Imagining Sufism and Muslimness:
The Production of Knowledge about Sufism and Its Power against Political Islam in the United States, Canada, and Pakistan

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Abstract

In this thesis, I offer new insight into the construction of twenty-first century Sufism as an ideological ally of North American liberal democracies through an ethnographic reflection on the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Sufi group of Montreal and its leader, Shaykh Omar Koné, from September 11, 2001 to the present (2001-2017). The Naqshbandi-Haqqani order has emerged as one of the dominant "moderate" Muslim voices in North America, specifically in Quebec, where it informs a discourse that opposes peaceful Sufism to political Islam. A closer look at this partnership sheds light on enduring Orientalist depictions of Sufism as essentially mystical since the eighteenth century. This view was then reinforced through different movements in the United States and Canada. I will argue, first, that Sufism and Sufis have become a potent political force in North America since the beginning of the "War on Terror," and that, second, this dynamic is in fact reflective of the global knowledge production of Sufism and its power. To this effect, the latter section of this thesis will address the history of Sufism in Pakistan, as the country is a frontline partner of the United States in the "War on Terror," to reveal the broader genealogies of meaning that have pervaded the naturalised construction of Sufism as apolitical and antithetical to so-called political or militant Islam since the eighteenth century.

Résumé

Cette thèse présente une nouvelle perspective sur la construction du soufisme au 21ème siècle en tant qu'allié des démocraties nord-américaines à travers une exploration ethnographique du groupe soufi Naqshbandi-Haqqani de Montréal et de son imam, Shaykh Omar Koné, de 2001 jusqu'à aujourd'hui (2001-2017). L'ordre Naqshbandi-Haqqani s'inscrit comme une des voix Musulmanes "modérées" dominantes en Amérique du Nord, et plus précisément au Québec, où il contribue au discours qui oppose le soufisme pacifique à l'islam politique. Un examen plus approfondi de cette association révèle des représentations orientalistes du 18è siècle persistantes du soufisme en tant que tradition essentiellement mystique, un regard qui a été renforcé à travers différents mouvements aux États-Unis et au Canada. Je soutiens, premièrement, que le soufisme et ses acteurs-trices sont devenu-e-s des joueurs politiques importants en Amérique du Nord depuis le début de la « guerre contre le terrorisme », et que, deuxièmement, cette dynamique reflète la circulation globale des connaissances et du pouvoir soufis. À cet égard, la dernière section de cette thèse s'intéressera à l'histoire du soufisme au Pakistan, un pays partenaire de première ligne des États-Unis dans la « guerre contre le terrorisme », afin d'illustrer les significations plus larges qui ont imprégné la construction du soufisme depuis le 18è siècle comme apolitique et antithétique au soi-disant islam politique ou militant.

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Notes on Transliteration

This thesis employs transliterated words from Urdu and Arabic. In general, Urdu and Arabic words are transliterated into roman characters, in italics, following the Library of Congress (LOC) system. However, proper names are given without diacritics. Terms that are found in the English dictionary are kept in their commonly accepted form, e.g., imam, qawwali, shaykh.

All interviews in this thesis have been conducted in French. Unless stated otherwise, translations are my own.

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Introduction: Weaving Tales of Sufi Identities

Sufism: in one seemingly common word, six letters, is borne a burden of tremendous historical constructs and manipulations, ranging from romanticised fascination to colonial anxiety, as well as reformist persecution (Ernst 2003a). Recent academic studies of Islam testify to the narratives that have suffused the image of Sufism since the eighteenth century, creating a category of "Sufi-ism" tied to a "mysticism" distinct from the Islamic religion (Ernst 2003a, 113). Today, in both scholarly conversation and popular imaginaries, Sufism is frequently identified as "mystical Islam" and essentialised as an inherently apolitical tradition. Different narratives have come to articulate this particular picture of Sufism, notably in the academic study of Islam in Orientalist sources that continue to shape public discourse, as will be discussed. This image can also be witnessed today in post-9/11 North America, wherein certain Sufi groups have emerged as allies of the United States and Canadian governments due to a growing perception of them as "moderate Muslims" in efforts to address the radicalisation of Islam in North America.

Beyond North America, governmental support for groups deemed Sufi can be found in Britain, Algeria, Morocco, Pakistan, and Russia (Muedini 2015, 3). Again, a particular narrative around Sufism is emphasised, which projects it as a moderate expression of Islam. This governmental approach is highly essentialist as it embraces a perspective that creates a binary between two supposedly separate forms of Islam, political Islam and peaceful Sufism, by excluding Muslim voices that fall outside of the domain of Sufism. Multiple issues and questions arise from this dynamic. How did this practice of governmental patronage, be it through monetary funding or public support, of

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certain Sufi groups emerge? Moreover, in North American countries, what are the implications of sponsoring Sufi groups for non-Sufi Muslim immigrant communities and of societal demands regarding assimilation?

To address these questions, I have turned to the Montreal chapter of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Sufi order and its interactions with the Quebec government and civil society.[1] This group, officially registered in Montreal in 1984, has become particularly active in Quebec and deeply involved in local socio-political dynamics, mostly tied to language, immigration, and religion. Its centre attracts a multiethnic and multilingual group with members mainly having Middle-Eastern, North, East, and West African heritages, as well as many local Quebec converts. This diversity shows that the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Sufi Centre is a platform for Muslim immigration and diversity in Quebec, and thus an important concern to the local government, as witnessed with the engagement of the order's local imam. The shaykh of this Montreal community is Omar Koné whose leadership has proven to be a major factor in increasing the space's engagement in multiple civil outreach and inter-faith activities.[2]

The activities of the Montreal chapter are not unusual in that they reflect the broader approach of the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis internationally. This Sufi group is a transnational Sufi order with branches all over North and South America, western

[1] As the primary investigator, I began my participant-observation research in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Sufi Centre in November 2014, joining the community occasionally for their evening services on Thursdays (see appendix for pictures of the Centre and communal meals). Eventually, following the reception of my REB ethics approval, I conducted more specific research and interviews with the community's leader, Shaykh Omar Koné, from July 2016 to July 2017. As an anthropologist, I joined the community in most of its activities, especially during the months of March and June 2017, attending services on Thursdays and Saturdays, as well as participating in the important community building month of Ramadan in June 2017. I am highly indebted to the community for having welcomed me to their centre over this prolonged period.

