prestige of the "house" as a vestige of nomadic identity. Deleuzo-Guattarian war machine, however, can function within sedentary space precisely because nomad thought constitutes the kernel of the assemblage and its 'esprit de corps.' Nevertheless, the war machine faces challenges when it is captured and appropriated by the state, particularly "in the form of national armies" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/2013, p. 289). If the state captures the war machine, emblematised in a nomadic figure, it thwarts the process of nomadic metamorphosis, transforming the assemblage instead into a governed body. Thus, under the state's control, the war machine ceases to be nomadic, and its goal becomes one of chaos and destruction (Hawes, 2015, p. 88). While war is the exact aspiration of the state in appropriating the war machine, the latter has no relation with actual war, for it "is betrayed by its name" (Patton, 2000, p. 109). Deleuze and Guattari deconstruct the common representation of the nomads as merely violent and chaotic, stressing the possibility of a revolutionary reaction towards the state only when the nomadic war machine faces the threat of capture.

Deleuze and Guattari depart from the original discourse and conceptualise a postmodern and deterritorialised approach towards nomadism. While Ibn Khaldûn states that royal authority is the goal of *asabiyyah* in terms of Bedouin nomads, Deleuze and Guattari do not equate nomadism—nor war machine—with war or violence. War machines "have the power of *metamorphosis*," which permits them "to be captured by States, but also to resist that capture and rise up again in other forms" by alternative "'objects' besides war. …Each power is a force of deterritorialization that can go along with the others or go against them" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/2013, p. 508). The sense of becoming is connected to the war machine, which can react to the state apparatus in terms of civil insubordination, nonconformity, political upsurge and maybe revolution; war, however, is not the main reactionary objective of the war machine.

Western philosophy stresses the importance of the individual rather than a group (Sumer, 2012, p. 256). However, the group, not the individual, according to Ibn Khaldûn, is "history's focal point and determining factor. Individuals seldom- if ever, unless they were divinely inspired- have more than a minor influence on the overwhelming forces of history" (Sumer, 2012, p. 256). Deleuze and Guattari, nonetheless, contrive another angle to such dialectics by focusing on nomad thought that distinguishes the war machine, the nomad and nomadic life from the state philosophy or sedentary counterpart. They dismantle Ibn Khaldûn's proclivity for group and coalesce between Eastern and Western philosophies, foregrounding the dynamic between individual and group spirit. The war machine possesses transformative potentials as long as its essence is nomad thought; an individual can summon their proclivity for nonconformity against the state through groups, larger political bodies, religious communities, or revolutionary bands.

The Deleuzo-Guattarian discourse of nomadology does not refer to "actual nomad at all but the nomad-idea, the geohistorically contingent tendencies that exist in all human populations" (Saldanha, 2017, p. 55). Any individual can possess a nomadic tendency to disaggregate the sedentary image and create imageless thought or proliferative possibilities. The nomadic war machine is rhetorical rather than anthropological, for it encompasses characteristics that defy Western metaphysics and Eurocentrism. In his major essay "Nomad Thought" (1977), Deleuze unilaterally argues that Friedrich Nietzsche is an epitome of a heterodox intellectual, who deterritorialises the image/thought duality. Nomad thought essentially defines Nietzsche, since he champions an iconoclastic overview that conditions his lifestyle (Howarth et al., 2024, p. 9). Further, "an 'ideological,' scientific, or artistic movement can be a potential war machine" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/2013, p. 492). As an example, the countercultural movement of the Beat Generation can be a potential war

machine, individually or collectively (Kherif & Al-Khawaldeh, 2021, p. 108). The war machine manifests through the individual's challenge to consumerism and capitalism by adopting a minimalist lifestyle. Numerous individuals or hippies have lived in their vehicular spaces, constantly traversing sedentary spaces in sustained acts of geographic defiance (Naughton, 2025, p. 2). In particular, Jack Kerouac, the Beat writer, is considered an emblem of rebellion and intellectual mobility in Post-war America, questioning social norms and dogmatic institutions (see Kherif and Al-Khawaldeh, 2021).

Another example, the Arab Spring revolution, initiated by Mohamed Bouazizi's act of self-immolation in December 2010, can be viewed as a manifestation of the Deleuzo-Guattarian war machine. The youth-led revolution deterritorialises the coded authority of the state apparatus and reterritorialises a new authority that considers the force of youths a changing factor to restore democracy in the MENA region. The Arab Spring uprisings embody a Deleuzo-Guattarian war machine: initiated by subjective nomadism, propagating nomadic thought at the collective level, and generating a renewed *asabiyyah* among Arab youth. This transversal solidarity—transcending blood ties—facilitated the temporary destabilisation of entrenched power structures, momentarily instituting the rule of Arab Youth. In literature, the prophecy of these youth-led revolutions was marked by the adaptation and appropriation of William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in the Arab world. The latter is another discourse that bestows the notion of the 'nomad thought' as Arab playwrights' reading of Shakespeare's text changes its focus from Hamlet to Laertes and Ophelia as main protagonists in their narratives to predict the 2010 revolutions (see Bessami & Abu Amrieh, 2022a, 2022b, 2024). This also applies to "Hirak Rif" movement in Morocco (see Errami & Chinig, 2021).

## 6. Conclusion

The present study has highlighted the affinities and divergences between Ibn Khaldûn sociological theorisation of nomadism and the Deleuzo-Guattarian nomadology. While different scholars have investigated the Arab thinker's influence on the Deleuzo-Guattarian discourse, most perceptions fail to acknowledge the deviation marked by the French thinkers. They revisit Ibn Khaldûn's ideas to recontextualise them within a new framework that resonates with the postmodern era—a period marked by displacement, change and post-structuralism. By crafting concepts, such as 'nomad thought' and 'the war machine,' Deleuze and Guattari not only deviate from Ibn Khaldûn's discourse but initiate a new ontology, one defined by creative becoming and immanent potential, enabling liberation from state apparatuses and radical reconfiguration of social structures.

While Deleuze and Guattari acknowledge the contribution of Ibn Khaldûn to their study of nomadology—in terms of *asabiyyah*, sedentary/nomadic dialectics and deconstruction of discourses—they ultimately de/reconstruct the anthropological inquiry into an all-encompassing discourse that risks excessive abstraction. They formulate an assemblage in perpetual metamorphosis, comprehending both collective *asabiyyah* and individual becomings. The war machine maintains nomad thought that is exterior to the state; it is universal as well as local and individual. A war machine is not inherently oriented toward violence and war. When confronted by the state codes, it may pursue alternative trajectories, from peaceful insubordination and individual nonconformity to political revolution. A nomad, according to Deleuze and Guattari, becomes only a figure of war when the state successfully reterritorialises war machine. Deleuze and Guattari appropriate Ibn Khaldûn's sociological study to poststructuralist thought, valorising its inherent critique of systematic totalities through fragmentation and contesting paradigms. This theoretical approach may risk hubristic optimism in its romanticisation of nonconformity. Yet, in contemporary times—characterised by perpetual upheaval—we witness the emergence of revolutionary movements and political bands, which question capitalism and consumerism, alongside individuals, who transgress

geopolitical demarcations to preserve nomad thought as a critique against stereotypes and dogmatic systematisation.

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