

3 Global Sufism

“Theirs and ours”

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The title, “Global Sufism: ‘Theirs and Ours’” highlights transformations of Sufi organizations and styles occurring both in the West and in the Muslim world and how these complicate the “global” and “local” as constructs. For example, the construct “ours” could indicate how Westerners have reinterpreted and institutionalized Sufism, and perhaps re-exported some elements back to Muslim societies. “Theirs”, on the other hand, would consider how Sufi movements originally based in Muslim societies have modified elements of the classical Sufi Orders (tariqas) in the face of modernization and globalization and subsequently attempted to export these new forms of Sufism to the West.

Some specific effects of globalization are mobility, rapid dissemination of information through print, video and the Internet, and encounters of Eastern (Muslim) and Western (European and American) individuals and cultural elements in ways that, while they do not entirely eliminate power discrepancies, have the potential for more equal contributions in shaping interactions and ultimately constituting networks. In fact “theirs” and “ours” ultimately converge in an age of globalization. At the same time, we may inquire whether the differences that exist among today’s global Sufi movements arise due to the persistence of cultural concepts and practices of networking developed in pre-modernity. One theoretical problem is the tendency to conflate the Western and the modern. The inevitable adoption of technologies such as print or the Internet by groups certainly occasions shifts in strategies, discourse and outreach – but are these shifts to the West, to the modern or to the global?

Networking in theory and practice

Network theory is employed at various levels of sophistication and disciplinary specificity. For example, some social scientists approach network analysis by studying links among individuals that are then mapped in terms of nodes and ties. The concept of network may function as a metaphor used to understand organizational behaviours in terms of relationships rather than the characteristics and propensities of individual actors. Therefore, network theory is a way to understand the role that interconnectedness and relationships play within social movements, avoiding explanations geared only to individual choices.

While networks as wholes have been characterized as either more “closed” or “open”, hierarchical or egalitarian, individual actors in networks have been classified based on their positioning as being stars, gatekeepers, bridges and so on. Explaining how networks converge and coalesce combines both idealist and materialist theorizing, for example, through explanations grounded in world systems and the economic factors (rational choice, material circumstances) or by stressing the network as a community of discourse.¹

Muslim styles of networking

Sufism may be considered a major example of classical networking in Muslim societies.² These networks are often conceived in term of links of genealogy such as silsilas (chains) and shajaras (trees) incorporating precedence whether through blood/kin relations, the exchange of privileged information and charisma, or both. Sufi networks were usually hierarchical and involved ritualized and informal exchanges. They often spread among ethnically related persons sharing the same space or having social relations in other contexts, although they might also draw together persons of vastly differing social strata through common loyalty to an Order or to a specific shaikh.

At the same time Sufis have historically been among the most prominent agents of Islamic expansion through networks of preaching, trade, and clientage, and in particular are known for being adaptable to local linguistic and cultural conditions. In terms of movement through space, a notable example of network expansion or relocation would be the cases of Sufi deputies (khalifas) being instructed by their shaikh to move to new cities or regions in order to establish further branches of an existing order.

In terms of network theory as developed in the field of sociology, traditional Sufi Orders overlapped with other webs of relationships in Muslim societies of the pre-modern period. Primarily these networks might consist of family, tribal and ethnic affiliations, contacts developed in the proximate urban or rural location (guild or futuwwa associations), ties developed through madrasa education and links forged within the same madhhab (legal school). I would characterize these sorts of networks as being more horizontal, linking members possessing similar “social capital” of status, wealth and education.

Vertical aspects of Sufi networks would empower those attaining the highest levels of charismatic status and leadership to extend horizontal linkages to other power networks of the wealthy and noble classes through patronage and clientship relationships, and in many cases through exchange of females in order to create kinship relations through marriage.

In terms of the local, the sites of traditional Sufi Orders were the lodge (khanqah) or the shrine. Globalized Sufism, however, due to the lack of such places in the West, adapts to other spaces such as mosques, clubs and secular meeting halls as well as to the virtual space of the Internet.³

In describing culturally distinct styles of networking in the traditionally defined Muslim world, one may consider the ideas of clientage and patronage

networks that are not specifically Islamic but rather Mediterranean.⁴ In this regard, Clifford Geertz and Lawrence Rosen have elaborated the idea of a specifically Arabo-Islamic understanding of relationality in personal networks as represented by the use of the *nisba* naming suffix that marks the connection to place, tribe or genealogy.⁵ Thus an individual, depending on his or her context or positioning, might be referred to by the *nisba* (name suffix) indicating variously the home city, region or country.⁶ In Sufism “*nisba*” was also used as a technical term to indicate affiliation to an Order as well as to suggest spiritual affinity to a particular prophet, saint or spiritual state.⁷

From 1000–1800 the Muslim world incorporated diverse systems of networks based on mystical brotherhoods, a standard educational curriculum, pilgrimage and travelling in search of knowledge that established interpersonal links fostering transregional connections. The period post-1500 is marked by the rise of regionally and linguistically discrete empires, although the pilgrimage, the use of Arabic in the high religious tradition, and Sufism, still allowed transregional networks and transmission of ideas to persist.⁸

The coming of modernity to Muslim societies (overlooking for the sake of clarity transitional eighteenth- and nineteenth-century developments) is characterized by shifts such as the nation state replacing the old nobility (often interrupted by periods of colonial rule), altered or ruptured clientage and patronage patterns, and contestations in understandings of Sufism including what a disciple (*murid*) would gain through affiliating with a Sufi order. In addition, in Muslim societies the entire concept of authoritative knowledge in modernity is displaced from charismatic religious authority to professions such as medicine and engineering,⁹ and even within religious circles from the “*hikmat*” synthesis of theology, mysticism and the textual sciences¹⁰ to jurisprudential expertise or reformist zeal.¹¹