[2] For instance, as will be further discussed in Chapter Two, Shaykh Omar Koné has been asked to join round tables on immigration and Muslim radicalisation organised by the Quebec government, led by Philippe Couillard. Among other groups, Shaykh Koné collaborates with the police service of Montreal (SPVM) to build stronger relations between civil organisations and the Muslim Council of Montreal.

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Europe, and the Middle East, among others. One of the common particularities that define the Naqshbandi-Haqqani branches is their attitude towards political authority, which assumes that the legitimacy of a state should be respected as demonstrated by the activities and teachings of Shaykh Nazim al-Haqqani, the founder of this order, and his representative imam in the United States, Shaykh Hisham Kabbani (Nielsen et al. 2006, 111). Illustrating one of their main objectives, Shaykh Kabbani has been working on articulating a positive image of Islam in the United States through marked interfaith and integration efforts since the early 1990s (Hermansen 2000, 184). Shaykh Omar Koné has done the same in Montreal in concert with the romanticised stereotypes of Sufism as the moderate face of Islam against radicalisation.

In this thesis, I will offer new insight into the abstract construction of twenty-first century Sufism as an ideological ally of North American liberal democracies through an ethnographic reflection on the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Sufi group of Montreal and its leader, Shaykh Omar Koné, from September 11, 2001 to the present. My primary research question regards how the "moderate" and particular "charismatic" identity ascribed to the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order of Montreal by the provincial government and Quebec public discourse may reflect global tensions towards Islam, including North American anxieties as well as local politico-social dynamics. I will also question the ways in which this identity permits the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order, in turn, to exert its influence on public discourse around secularism, multiculturalism, and religious tolerance in Canada (cf., Stoker 2007, 836).

The period of this study, 2001–2017, reflects the phase in which the Naqshbandi-Haqqani group has been most socially and politically active in Montreal. In positioning

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present-day global trends within larger historical narratives, I hope to question some narratives that influence the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order and their activities in Quebec. Conversely, I will explore the ways in which the Naqshbandi-Haqqani group is itself an agent in making Sufis the "charismatic Muslims" in public discourse in Quebec and Canada drawing on, among other things, Orientalist tropes about Sufism. With this research, I hope to offer a new perspective on the emerging identity of "moderate North American Muslims." I will argue, first, that Sufi groups and leaders have become potent political forces within North American circles since the beginning of the "War on Terror," and that, second, this dynamic is in fact reflective of the global knowledge produced about Sufism and its ostensible power against political Islam.

Within academia, it is only relatively recently that field-based studies of Sufi communities have acquired a critical mass in an attempt to provide ethnographic evidence that problematises Orientalist stereotypes. Such studies have emerged with the increasing presence of Sufi transnational communities in North America and Western Europe, and strive to examine contemporary manifestations of this tradition to dislocate Sufism from its golden age narrative (Geaves 2000; Werbner 2003; Wheeler 2003; Westerlund & Hermansen 2004; Malik & Hinnells 2006; Bruinessen & Howell 2007; Dressler & Geaves 2009; Raudvere & Stenberg 2009).[3] However, these studies have tended to overlook international tensions between Sufism, Orientalist stereotypes, and political authorities outside as well as within Muslim-majority countries. Therefore,

[3] Recent anthropological scholarship conducted by Ron Geaves has attempted to locate Sufism at "the heart of traditional Islam / Islamic belief and practice" out of a desire to reposition Sufism within the faith, in reaction to this apparent break between the two traditions (2000, 21). However, Geaves' emphasis on Sufism as the mystical, inner dimension of Islam further reinforces the perception that Sufism is essentially a mystical branch of Islam, one that is personal and disengaged from political activism. Therefore, recent scholarship has, at times, retained a romanticised understanding of Sufism, one that has historically permeated Orientalist writings.

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research by other scholars, particularly Rosemary Corbett and Carl Ernst, will foreground these works while historicising this view of Sufism as the moderate form of Islam.[4]

In addition to Corbett, Ernst is the leading scholar to have tackled Orientalist scholarship that produced a romanticised vision of a peaceful Sufism, as best exemplified in works of Sufi poetry and literature. He also addresses the persecution of certain Sufi practices and shrines by reformist groups such as the Wahhabis in the twentieth century. Of significant importance for my research, Ernst has tackled the genealogy of Islamic mysticism to reveal the impact of these enduring romanticised narratives on the academic study and teaching of Sufism in the twenty-first century (2003a, 110). In considering the trend of governmental support of an essentialised Sufism against more radical groups, Fait Muedini's recent book, *Sponsoring Sufism* (2015), explores the endorsement of Sufi groups and Sufi actors by different governments. Muedini's work is the most recent global political research of this kind and is helpful in understanding this shift since the 1960s.

With regards to the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order, many scholars have focused on its transnational reality and character, as well as its considerable growth in North America and Britain. These scholars include Marcia Hermansen (2000; 2004), Jorgen Nielsen et al. (2006), David Damrel (2006), and Simon Stjerholm (2010). However, when it comes to my case study, the only in-depth anthropological work on the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order in Quebec was conducted by Marie-Nathalie Leblanc and published as a journal article in *Anthropologica* (2013). Leblanc's ethnography discusses the cosmopolitan

[4] Corbett's work (2017) looks closely at the history, lives, and ambitions behind the 2010 proposed project for a Sufi Islamic community centre near "Ground Zero" in New York City. In historicising the motivations behind this project, she provides analytical perspective on a century of pressure on religious minorities in the United States as well as Orientalist stereotypes regarding Sufism.

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identities adopted by the Naqshbandi-Haqqani members through their outreach and engagement with the government from 2004–2010.

As a result, one can find recent anthropological studies on Sufi communities in North America and Western Europe (e.g., Geaves, Werbner, Wheeler, Westerlund & Hermansen, Malik & Hinnells, Bruinessen & Howell, Dressler & Geaves 2009, and Raudvere & Stenberg), scholarship on Orientalist Sufi literature and its socio-historical context (e.g., Ernst, Corbett) as well as works on Sufism and governmental relations (e.g., Muedini, Corbett, and Leblanc). However, they are not always in dialogue with one another and generally overlook the agency of Sufi groups in shaping the moderate Islamic discourse in post-9/11 North America.[5] Hence, I hope to bring together these two domains of research, the socio-historical and epistemic study of Sufism, with geo-political public policy research of Sufi groups and government post-9/11 in the context of Quebec, through my ethnographic study of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order of Montreal.

Chapter One will explore the development of Islam in North America, focusing on different historical moments that have marked the conceptual and dialectical translations of Sufism in American society. This section will offer insight into the experiences of West African Muslims in the Americas, beginning in the sixteenth century. This chapter will also investigate transnational Sufi groups in the United States in order to explore the essentialisation and exotification of Sufism in opposition to "militant Islam," which has propelled the growth of a similar "Sufi-culture" in Canada.

[5] For instance, one can think of Valerie Stoker's article on the Sikh community in Quebec as an example of a study that takes into account the agency of a religious community in shaping discourses around secularism, multiculturalism, and religious tolerance in Canada through a marked appeal to its religious identity and current context (Stoker 2007, 836). Corbett has done a related project in the context of the United States and a Sufi-Muslim community. Similarly, I hope to transpose these frameworks in the context of the Muslim communities in Montreal and explore the agency of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order as a force also shaping discourses in Quebec around political Islam, peaceful Sufism, and secularism.

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The different movements and figures to be addressed are the Atlantic slave trade, Muhammad Alexander Russell Webb, Inayat Khan, Universal Sufism, the Nation of Islam, Imam Abdul Rauf, and Shaykh Nazim al-Haqqani. Ultimately, I seek to highlight the different political agendas and conflicts in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries that have come to reinterpret Sufism for a specific "moderate" purpose in the context of North American liberal democracy.

In light of this frame of reference for articulations of Sufism in North America, Chapter Two will introduce the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Sufi Centre of Montreal and locate its position within the broader history of the dominant religion in Quebec and Muslim immigration to Canada since the 1960s. This historicisation of Muslim communities in Canada and of Sufi groups in Quebec will be central to understanding the local dynamics at play between the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Centre of Montreal and the provincial government. I will offer ethnographic reflections on the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order of Montreal and its leader Shaykh Omar Koné, and address the latter's outreach and political activities since the 2000s. Based on the previous section, this chapter will explore narratives around twenty-first century Sufism and the agency of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Sufi Centre of Montreal.

Finally, in Chapter Three, building on this North American theoretical framework, I will turn my attention to Pakistan in order to offer an Islamic country case study in which Sufism, as an essentialised ideology, and Sufi agents have similarly been co-opted by the national government since 9/11. Reflecting on the history of Islam and more precisely Sufis in the subcontinent, I divulge a characteristic process of "push-and-pull" between Sufi religious authorities and central power, one that has endured and evolved

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throughout the days of Pakistan's independence since 1947. The purpose of this section is to demonstrate that the instrumentalisation of the notion of Sufism and Sufis for counter-terrorism purposes, especially following 9/11, is not unique to North America or simply a result of North American anti-Islamic sentiment; reflecting global networks of knowledge and power, the construction of Sufism and its agents as antithetical to "militant Islam" has similarly taken hold in Pakistan, due both to concomitant international pressures and internal political transformations.

With this thesis, I wish to contribute to academic discussions that attempt to de-romanticise the notion of Sufism and humanise the abstract category of Islam, while historicising the changing use of these words and concepts in order "to reveal the crucial issues that define our world" (Ernst 2003b, xix). Moreover, as a French-Canadian, I hope that this study will have particular relevance in the pedagogical approach to teaching Sufism as well as in the current North American political climate in which non-Sufi Muslim Canadians find limited outlets for social and political activism, in the prospect of opening new channels of mutual understanding in Canada.

Sufism in Perspective

Historically, Sufi groups have varied greatly across various regions and periods, adapting their practices to their different contexts—this has permitted the tradition to spread from the Middle East to Eurasia and Africa. Sufism in transnational contexts is thus a diverse religious tradition and cannot be reduced to an essentialised "peaceful" and "apolitical" tradition as it often is in Orientalist scholarship. Indeed, today, there are many Sufi groups that challenge Orientalist stereotypes, in that they are politically and

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socially involved devotional communities. There are also other varieties of Sufi orders, such as secretive closed religious circles found in majority and non-majority Muslim countries.

The origins of the first "Sufis" have remained somewhat of a debated topic in academia. According to most sources, Sufis have been present since the founding of Islam in the seventh century in present day Saudi Arabia, reaching different corners of the world along with the rapid growth of Islam. Others claim that Sufis were in fact mystics in search of a prophet prior to the coming of Islam, and only converted to Islam after meeting Prophet Muhammad.[6] As for the term itself, some scholars assert that these figures were identified by European travelers during the Middle Ages as "Sufis," meaning "pure" or "wool-wearing," based on the life of poverty they were leading (Fadiman & Frager 1997 in Muedini 2015, 20). They were most often described as dervishes (Sufis embracing a poor life, wanderers), and at times shunned by society for their non-normative ways though praised for their pious lifestyle. Although these origins have remained somewhat ambiguous and contested, all scholars agree that the centrality of *walī*s, or Sufi saints, within Islam cannot be overlooked.