In his prospectus for the conference on “Sufism and the Modern” convened in Indonesia in 2003, Martin van Bruinessen construed the continued vitality of globalized Sufism as one indication that the decline of the Sufi orders had been prematurely pronounced by Orientalist scholars such as A.J. Arberry who stated that, “Sufi orders continue to attract the ignorant masses but no man of education would care to speak in their favor”.¹² According to van Bruinessen, even Clifford Geertz and Ernest Gellner had erred in their predictions that rural miracle-working saints and mystics would be soon replaced by the dry scripturalism of urban scholars.¹³

While many Sufi orders even in the pre-nation-state era were “transnational”, if such a term can be used,¹⁴ modern communications and the diaspora (Arjun Appadurai’s scapes and flows of media, finance, technology, ideas and people)¹⁵ have introduced new modalities into the global context of Sufi networking. In particular, we find the continued existence of vibrant “urban” Sufi networks in many regions that retain social capital in terms of status, literacy and religious knowledge. Some of these movements have enabled the revitalization of Sufism in the Muslim World and inspired some of the notable examples of global Sufism reaching the West through travel, migration and media.

Global Sufi networks may be bi-local or multinational but what now attracts our attention as unique is their ability to range across transcultural “world-systems” from the West to Asia and Africa and even beyond the bonds of Muslim communities of discourse.¹⁶

“Global” Sufi networking: “theirs”

In this section, I interrogate how several “post-tariqa” Sufi movements originating from the Muslim world decide to gain influence or interact with constituencies in the West – and with which constituencies? This necessarily complicates the category of Sufi – because I’d like to start with a South Asian Barelvi Sufi coalition and with the Turkish Fethullah Gulen movement, both of which are primarily twentieth-century movements that depart strikingly from classical Sufi norms such as direct initiation, teaching shaikhs and so on.

South Asian Barelvi-ism could be understood as a movement that provides a doctrinal and institutional context for popular Sufi practices.¹⁷ It is therefore now centred in mosques and madrasas, no longer exclusively in shrines and khanqahs. Rather than functioning as an initiatory Sufi order, adherents and sympathizers may come together in multiple contexts and may or may not be formal initiates of various Sufi orders. The Barelvi/Ahl-i Sunnat interpretation of Islam stresses the role of charismatic saints, devotionism and the supernatural powers of the prophet and saints meditated through Sufis and ulama.

Both the Turkish Gulen and the South Asian Barelvi movements have thus far been ethnically restricted, rarely trying to attract members from outside of the same group. However, each movement has attempted over the past decade or so to engage the goodwill of broader constituencies in the West whether among co-ethnics, likeminded Muslims of other ethnicities or, in the case of the Gulen movement, non-Muslims with an interest in inter-faith dialogue. Drawing from the American context with which I am most familiar two recent examples come to my mind.

Sufi Barelvis: the Naqshbandiyya Foundation for Islamic Education

In one case (1990s) the Naqshbandi Foundation for Islamic Education, founded by Barelvi-oriented Sufis from Pakistan, specifically murids of Jamaat Ali Shah (d. 1955), a Naqshbandi, studied by Arthur Buehler,¹⁸ tried to have an impact in the United States by organizing “Milad” conferences (celebrations of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad), and at one point gathering ulama of the Ahl-e Sunna wa l-Jama’at (Barelvi) orientation to try to form some kind of North American umbrella organization. The group envisioned a broad Sufi–Barelvi consensus as is evident from their website which links both Western and Muslim world Sufi Orders and the sites of Ahl-e Sunnat associations in various countries.¹⁹ Here a form of contemporary South Asian Sufism – Barelvi-ism was being exported to the US through immigrant networks and attempts were made to cooperate with

three local groups – American (Muslim) academics sympathetic to Sufism, American Sufi Orders, including at one point the Herlveti-Jerrahis, Naqshbandi-Haqqanis, the Guru Bawa Fellowship, and others, as well as Bareilvi ulama (immigrants). Several Milad conferences held in Chicago (1993–1995) attempted to combine all three constituencies²⁰ and branches in several other American cities hosted smaller events.²¹

I would characterize this effort as one based on the efforts of a handful of immigrant Muslim professionals, and one that did not take strong hold. The main target of this initiative was to influence the Muslim community in North America towards more inclusion of the Bareilvi element. However, most Muslim institutions, mosques, ISNA (the Islamic Society of North America) and so on, rejected these manifestations of Sufism – and the Bareilvis were not ultimately able to organize in the United States at the national level.²² The ulama didn't achieve consensus among themselves, while the Sufi groups often were not very Bareilvi in style, and had different concerns. For example, the divergent interests of American convert Sufis included a focus on Sufism as a source of personal development, promoting their respective charismatic shaikhs,²³ identifying with classical “high” tradition Sufism, and nostalgia for the great Sufi past.

At the same time in Pakistan, India and even in Britain, one finds successful Bareilvi institutions and networks, in some cases even political parties – but these of course have emerged in ethnically more homogenous “local” settings.²⁴ Therefore we may question whether the problem with organized Bareilvi-ism taking hold in the United States is the paucity of a certain “class” of South Asian immigrants? We may also view it as attributable to elements in the wider American culture. Alternatively its failure may have occurred as a result of factors specific to the Muslim sub-culture in the United States; for example, the fact that most community organizations were already controlled by anti-Sufi Islamists?