These godly figures, some of who are *sayyid*s (meaning descendants of Prophet Muhammad through the lineage of his daughter Fatima), are known for the miracles they performed, and are largely credited with having spread the word of Islam through their many migrations and distinct tolerant approach towards religious diversity, as we will see

[6] This view is more characteristic of New Age Sufism in North America and western Europe, wherein the teachers of these movements emphasise Sufism as a pre-Islamic tradition and spirituality. For more information on this view, one can consult sites such as the Sufi Way, which is a Sufi New Religious Movement. (The Sufi Way. "The Origins of Sufism." N.p., 2014. Web. 18 June 2017.)

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in Chapter Three.[7] The centrality of *walī*s in the history of Islam, and wherever Muslims would settle, can hardly be overstated. A crucial figure in Islam within the context of South Asia is *Sayyid* Nizam al-Din *Auliyā* (1238-1325), whose shrine in Delhi, India, is one of the most important centres of pilgrimage for Muslims in the subcontinent.[8] To this day, these *walī*s and their shrines remain predominant Sufi landmarks and foci of devotion throughout the Muslim world.

Records of "institutionalised" forms of Sufism, known as *tarīqa*s, or paths, in countries of the Muslim world date back to the ninth or tenth century (Buehler 1998, 1 in Muedini 2015, 20).[9] These *silsila*s, or spiritual lineages of master-disciple, were named after their founding imam and subsequently developed into influential networks of spiritual power among the masses. As such, they were of significant importance to local political leaders.[10] At times, Sufi groups acted as highly secretive clusters detached from state affairs while, at other times, they were either politically influential in their support of state leaders or openly critical of governments, even waging wars against colonial forces, such as in North Africa and the Indian subcontinent. For instance, as Alix Philippon explains, in the context of colonialism and colonial administration, the word Sufism resonated not with mysticism but rather with "fanatical resistance," threatening

[7] Some miracles recorded "can include such unusual abilities as thought-reading, healing the sick, reviving the dead, controlling the elements and animals, flying, walking on water, shape-shifting, and bilocation" (Ernst 1997, 68 in Muedini 2015, 30).
[8] Another major figure in South Asia is *Sayyid* Bari Imam Sarkar *Auliyā* (1617-1705), today famous as the patron saint of Islamabad, Pakistan, known as one of the most influential figures in spreading Islam in the region, converting thousands of Indians.
[9] Geaves defines the *tarīqas* as "brotherhoods of mystics each with its own shaykh [spiritual teacher] who taught a way unique to his own realisation of closeness to Allah" (2000, 16).
[10] In the Indian sub-continent, the five major *silsila*s are the Chishtiyya, the Naqshbandiyya, the Qadiriyya, the Suhrawardiyya, and the Qalandariyya; excluding the latter, these four orders represent major Sufi schools around the world (Philippon 2016, 16). The translations from French to English of Alix Philippon's 2016 book *À l'ombre des sanctuaires : Traditions Soufies au Pakistan* are my own.

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European domination (Triaud 1995, 19 in Philippon 2015, 192).[11] These Sufi groups leading *jihād* or wars against colonial powers from India to Algeria became the object of colonial paranoia (Triaud 1995, 19 in Philippon 2015, 192).

In other words, Sufi groups' approaches to society and political power have varied greatly in the Muslim world; as such, they cannot be reduced to apolitical organisations. As Philippon observes, delineating Sufism "only as the mystical trend within Islam does not enable us to understand the more social and political dimensions of this diverse phenomenon," which will be illustrated in Chapter Three (2014, 272). Moreover, the strength of Sufi *tarīqa*s was in their precise ability to engage with local culture and develop proper practices wherever their groups evolved. Therefore, to talk of "Sufism" as a definite category is problematic; the notion of Sufism and its agents need to be understood in light of their epistemic constituencies, wherein the concept of a "Sufi-ism," as a category, emerged out of sympathetic Orientalist scholarship.

Carl Ernst has described at length the genealogy of "Islamic mysticism" to expose the impact of Orientalist scholarship and Islamic reformist discourses on the study of Sufism (2003a, 110).[12] Ernst argues that the representation of the latter as Islamic mysticism came out of Orientalist scholars who, sympathetic to Sufism, specialised in its study and valorised the tradition as a classical literary phenomenon to be set apart from the rigid "stern faith of the Arabian Prophet" (2003a, 110).[13] The label "Sufi" was invented in the eighteenth century to point to the literary phase of Sufism "best illustrated

[11] The translations from French to English of Alix Philippon's 2015 article *« Bons soufis » et « mauvais islamistes ». La sociologie à l'épreuve de l'idéologie* are my own.
[12] Ernst states this information based on A.J. Arberry's *Aspects of Islamic Civilization*, presented in the Original Texts (1956), as one of the best examples of such "venerable textbooks and anthologies that have been in use for decades in North American universities," presenting Sufism as Islamic mysticism (2003a, 109).
[13] Here, the particular sympathetic scholars to Sufism to whom Ernst refers are R.A. Nicholson, A.J. Arberry, and Louis Massignon (2003a, 110).

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by the great Sufi poets (Rumi, Hafiz, Ibn al-Farid, etc.) or by prose works on discipline and metaphysics" (Ernst 2003a, 110). "Sufi-ism" was created to extricate "those portions of 'Oriental' culture that Europeans found attractive" and could not, so went the argument, be reconciled with Islamic "Mahometan" religion (Ernst 2003a, 110).

According to these scholars, Sufi mysticism had more in common with "true Christianity, with Greek philosophy, and with the mystical speculations of the Indian Vedanta" than Islam (Ernst 2003a, 110). Sufism was severed from Islam due to this rapprochement with the modern ideals of religion in Western Europe. Consequently, they distilled the "spirit" of Sufism to the literary tradition the scholars so admired, while these same scholars overlooked the contemporary "inappropriate" social manifestations (Ernst 2003a, 110). Scholarly emphasis on the mystical element in Sufism in conjuncture with the removal of overtly Muslim content, such as *shari'a*, served to "locate Sufism within the framework of universal mysticism," and therefore free it from the "shackles" of Islam (Geaves 2000, 161).[14] The Muslim environment was understood only as a "cultural backdrop," as Sufism belonged to "the universal quest for truth rather than the Muslim manifestation" (Geaves 2000, 167). Sufism was in this way valued in scholarship for its mystical collective nature as a timeless, "awe-inspiring human truth," delocalising the practice outside its historical context.

The scholarly literature on Sufism as mystical thus tends to romanticise its tradition within a golden age rhetoric of an ancient exotic past, which locates Sufi texts, poetry, and music outside their historical context. The emphasis on long-dead mystics in

[14] Geaves explains how Idries Shah (1924-1996) further validated this perspective in the twentieth century by introducing "Sufism to the educated middle-classes, particularly western intellectuals and artists" (2000, 167). In Shah's writings, "Muslim background appeared only as a cultural backdrop to the exploits of an innocent God who probed and poked at the hypocrisy of organised and institutional religion" (Geaves 2000, 167).

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addition to the Orientalist fascination with eastern mysticism turned Sufism "into a vitally extinct tradition" perceived to have flourished in the past and embodied in ancient ecstatic poetry (Geaves 2000, 2). Needless to say, this focus on the artistic and transcendent form of Sufism and its agents has contributed to the disjunction between the tradition and its local, cultural roots, namely Islam in its various forms across multiple continents. What is more, the term itself, "mysticism," tends to decentre Sufism and Sufis from their contemporary manifestations into a former "golden age" exemplified in Sufi literature, further categorising the tradition within a false rhetoric far from its ongoing vibrant reality.[15]

Incidentally, I shy away from the popular label of "Islamic mysticism" or the "mystical branch of Islam" to define Sufism as regards the academic teaching of Islam. In relation to this pedagogical concern, Ernst declares that the study of the epistemological roots of Sufism is crucial to alter the "generic concept of mysticism with which it is often associated" (2003a, 121). In line with Ernst's concern, "not enough has been done to historicize and problematize the category of mysticism as it emerged around the turn of the century in Western thinking about religion" (2003a, 121). Mysticism is too often reduced to "a bare universalism" and to the private experience of an individual, in which Sufism pertains to a universal truth arising from multiple religions. In academic

[15] To this day, such emphasis on personal "mystical" dimensions has restrained Sufism–excluding Islam–to an inherently apolitical, peaceful tradition conveying a spiritual message concerning human experience as a vehicle of religious tolerance. For instance, in Britain, the Sufi Order (UK), a non-Muslim New Religious Movement, "is proud to acknowledge that the teachings of Sufism go far beyond the confines of Islam" and locate "Sufism as a product of eternal truths arising from ancient Buddhist, Hindu, Zoroastrian and early Christian mysticism mixing with the Muslim teachings of Muhammad" (Geaves 2000, 176). The Sufi Order defines Sufism, according to Geaves, as "the religion of the heart, in which the primary importance is to seek God in the heart of humanity" (2000, 180). By juxtaposing the trends in scholarship with current New Age spirituality, we can observe how New Religious Movements have internalised and reinvented these romanticised identity narratives by reducing historical ties to cultural backgrounds in a globalisation framework, a topic to which I will come back in Chapter One.

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discussions concerning Sufism, "the historical contingency of religious terminology" must be addressed to orient students to a better understanding of historical processes of manipulation and political domination, coming from outside as well as within (Ernst 2003a, 121).

Accordingly, I seek to emphasise the resulting dehumanising characterisation of Islam today and mythologised nature of the study of Sufism that has arisen from these enduring processes, which in turn has come to influence popular beliefs concerning Sufis and Muslims as well as their self-identification. This emphasis on the "mystical" literary tradition has become internalised on some level and projected in conflicts within Muslim communities, as seen with reformist Muslim movements. In other words, Sufism was not only the object of colonial paranoia and Orientalist romanticisation, but was also further codified according to reformist Muslim persecution beginning in the nineteenth century.

Up until a hundred years ago, Sufism permeated all facets of Muslim life and no specific distinction of identity had to be established between the two "labels" (Ernst 2003a, 115).[16] However, with the advent of reformist attacks coming from groups such as the Wahhabis, traditional Muslims had to identify themselves in order to defend their beliefs and rituals (Geaves 2000, 26).[17] Sufi practices that had permeated Muslim traditional life for centuries across borders were now critiqued as unlawful innovation

[16] Ernst explains that "prior to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it was scarcely necessary for a Sufi, steeped in the Qur'an and the example of the Prophet Muhammad, to have to define him- or herself in terms of Islam" (2003a, 115)

[17] Wahhabism emerged at the end of the eighteenth century in Arabia as a radical reformist Muslim movement based on the writings of the fourteenth-century reformer 'Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328) (Hodgson 1974, 160). This sect of Islam was articulated by Muhammad Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792). The Wahhabi movement emerged as a force condemning Sufism, Sufi practices, and Sufi shrines. The influence of Wahhabi interpretations of Islam really increased in the twentieth century in parallel with the 1970s price of oil, wherein the Saudi government started promoting Wahhabism internationally (Denoeux 2002 in Muedini 2015, 55). Wahhabi influence grew most strongly in Afghanistan and Pakistan with the rise of the Taliban, which will be addressed in more details in Chapter Three (Manzar 2010, 13).