The Gulen movement

The Fethullah Gulen group, like the Nursi movement from which it derives, has been categorized as a tradition transmitted through print and study.²⁵ I will briefly consider the recent (post-2000) activities of the Fethullah Gulen movement in the United States. In this case we have a local form of networking based on patterns of Turkish Anatolian Sufism²⁶ trying to make organized inroads into the American/global scene. It may be objected that this movement is not explicitly “Sufi” and in fact eschews features of Sufi organizations such as initiation. I prefer to consider it as a variety of “post-tariqa” Sufism, a development emerging in the modern period that represents a new articulation of Sufi networking.

Successful exportation of some activities of the Gulen movement has occurred in the ex-Soviet republics since 1994 due to the establishment of schools and consequent outreach in the Turkish language.²⁷ Due to its original and continued emphasis on education as a vehicle for inculcating moral values in the modern world while promoting a scientific outlook, one may characterize the Gulen movement as building on a network model based on the school, especially

of the madrasa type. In this type of network the links between student and teacher are life-long and in some cases close to the master-disciple ties of Sufism.²⁸ “Exemplary” figures, Gulen, the Aghabeys (older brothers), and the other teachers facilitate Islamic learning and morally edifying discussions and dispense hospitality and service to the members and clients who in turn are supported in sharing this with ever-widening circles.

Hakan Yavuz divides the activities of Gulen’s movement into two phases:

- 1 The first period consists of religious community building 1966–1982 in which Gulen (b. 1938), a state-appointed religious teacher and preacher (hoca), tutored a spiritually oriented and intellectually motivated core group of followers to build a religious community in Izmir. Gradually the circle of supporters expanded beyond local students and businessmen to include outreach to many Turkish cities. Institutions were founded that would focus on the needs of an upcoming generation by providing dormitory facilities and ultimately an extensive network of primary and secondary schools.
- 2 During the second phase (1983–1997) the Gulen movement expanded into the public sphere and loosened some of its boundaries.²⁹ Increasing outreach involved a middle segment of Turkish society amenable to Islamization or moral rectification as subtly encouraged through television, radio, news, publishing, educational, and other support aspects of the movement.

During this time Gulen’s “inclusive and liberal interpretation of Islam as a religion of love, peace and social responsibility helped him build bridges and add new circles to the movement”.³⁰ The movement judiciously positioned itself in mainstream Turkish society by developing important holdings in the media, financial and educational sectors. With the collapse of the Soviet empire in the 1990s the Gulen movement expanded its outreach, internationalizing by founding schools in Central Asia, especially in Turkish speaking areas.

The year 1997 marked a new phase after Gulen left Turkey to reside in the United States at a time of severe government pressure on what were perceived to be Islamizing currents threatening the secular Turkish state. His movement, now some six million strong in Turkey, continues to expand its outreach globally through schools and, more recently, through activities in the United States. The main outreach in the US is currently not to fellow Muslims – but rather to the academic and inter-faith communities. Outreach efforts have included sponsoring fast-breaking dinners (Iftars), conferences, the promotion of Turkish culture through events such as Mevlevi performances, as well as the founding of charter schools. Increasingly, American business and political networks are tapped for participation and mutual support. These initiatives resonate with Fethullah Gulen’s stated objectives of encouraging a tolerant Islam engaged with the modern world through scientific education and tolerance while cooperating with those of diverse religions and backgrounds.

Activities of this group engage this chapter’s theme of global and local because one thrust of Gulen’s outreach is that Turkish Islam can model on a

global scale a moderate and tolerant expression of the religion – a combination of Sufi Islam and Turkish culture. In addition, Gulen turns from the Arab world to the West – evidenced by a focus on English rather than Arabic in the movement's schools. In what sense could we say that this Turkish movement is either similar to, or unlike, classical practices of Sufism? In fact, the writings of both Nursi and Gulen³¹ critique traditional forms of Sufi organization and suggest that the scope of Sufism for these times should be compatible with modern knowledge (science) and social formations. *Baya* (initiation)³² and *tariqa* identification are not practiced in any of the Nur movements despite their Naqshbandis roots.³³ A remaining question is – if this movement represents a new style of modern global Sufi networking that could be more easily communicated across cultures – how is the local/Turkish cultural element going to be negotiated in the future?

This question of Turkish cultural identity among Sufis in the West has already arisen in the case of the Mevlevi and Jerrahi Sufi movements in the United States. The American Mevlevi Sufis (under Jelaluddin Loras,³⁴ or Kabir Helminski,³⁵ for example) seem to have moved more towards the New Age attitude of eclecticism and gender equality, allowing women to perform the *sema* turning ritual, for example.³⁶ The American Helveti-Jerrahis have internally differentiated themselves into sub-branches, both regionally and according to the extent to which adherence to the *shari'a* is emphasized and traditional gender norms maintained, thereby negotiating Turkish Muslim and American New Age norms in various permutations.³⁷

Clearly the Gulen movement in the United States is less interested in direct recruitment, which in Turkey takes place through social networks such as family, education and religious meetings. Broader creation of a “community of discourse” occurs as associates become committed through “moral obligation” to work for a better society through reforming the private sphere. This message is transmitted in Turkey through media (newspapers, television, radio) and publications (300 bookstores) and small study circles that support and propagate the movement's philosophy. Most Gulen followers in Turkey are young people who, while at high school or university, adopted a more “Islamic” and service-oriented philosophy that at least for a time may alienate them from secularized relatives.