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(*bid'a*) in the reformers' attempt to codify Islam to its "original purity" (Geaves 2000, 26). The Wahhabis accuse Sufis of pantheism as well, based on the latter's perceived relationship to God, which aims for "a personal engagement with the Divine" (Chittick 2009, 207 in Muedini 2015, 20).[18]

In this intimidation, Ernst argues that certain reformist Muslim groups "articulated their goal as the domination of the symbols of Islam," excluding from their discourse customs they judged were not inscribed in the "purity of Islam" at the time of the Prophet (2003a, 113). As seen previously, *tarīqa*s that successfully integrated into their local milieu were often subsequently critiqued by reformist groups who "rejected the ritual and local cultural adaptations of Sufism as non-Islamic" (Ernst 2003a, 113). The primary goal of reformists' attacks on Sufism was to make the latter "into a subject that is separable from Islam, indeed, even hostile to it," further reinforcing the binary found in Orientalist scholarship (Ernst 2003a, 114).

In light of these misconceptions approached above, Islam came to be equated with politico-radical reformism, and Sufism as a trans-historical, trans-local, tradition that evades boundaries and political streams. Ernst explains that it would seem only normal to view Sufism as incompatible with military and economic activities to those "who consider mysticism a private affair, and who view Sufism primarily through poetry or theoretical treatises" (2003a, 121). Considering the "historical contingency of religious terminology" discussed above, Islam as a political religion is in turn rejected by Sufis who need to justify themselves to their wider society according to the fact that this Islam does not fit the essentialised picture of inner mystical experience characterising the

[18] The most influential critique that has inspired the Wahhabi ideology was made by the thinker 'Ibn Taimiyya in the thirteenth century (Philippon 2014, 274).

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identity of their social religious body (Ernst 2003a, 121). From this perspective, any association of Sufism or Sufis with political power "constitutes a fall from purity" (Ernst 2003a, 121).

From this exploration of historical genealogies, one can begin to comprehend the intricacies of the romanticisation of Sufism and its ensuing impact on processes of Muslim self-identification with and against Sufis. The impact of such baggage-bearing religious terminologies could hardly be emphasised enough, especially today, in an increasingly globalised post-9/11 world. Against the so-called escalating threat of political Islam or "Islamism," Sufism and Sufis, perceived to be inherently tolerant, are more and more valued within North American secular political discourses (Leblanc 2013, 426). Moreover, with the growing awareness of "mystical Islam" as a spiritual philosophy in North America and western Europe along the lines of New Religious Movements, Sufi beliefs and practices have become increasingly exotified within popular culture since the 1960s (Dressler & Geaves 2009, 2). The historical constructions and political dynamics that have propelled this de-localised notion of Sufism and Sufis will be the focus of the following chapter in order to help us better understand the exotification of Sufism in North America.

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Chapter One
Sufism in Translation: Tracing the Making of Moderate Muslims in North America

Following 9/11, successive governments in Canada and the United States have selectively promoted particular Sufi organisations and leaders in a clear effort to fight "politico-radical" Islam in parallel with the US-led "War on Terror" (Muedini 2015, 3).[19] This support has ranged from think tank recommendations to direct monetary funding of selected Sufi groups or organisations to outspokenness in favour of certain Sufi leaders and their groups. In this political strategy, Sufism is constructed as peaceful, universal, and "tolerant *because* it is antithetical to normative Islam" (Lipton 2011, 439, emphasis in the original). Consequently, post-9/11 Sufism in US political discourse has acquired a new function inscribed in this construct "as a template for an 'alternative' Muslim subjectivity" (Lipton 2011, 428). Moreover, the motivations behind sponsoring Sufi groups and ideology at the state level have common roots in an essentialised discourse that overlooks local tensions, while reflecting post-9/11 North American-based international pressures to find an alternative Muslim voice.

Indeed, this political narrative plays a "significant function as part of a wider, post-9/11 geopolitical discourse in the so-called 'War on Terror'" (Lipton 2011, 427). For instance, Algeria, Morocco, and Pakistan are Muslim-majority countries that mirror these dynamics. According to Fait Muedini (2015), state leaders of these three countries have sponsored Sufi leaders, groups, and ideologies in the hope of fighting militant Islamic organisations that threaten their legitimacy. International pressure coming from US

[19] On September 20th 2011, George Bush Jr. declared a "War on Terror" that would start with Al-Qaeda, the terrorist organisation of Osama Bin Laden held responsible for 9/11 and supported by the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. After condemning the Taliban regime, Bush Jr. further declared that the US would attack every terrorist group of global reach as well as target any government supporting these terror organisations worldwide.

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foreign policy to sponsor Sufi groups over "radical Muslims" has also represented a significant motivation for these Muslim-majority leaders, as will be examined now and exemplified in Chapter Three. The case of Pakistan will be addressed in the latter chapter in order to offer a comparative Islamic country case study, which will reflect some international tensions discussed here in light of this country's own historical interactions with Sufi agents.

In this chapter, I will trace the construction and impact of the image of Sufism and Sufis as amenable to an American ethos in the context of the United States through three historical moments, or phases of movements of peoples, conversion, ideologies, and social trends. First, the arrival of Muslims in North America will be explored beginning in the sixteenth century with the discovery of the "New World" and the Atlantic slave trade followed by the rise of black American Muslim movements in the 1930s; then the exotification of Sufism within popular culture and New Religious Movement ideology from the 1920s onwards; and finally by state-sponsored political strategies and dialectical approaches promoting Sufi groups as American allies and Sufism as antithetical to militant Islamism post-9/11. I will address, first, some historical moments that have marked the translations of Sufism and Sufis in the United States and, second, their impact on current politics at the crossroads of the US-led "War on Terror," especially in relation to the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Sufi order. The case study of the United States will shed light on the tropes regarding Islam and the popularisation of Sufism in North America, which has greatly impacted the politics and popular culture that shape Sufi communities in Canada and Quebec, as will be addressed in Chapter Two with regards to the Montreal chapter of the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis.