The objectives of the movement in the West are therefore somewhat ambiguous. Is the goal an expansion of the project of “moral reform” and “tolerance” to the entire world (globalism) or it is a means to gaining credibility in the Turkish homeland?

Global Sufism: “ours”

By “ours” I wish to indicate any mode of Sufism that is primarily centred in the West, although it must at some level invoke Eastern roots, unless one changes the definition of Sufi to mean “mystic” in the most general and all-embracing sense. This is in fact a position taken by some New Age Sufis and some from the Islamic world who see in Sufism a re-emergence of mystical elements derived from pre-Islamic practices of indigenous cultures.

While there may be quite a number of ways of categorizing types of “Western” Sufi movements,³⁸ for the purpose of the present analysis I will discuss three types:

- 1 eclectic Sufi movements;
 - 2 those with a Western convert as shaikh and, finally;
 - 3 movements headed by charismatic shaikhs from the Muslim world.
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- 1 Eclectic Sufi movements. Two movements that seem to be based in the West with only residual links to a Muslim homeland are:
 - a the Sufi Order in the West (Inayat Khan) and;
 - b the International Association of Sufism.

Comparatively speaking, each movement traces its origins to a Sufi who came to the West from a Muslim country. Each features leadership based on family or hereditary connections and has experienced rivalries concerning succession to the original teacher among his descendents.³⁹ Each gives more equitable treatment and leadership roles to females. Each primarily recruits Westerners who may not convert to Islam. Each stresses Sufism as a path of personal transformation and employs Western psychological/scientific knowledge along with mysticism and Sufi terminology, in order to validate its mission and teachings.⁴⁰

- 2 Convert Shadhili shaikhs. As a second case of “ours” Sufi movements I would like to look at several Shadhili movements in which a Western convert has become the shaikh or the central node in the network.

They are:

- a the Maryamiyya of Frithjof Schuon (d. 1997);
- b the Murabitun of Abdalqadir as-Sufi;
- c the Hashimi Darqawi of Nuh Ha Mim Keller.

In each of these cases, I would argue, the Sufi movement is largely driven by its opposition to something – in the case of Shadhiliyya Sufi movements in the West this has often been the “modern”. In terms of networking styles, the tightest bonds are among convert shaikhs and their (largely) Western followers due to the element of world-denying orientation and protest. It may be noted that in the instances where the convert shaikh resided in the West, a pattern of encouraging communal living emerges at least for a time. This signals the fact that those who join the network are often lacking other sets of relationships and social capital and have been amenable to locating their entire web of links within the movement.⁴¹ However in terms of wealth, race and education many followers of these two movements of Frithjof Schuon (Maryamiyya) and Abdalqadir as-Sufi (Murabitun) have generally been advantaged Europeans and Euro-American converts.

However, these two movements differ in that Schuon stressed the idea of traditionalism derived from the philosophy of Rene Guenon and seems to have attracted disciples from disparate networks: New Age eclectic, Islamically

oriented Westerners and intellectuals, and elite Muslims from the Muslim world. The Murabitun, on the other hand, initially recruited upper-class dropouts in London but in more recent years has developed some following among disaffected Muslim youth in the diaspora and in the Muslim world, as well as some populations attracted by its radical political and spiritual critique of the modern West.⁴² The Hashmimi Darqawi of Keller arose a generation later and finds its membership largely among Muslim youth in the Western diaspora.

Shadhiliyya-Maryamiyya

This group had been headed by Frithjof Schuon (d. 1998), more privately known as Shaikh Isa Nur al-Din.⁴³ Schuon, who was originally from Switzerland, moved to Bloomington, Indiana in the 1970s.⁴⁴ He was connected with the Shadhiliyya-Alawiyya tariqa of Algeria through Shaikh al-Alawi (d. 1934). Many prominent academic scholars of Islam living in the West including Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Martin Lings, Titus Burckhardt, Victor Danner⁴⁵ and William Stoddart⁴⁶ have been associated with Schuon's teaching. As Mark Sedgwick has demonstrated, the academic influence of this movement in terms of traditionalist philosophy in the lineage of Rene Guenon has been more important than its specifically Islamic Shadhili teachings.⁴⁷

After briefly studying with Shaikh Ahmad al-Alawi⁴⁸ whom he met in 1932, Schuon seems to have had his own visionary inspiration to connect with Mary and Jesus in his spiritual practices. His movement has been known as the "Tariqa Maryamiyya", or the path of Mary. While the practices of the tariqa are Islamic, there is also a certain eclecticism featuring terminology and practices from Christian, Hindu and Native American traditions⁴⁹ on which Schuon had also written. Schuon chose not to lecture publicly and to remain personally secluded,⁵⁰ but taught a closed circle of followers in Bloomington.

Since Schuon's death in 1998 the leader of the American branch of the movement has been Professor Seyyed Hossein Nasr. The tariqa's focus has been characterized as discernment and gnosis, and elite, rather than popular or devotional, Sufism.⁵¹ The mode resonated with the project of resacralizing the West or at least swimming against the tide of secularization, modernity and the disenchantment of the world.

In addition to the formal initiates of the Order, it has had a broader influence on educated readers both in the West and the Muslim world interested in Islamic mysticism and comparative religion through the writings of Schuon and of his prominent disciples who as scholars of religion articulate a "traditionalist" or perennial perspective.