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Part One: African Muslim Migration and Black American Movements in North America

In academic scholarship, when tracing the development of Sufi practices and agents in North America and Western Europe, Inayat Khan is often mentioned as the first missionary figure to have spread Sufi ideology starting in 1910. However, this historical rendering overlooks an important development predating the twentieth century, namely the forced migration of West Africans coming with the Atlantic slave trade.[20] Indeed, Muslims were among the first migrants to the Americas, meaning Sufi practices reached North America long before the creation of the United States, considering that Islam and Sufism were once inextricable (Corbett 2016, 72).[21] In Senegambia, the area of West Africa that had been Islamised for the longest time starting in 1010, Sufism became a central part of its Islamic culture.[22] As Ernst notes, most Americans today have forgotten this episode, but "as many as 15 percent of the West Africans sold into slavery in the United States were Muslims, including a number who preserved their culture and even wrote texts in Arabic while enslaved in the South" (2003b, 18).[23] This historical moment

[20] I am indebted to Rosemary Corbett for mentioning this important source of historical information in her book *Making Moderate Islam* (2016, 72).
[21] In fact, the first contact of Muslims with the Americas, before the coming of massive numbers of West Africans, were guides of North African origins who had joined Christopher Columbus during his initial discovery of the "New World" in the fifteenth century (Kaba 1992, 26; Curtis 2009a, 13).
[22] Beginning in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Sufi brotherhoods spread through the region of West Africa and came to play an integral role in the social order of African Muslim societies as well as the spread of Islam well into the twentieth century (Hill 2009). Approximately 24% of slaves in North America, and more precisely in present-day United States, are said to have originated from Senegambia ("African Muslims Enslaved in the United States and Elsewhere." *Prince Among Slaves*. N.p., 2011. Web. 20 June 2017).
[23] One of the most well-known African Muslim slaves in scholarly works, according to Nyang, is Ayub Ibn Sulaiman Diallo, an African Muslim prince who became a victim of the slave trade in 1731 (Nyang 1992, 6). For more information about the writings and life of Ayub Ibn Sulaiman Diallo, see Edward E. Curtis, IV, *Muslims in America: A Short History* (New York, 2009a), pp. 12-13. Older sources include Douglas Grant, *The Fortunate Slave* (London, 1968); Philip C. Curtin, ed., *Africa Remembered: Narratives by West Africans from the Era of the Slave Trade* (Madison, 1967), pp. 17-59; Francis Moore, *Travel into Inland Parts of Africa* (London, 1738); Thomas Bluett, *Some Memories of the Life of Job, the Son of Solomon, the Highest Priest of Boonda in Africa* (London, 1734) (Nyang 1992, 6).

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thus marks America's initial encounter with Islam, which took place within the context of colonisation (Nyang 1992, 3; Ernst 2003b, 18).[24]

In this sense, West African Muslim slaves represented an important group in the colonisation of the Americas from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth century, bringing with them their Islamic heritages and implementing the first Sufi practices in North America (Curtis 2009a, 20).[25] For instance, Curtis reports the case of a famous West African Muslim slave in the late 1800s, Bilali (also called Ben Ali, Belali Mahomet, and Bu Allah), whose duty was to oversee the work of hundreds of slaves on Sapelo Island, Georgia, where they lived (2009a, 19). He and his wife, as well as several family members, are recorded to have used Muslim prayer beads to perform *zikr*, a traditional Sufi practice (Curtis 2009a, 20).[26] Although Sufi practices were not intentionally and systematically transmitted to white Americans until the coming of Inayat Khan in 1910, as will be discussed in section two of this chapter, the early West African Muslim community must be acknowledged as the initial encounter of the United States with Islam, and therefore Sufism. This community further grew in importance with the expansion of black American Muslim movements in the twentieth century. As I will

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[24] One of the most important recent scholars on African American Muslims is Edward E. Curtis, IV. For more information, see his books *Muslims in America: A Short History* (New York, 2009a) and *The New Black Gods: Arthur Huff Fauset and the Study of African American Religions* (Bloomington, 2009b). Some primary sources available on the slave trade in the Americas in the nineteenth century are accounts collected by three amateur ethnologists, namely Theodore Dwight, William Brown Hodgeson, and James Hamilton Cooper (Nyang 1992, 5). Other less recent works include Allen D. Austin, *African Muslims in the New World: A Sourcebook for Cultural Historians* (New York: Garland, 1981) and *African Muslims in Antebellum America: A Sourcebook* (New York: Garland, 1984), which have contributed to scholarship on Muslims within the slave community by making previously hard to locate texts readily available to scholars (Nyang 1992, 7).

[25] For a detailed account of these developments, different practices, and religious accommodations, see Edward E. Curtis, IV, *Muslims in America: A Short History* (New York, 2009a), pp. 12-25.

[26] *Zikr* is a meditative form of prayer in which the practitioner repeats and remembers, silently or vocally, the names of God or short sayings (Curtis 2009a, 20). Curtis adds that the beads used in this case were the same kind popular among the Qadiriyya Sufi order, a group that had a profound influence on West African politics and society in this era (Curtis 2009a, 21).

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explain, the experience of black American Muslims can hardly be overlooked when delving into the history of Islam in the United States.