Shadhili-Darqawi Order (also known as the Darqawi, Habibiyya and Murabitun order)

The Darqawiyya-Habibiyya movement is led by Abdalqadir al-Murabit also known as Abdalqadir as-Sufi, who publishes at times under the name, Ian Dallas

(b. circa 1931). Dallas was at one time editor of *The International Times*, a socialist paper.⁵² He also worked as a scriptwriter and played the part of the magician in Fellini's movie *8 1/2*. A frequent traveller to North Africa, Dallas was initiated by a Moroccan Sufi, Shaikh Muhammad ibn al-Habib al-Darqawi (d. 1971) in 1967.⁵³ He claimed to be appointed a deputy (*muqaddam*) by the Shaikh and his followers would visit the centre near Meknes.

In 1976 in England Abdalqadir declared himself to be a shaikh in the Habibiyya Order and his movement began to attract followers who were mainly young British and American converts to Islam. For some time he and his murids lived in flats donated by South Asian immigrant businessmen or in squatter houses in Bristol Gardens, West London.⁵⁴ The decline in modern knowledge and education is a recurring theme in Abdalqadir's writings, appearing again in his preface to *The Meaning of Man*, a translation of Darqawi writings.⁵⁵ By 1976 Abdalqadir had enough followers to establish a Sufi community in Norwich, England. His leadership became more and more autocratic. At one point he commanded all his followers to sell their cars, at another to divorce their wives. He later began to promote the study of the Muwatta' of Imam Malik as basis for an ideal social and legal system, and thereafter gave less emphasis to esoteric Sufism as he developed more of a strict and militant Islamic position. Ali Kose distinguishes two phases in Abdalqadir's teachings, beginning with an earlier esoteric Sufi period favouring isolation from society and later entering an activist political phase.⁵⁶

Although Abdalqadir seems to have initially attracted mainly Western converts to Islam as immediate disciples, his aggressively anti-modern and anti-Western ideology gained him support and hearings from Islamist networks in the Muslim world.

The concerns of the movement began to align with tenets of Islamist movements, becoming increasingly activist and global. Noteworthy is the Murabitun project of rejecting paper currency in favor of minting gold and silver coinage, and ultimately establishing an e-dinar (Internet) monetary system to displace Western economic interests.⁵⁷ Internet photos and news items indicate the project being enthusiastically received and the gold dinar being endorsed by Islamist political leaders such as Malaysia's Muhathir and Turkey's Erbakan.⁵⁸ The Murabitun movement has also involved itself in ethnic and revolutionary unrest and promoted conversions to Islam in areas such as South Africa and Chiapas, Mexico.⁵⁹

Followers of 'Abdal Qadir have also been instrumental in organizing, with assistance from other Spanish Muslims and foreign donors, the construction of a mosque in Granada on the hill right across from the Alhambra, inaugurated to worldwide attention on 10 July 2003.⁶⁰

Many of the early Murabitun were highly motivated and intelligent convert intellectuals who now occupy high places in academia or more significantly have become what I term "public intellectual convert Sufis" (PICS). This model of the "alim as cultural critic" appeals to the Muslim community, especially among diaspora Muslim youth, maintaining strong Internet presences, and offering

sophisticated cultural critique of both Western culture and decadent tendencies in the global Muslim scene. Abdalqadir's books are carried by a variety of Islamic bookstores and Internet sites.

In his study, *Sufis of Britain*, Ron Geaves notes the fact that Abdalqadir's movement has little appeal to immigrant Muslims within Britain although it has received worldwide support and publicity in the Muslim world at large, either due to its dawa activities⁶¹ or its political stance.⁶² Abdalqadir himself seems to maintain some connections with political Islamic movements, such as the Ikhwan al-Muslimin,⁶³ despite his criticism of its philosophy. His works have been translated into Turkish⁶⁴ and other languages of the Muslim world and have attracted the attention of Turkish immigrants in Europe,⁶⁵ also Spanish⁶⁶ and Indonesian Muslim youth.⁶⁷

In addition, Murabitun/Darqawiyya followers have published many translations of classical Shadhili works, Islamic law, hadith, etc. and some pursue academic careers in Western universities.

Shaikh Nuh Ha Mim Keller of the Hashimi-Darqawi Order

As the final example of "ours" Sufi movements led by convert shaikhs we take the Hashimi-Darqawi of Nuh Ha Mim Keller (b. 1954), an American Shadhili who has lived in Jordan for the past 20 years but has a large (several thousands) following composed primarily of young immigrant Muslims in the United States and Britain. Keller visits the United States where he has a number of American disciples once or twice a year, offering three-day sessions in various key locations. His American followers are mainly young Muslims born of immigrant parents and raised in the West who are seeking a return to Islamic authenticity, although he also has a following among American converts to Islam. This phenomenon of the young Western Muslims going for training in a madrasa to absorb both the intricacies of fiqh and Sufi learning emerged in the 1990s and continues unabated at the time of writing.

Keller is a direct disciple of 'Abd al-Rahman al-Shaghuri (d. 2004),⁶⁸ a Damascene Shadhili Shaikh in the line of both Shaikh Muhammad Sa'id Kurdi⁶⁹ and Shaikh Hashimi (d. 1961) who was a disciple of Shaikh al-'Alawi. al-Kurdi was born in Jordan and studied the traditional Islamic sciences in Damascus.

Keller is an example of the first generation of Western Sufis who have studied Islamic and Arabic sources extensively and have their own followings of shari'a-oriented Muslims, including some from South Asia and the Middle East. He has become somewhat of a public intellectual since the terrorist attacks of 9/11 where a number of Internet websites reproduce his interviews and commentaries on this as well as other topics.⁷⁰ His approach to Sufism has been characterized as "techno-fiqh" or "ultra orthodoxy" by other American Sufis. On the other hand, his followers perceive his style as being the most authentic and legitimate.⁷¹

Keller's main publications to date have been translations of classical Shafi'i legal manuals, such as the *Reliance of the Traveller* or *Maqasid* of al-Nawawi.⁷²

Members of his tariqa can access audio files of the shaikh's lessons on a private website. Keller's following in the West is growing rapidly and may attract further notice in the future.⁷³ Reports are that hundreds attend his lectures in Europe, Canada and the United States, representing a significant development among Western Sufi movements.

- 3 Charismatic shaikhs. The third category of "ours" Sufi movements to be considered here are those led by charismatic shaikhs from the Muslim world. Among such groups the Naqshbandiyya-Haqqaniyya and the Helveti Jerrahis are examples of Sufi movements that span more than one country and maintain a presence in the Muslim world. Generally, compliance to the shari'a and Muslim identity is maintained by members although within each movement there have been factions that drift towards more eclectic "New Age" practices.

In fact, these movements over time have tended to split along ethnic lines and in terms of practice. In the case of the Helvetis and Haqqanis this has occurred both in England and the United States. In these instances some members, especially converts to Islam, have drifted away or adopt a more eclectic "New Age" form of Sufism deviating from formal Islamic norms and shari'a compliant practice.

Thus, I would argue that in order to network broadly in Western societies and to persist over time, Islamic Sufi movements based on the charisma of particular shaikhs (Helveti, Naqshbandi-Haqqani) either have had to develop tiers or splits between Muslim and non-Muslim elements or they have to become more oriented towards inner development (psychology) and New Age concerns.

Conclusions

Scholars of networks in the diaspora have recognized the need to distinguish between forms that are essentially composed of bi-local linkages between the home country and the site of migration, and movements that are transnational and transcultural. In the case of Sufi movements, the truly global ones are those that network their Sufi activities in some meaningful way in multiple and culturally diverse societies.

One conclusion derived through comparing these various Sufi groups in terms of networking patterns and styles is that two dimensions of the networks themselves should be noted.

The first is the "vectoring" of such movements, their goals and mission, will determine their relationship to persons, ideas and other movements outside the group, helping to determine how much they are able to spread and interact across diverse populations. It seems on the basis of comparative work on global Sufism that the mission of the movement is important in the style of networking and possible affinities and conflicts among individuals and across networks.

The second is the nature of what circulates within the network, binding the individual members together. This provides important indications regarding a

movement's identity, style of networking and possible affinities and conflicts both among its members and to other movements.

In order to illustrate the issue of vectoring and mission I would like to cite the case of tension between Murabitun and the Naqshbandi Haqqani intellectuals on questions of doctrine. I would state that both movements potentially appeal to the same cohort of youth disaffected with life in the West.

The Murabitun critique centres on the style of the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis in promoting their shaikh and his controversial millennial teachings.⁷⁴ Its author, Umar Vadillo (deputy of Abdalqadir), promotes the political and economic ventures of the Murabitun while taking aim at Sufi perennialist movements (Schuon and Nasr's Maryamiyya) and the Naqshbandi lineages of the Syrian shaikh Ahmad Koftaru and the Haqqani Shaikh Nazim.⁷⁵

In brief the Murabitun, who stress *fiqh* and anti-Western discourse, oppose the Haqqanis, who stress the charisma of their shaikh and to an extent, Sufi esotericism. At the same time, this mission has enabled the Haqqanis to network with other Sufis self-defined as "traditionalists" who are opposed to Wahhabis, including perennialist and Barelvi groups.

In terms of the second feature, i.e. what circulates within Sufi networks:

- a one may contrast an emphasis on the personal charisma (of the shaikh and others) vs.
- b a focus on some specific content or information (such as *fiqh*, ideology, psychology, methods for personal transformation, etc.) that were not discussed in these terms in classical Sufism.

For example, most Sufi eclectic groups discussed above incorporate "Sufi psychology" as something that is cultivated and even practiced professionally, in some cases, by members.

The concept of global Sufism also helps us theorize debates about Islam and the role of culture in which Sufism is usually seen as being "culture friendly"⁷⁶ as opposed to the deterritorialized, "pure Islam" discourse of the Islamists. As I noted in a previous article, "deterritorialized" Islam appeals to diaspora youth who are disadvantaged in terms of the cultural capital of adult immigrants.⁷⁷ Since the Murabitun and Keller focus on "*fiqh* as the answer", these latter are correspondingly more successful with such diaspora Muslim youth.

The nature of what circulates within a Sufi network (*fiqh*, esoteric lore, psychology) also shapes its structures in ways that mimic other sorts of economic and social networks—franchises, multi-level marketing schemes, trade fairs or clubs. It may also predict the other networks in the society with which a Sufi movement may establish affinities and relationships, for example with holistic healing circles in the case of the Sufi Order, or Neo-Con lobbies in the case of the American Naqshbandi-Haqqanis, or at least their leader, Shaikh Hisham.

Modernity is marked by increased rationality and bureaucratic procedures leading to the disenchantment of the world and the emergence of civil religion. In general, global Sufism may be viewed as resistance to this trend of modernity

in western terms. The recruitment issue for Sufi movements in the West is that they do not draw on the indigenous symbols, language and identities that generally facilitate social and religious mobilization. At the same time, they conform to definitions of a species of “new [Islamic] social movements” that are driven more by issues of identity, culture and post-materialism rather than class, economic or narrow political interests.⁷⁸

In this sense many global Sufi movements are like “new” Islamic movements in being driven by identity, culture etc. However, in Western societies such causes are likely to appeal only to a narrow field of indigenous protestors against a spiritual or moral deficiency in the West.⁷⁹

The concern with identity and culture therefore gives such global Sufi movements a certain affinity with moderate Islamist movements as vehicles for moral protest and personal rectification. However, the Western Sufi movements are likely to be less interested in political activity, and will be more inward looking. When exported back to the Muslim world, however, the anti-modern and quest for authenticity expressed through perennialist movements, fiqh expertise, or critique of the West may circulate among broader Muslim constituencies where they may take on a political valence and recruit a certain cohort of Muslim youth.

“Global” Sufi movements of various sorts inevitably must adapt to local environments. For example take the cases of the Bareilvi group I cited (NFIE), the Gulen movement, and even the Naqshbandi Haqqanis. Each of these groups has some Naqshbandi Sufi background. Each has had to adapt according to local environments. For example the Gulen activities in Germany differ from those in the United States and those in Central Asia.

Other global Sufi movements such as the Naqshbandi Haqqanis are known to attract different types of members in the various countries where they operate: Malaysia, Germany, Britain and the United States, and Egypt, for example in terms of the class background and Islamic interpretation.

Therefore we observe that in terms of Sufi networking, the traditional mode of tariqa or brotherhood has come under pressure in the modern global context. New forms of networks include multi-tariqa Sufi conferences, post-tariqa Sufi movements and many individual articulations of Sufi practice and identity.

Notes

1 Loimeier (2000: 64). John Voll’s work on ulama networks is an example of the “community of discourse approach”.

2 Ibid.

3 Schmidt (2004).

4 Gellner and Waterbury (1977).

5 The anthropologists Clifford Geertz and Lawrence Rosen have commented on the importance of *nisba* as a concept within the Islamic, in particular, Moroccan system. See, for example, Geertz (1976: 234f.) and Rosen (1984).

6 Geertz, 1976 and Rosen, 1984.

7 Hermansen (1992).

8 Reichmuth (2000: 64ff.).

- 9 For example, as cited in Eickelman, 1992.
- 10 Muhsin Mahdi, "Islamic Theology and Philosophy" entry in *Encyclopedia Britannica* 9 (1974):1012–25.
- 11 Fusfeld (1984).
- 12 Arberry (1950: 122).
- 13 Martin van Bruinessen, "Sufism and the 'Modern' in Islam". Online, available at: www.let.uu.nl/~martin.vanbruinessen/personal/conferences/sufism_and_the_modern.html (accessed 16 September 2005).
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Appadurai (1996: 45ff.).
- 16 Reichmuth (2000: 55–56).
- 17 Sanyal (1996).
- 18 Buehler (1998).
- 19 Online, available at: www.nfie.com/links.htm, although the site seems to have been dormant since 2002.
- 20 Publications arising from these conferences are the two issues called *Sufi Illuminations*.
- 21 While NFIE continues sporadically only at the local level, an offshoot Islamic Studies and Research Association (ISRA) has a similar style of networking, and host several annual conferences with a regional appeal. Online, available at: www.israinternational.com (accessed 24 September 2005).
- 22 In fact a later organization, ISRA, tries to draw on many of the same networks. While localized in the South-East of the United States, the movement recently tried to enter the Chicago area through a network of Pakistani Punjabi businessmen. This seems to have met with little enthusiasm from the persons who were initially gathered from the Chicago businessman's contacts in the Pakistani business association (ethnic and professional networks) but who have less interest in Barelvi spirituality or American Sufism, although sympathetic to Islamic activities in a more general sense.
- 23 In particular Naqshbandi-Haqqanis who at one point threatened to pull out of the event if their Shaikh Hisham was not given top billing.
- 24 See Geaves (2002), on Barelvis.
- 25 Yavuz (2003: 297–316) and Bekim Agai, "Zwischen Netzwerk und Diskurs: Die Bildungnetzwerk um Fethullah Gulen". Online, available at: www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/orient/Agai.pdf (accessed 24 September 2005), also Agai's longer dissertation.
- 26 Yavuz (2003: 116, *passim*).
- 27 Agai (2001); Balci (2003).
- 28 Motahhede (1985).
- 29 Yavuz and Esposito (2003: 183).
- 30 Ibid. Yavuz (1999: 125–142).
- 31 Nursi *Letters* 41, 85. Serif (1989: 181–182).
- 32 The role of bay'a as a marker of hierarchical networking is not restricted to Sufi networks in expansion to the West. In an example from South Asia, the Israr Ahmed movement, Tanzeem-e Islami, an Islamist circle at a certain point began to emphasize the importance of taking bay'a to an amir. Of course this is one version of political organizing based on the model of the golden age of Islam where the khalifa received bay'a. While absent from the model of modern nation states, it is revived in some contemporary Islamic movements.
- 33 The Naqshbandi influence in the life and writings of Nursi is evident going back to Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi through the Khalidi-Naqshbandis. See, for example, Algar (1979). In the case of Fethullah Gulen, one may intuit a Mevlevi current as well, although no direct initiation or influences are claimed.
- 34 Loras is the son of a Turkish Mevlevi shaikh from Konya who came to the United States in the 1980s and leads a "New Age" version of Mevlevism.

- 35 Kabir Helminski is an American Mevlevi who heads an organization known as the Threshold Society.
- 36 Reinhertz (2001).
- 37 Webb (1995).
- 38 For example, typologies have been suggested by Hermansen (1997); Webb (1995: 251–252); Chittick (1995).
- 39 For example between the sons of Inayat Khan and between the son (Ali Nader) and daughter (Nahid) of Shah Maghsoud Angha in the case of the Shah Maghsoudi Uveyysi.
- 40 Hermansen (2004).
- 41 Stark and Bainbridge (1980).
- 42 This movement is discussed in Hermansen (2005).
- 43 Kinney (1994). Schuon is given a biographical notice in Rawlinson, *Book of Enlightened Masters* (Chicago: Open Court, 1997), 517–524.
- 44 Brief bio-bibliographies of Guenon, Schuon and his circle may be found in Borella (1992). Frithjof Schuon's more well known writings on Islam are *Understanding Islam* (1963) and *Islam and the Perennial Philosophy* (1976).
- 45 Danner briefly discussed the connection of Rene Guenon (Shaikh Abd al-Wahid Yahya) with the former Shaikh al-Azhar, Abd al-Halim Mahmud, himself a Shadhili. Mahmud mentions the diffusion of Shadhili teachings in the West in *Qadayyat at-Tasawwuf: al-Madrasa al-Shadhiliyya* (1988: 281–362). Danner (1991: 47).
- 46 Stoddart (1986).
- 47 Mark Sedgwick, “Western Sufism and Traditionalism”. Online, available at: www.aucegypt.edu/faculty/sedgwick/trad/write/WSuf.html (accessed 24 September 2005).
- 48 See Lings (1971). Nasr mentions that Schuon met al-'Alawi in 1932 (1986: 53).
- 49 Schuon apparently has a special affinity for native American traditions and has written a work, illustrated with some of his own paintings, *The Feathered Sun* (1990). See also Wilson (1993).
- 50 Nasr (1986).
- 51 Chittick (1995).
- 52 An early publication of Abdal Qadir was entitled *Islam: A Manifesto*, in emulation of Karl Marx's work on Communism.
- 53 The Darqawis are in the same lineage as the 'Alawiyya-Shadhiliyya. See Schleifer (1997).
- 54 A brief reminiscence of this period may be found in Sardar (2005).
- 55 al-Jamal (1977).
- 56 Kose (1996: 181).
- 57 Maurer (2002) treats the Murabitun and e-dinar in the context of alternative currencies.
- 58 Abdalqadir al-Murabit, Preface to Umar Vadillo, “The Return of the Gold Dinar”. www.geocities.com/Athens/Delphi/6588/gpreface.html. Viewed March 5, 2009.
- 59 Garvin (2005).
- 60 Reaction in Spain to these developments has been mixed. See Smith (2003). The mosque opening was hailed widely the first official return of Islam since 1492.
- 61 For example, Abu Ammar, “Principles of Dawa”. Online, available at: <http://iic.netuse.co.uk/dawah.htm>.
- 62 Geaves (2002).
- 63 *Letter to an Arab Muslim*, (Palma de Mallorca: Kutubia Mayurqa, 2000), 62.
- 64 Abdülkadir el-Murabit, *Diyalektigin Sonu Gelmekte Olan İnsan İçin* (n.d.) and *Muhammedi Yol* (n.d.).
- 65 www.ulumhikmekoeln.de/Dallas.htm is a Turkish article on Dallas and his thought.
- 66 The only site seems to have been superseded in 2003 by the Mosque of Granada site as a vehicle for Murabitun identity and outreach in Spain. Online, available at: www.mezquitadegranada.com (accessed 24 September 2005).

- 67 www.islamhariini.org (Jakarta) (accessed 24 September 2005).
- 68 'al-Rahman Shaghuri (1998). His obituary by Keller is available at: www.israinternational.com/library/topics/2004/nov.php (accessed 24 September 2005).
- 69 Najjah al-Naubani (1997).
- 70 www.islamfortoday.com/keller.htm.
- 71 Boumediene Hamzi, "Notes on the History of Orthodox Sufism in the United States", unpublished paper.
- 72 *Reliance of the Traveler* (Evanston: Sunna Books, 1993) and al-Nawawi, *Maqasid* (Evanston: Sunna Books, 1994).
- 73 A phenomenological description of some aspects of this movement and Keller's teachings may be found in Sahin (2003).
- 74 Geaves (2001). Shaikh Nazim and his teachings have been attacked directly by a senior member of the Murabitun, Umar Vadillo (2003).
- 75 This is not a new element in Murabitun ideology but reprises an article by Abdal Qadir in which he characterized the Sufism of (Ahmad) Koftaru, (Hisham) Kabbani and (Martin) Lings as "neo-batinism that puts the experience of mar'ifa on par with the shari'a". Abdal Qadir as-Sufi, "El Nuevo Ismailismo". Online, available at: www.cislamica.org/ultimahora.asp?Id=21 (accessed 17 September 2005).
- 76 Some global Sufi movements embrace aspects of traditional culture, and nostalgia for this aspect of tradition in the personal sphere at the same time as they embrace modernity in the operational one.
- 77 Hermansen (2003).
- 78 Quintan Wiktorowicz, *Islamic Activism: A Social Theory Approach* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 16. The debate favouring either the economic (rational choice, material circumstances) vs. community of discourse (ideological) models of explanation goes on in World History circles regarding historical examples of networks. Loimeier (2000: 64).
- 79 Among global Sufi movements the tightest networks are among the followers of convert shaikhs and their (largely) Western followers due to the element of world-denying orientation and protest.

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Global networking and locality

**Edited by Ron Geaves,
Markus Dressler and
Gritt Klinkhammer**

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