Following the initial movements of West African Muslims onto American soil with the Atlantic slave trade, the Muslim community grew with a second wave of migration coming mainly from the Levant and Fertile Crescent in the nineteenth century (Nyang 1992, 7).[27] These immigrants, mainly sailing from Lebanon and Syria, came in search of the "North American Dream" following an economic crisis in Lebanon and political unrest developing within the Ottoman Empire (Nyang 1988, 523). However, these settlers suffered great psychological pressure to assimilate and struggled to maintain their religious lifestyle; many of their second generations are said to have eventually converted to Christianity (Kaba 1992, 27; Nyang 1988, 523; Rashad/Miller 1995, 130).

Subsequently, another central development within the American Muslim community came not from immigration but the large-scale conversion of black Americans to Islam in parallel with "the black search for identity in America" (Nyang 1992, 11).[28] This topic has been documented at length within scholarship and public media due to its perception as a threatening social trend while coinciding with the 1950s African-American Civil Rights Movement. The Nation of Islam was the most significant black American Muslim movement, drawing thousands of converts by 1960 into its fold "by claiming the legacy of Black Religion, a legacy of 'protest, resistance, and liberation'" (Sherman Jackson 2005, 32 in Karim 2010, 115). This movement used

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[27] Again, for more information on this second wave of immigration, see Edward E. Curtis, IV, *Muslims in America: A Short History* (New York, 2009a), pp. 37-50.
[28] For more information about this topic, see Edward E. Curtis, IV, *Islam in Black America: Identity, Liberation, and Difference in African-American Islamic Thought* (Albany: 2002), and *Black Muslim Religion in the Nation of Islam, 1960-1975* (Chapel Hill, 2006).

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"militant language" to attract black converts from the 1930s to the 1960s as it involved a complete rejection of Christianity and assertion that Islam was the religion of their forefathers prior to slavery (Rashad/Miller 1995, 134).

The Nation of Islam was founded in Detroit in 1930 under Wallace Fard Muhammad (1877-1934). The rise of his movement also coincided with the contact between Arab immigrants and black Americans in the ghettos of urban northern cities such as Detroit (Kaba 1992, 27). As Kaba explains, the great migration of black Americans from the rural South of the United States to the industrial cities of the North between 1900 and 1950, about 40,000 per year, forced them into ghettos, causing a major process of acculturation (1992, 28). In parallel with increasing frustrations and oppressions associated with life in these ghettos, a significant fraction of black Americans converted to Islam, finding in their immigrant Muslim neighbours from Lebanon and Syria values different from those of Christianity or institutions dependent on white people (Kaba 1992, 29). In advancing the twin causes of black nationalism and freedom from white supremacy, the Nation of Islam offered a new path of social liberation to black Americans.

Under the leadership of Elijah Muhammad (1897-1975), the second leader of the Nation of Islam from 1934 to 1975, the movement increasingly protested racism, "addressed the suffering of African American people, and offered them an alternative experience and identity" (Karim 2010, 115).[29] Elijah Muhammad became well known

[29] According to Kaba, black Americans converted to Islam, as "a religion rich in ideological inspirations," for three major reasons: first, the possibility of joining one of the most important and respected religious traditions in the world; second, the universal civilisation Islam offered in its doctrine, giving birth to a great spiritual and cultural solidarity amongst peoples of the world; and third, Islam established a community based on moral and political codes that were useful to groups in the process of developing, as was the case of African Americans (1992, 29).

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after being arrested in 1934 for his opposition to the public school system and to laws of segregation. He also advocated that his movement was persecuted by the white judicial system following a terrible riot with the police in Chicago in 1935 (Kaba 1992, 30). The 1940s persecution against the Nation of Islam intensified when members refused to serve in the army under the instructions of Elijah Muhammad (Kaba 1992, 30). The latter was again imprisoned from 1942 to 1946, accused of conspiracy, sedition, and treason during World War II (Kaba 1992, 30).[30] The Nation of Islam increasingly came under the radar of the FBI and US intelligence agencies in the 1950s, often described as fostering violence and black supremacist ideology under the banner of Islam amongst the black American population.[31] Nonetheless, the Nation of Islam became increasingly popular and, by 1960, had established 60 "mosques-temples" in 22 states (Kaba 1992, 31).

On the one hand, the *umma* (global community of Muslims) was distrustful of the Nation of Islam, mainly because Elijah Muhammad declared himself a "Messenger of Allah," and on the other hand, the United States viewed the group as a violent, communist, and black supremacist movement that was a danger to the nation. One of the leading figures who represented a "threat" to the United States due to his powerful charisma and public-speaking abilities was Malcolm X (1925-1965), who contributed greatly to the cause of the Nation of Islam in the 1950s. During his years in prison from

[30] Elijah Muhammad is said to have sided with the Japanese cause in the war, after which he was arrested by the FBI (Rashad/Miller 1995, 182).
[31] It must be mentioned that the Nation of Islam was regarded with distrust in America based on Orientalist scholarship, representing two massive layers of discrimination, namely colonial persecution of black Africans and Islam. For instance, this statement from Lothrop Stoddart, a scholar from Harvard, is case in point of the American perceptions of Islam and black Africans: "Insofar as he is Christianized, the negro's savage instincts will be restrained and he will be disposed to acquiesce in white tutelage. Insofar as he is Islamized, the negro's warlike propensities will be inflamed, and he will be used as a tool of Arab Pan-Islamism seeking to drive the white man from Africa and make the continent its very own" (Stoddart 1920, 96-97 in Rashad/Miller 1995, 149). Islam, as a "militant religion by nature," was perceived as a "dangerous weapon of liberation" in the hands of "inherently violent" Africans (Rashad/Miller 1995, 149).

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1947 to 1952, Malcolm X converted to Islam and officially joined the movement upon his release in 1952 (Rashad/Miller 1995, 191). He quickly rose as the most active preacher of the movement under Elijah Muhammad in the 1950s, and become the leader of the New York Harlem mosque in 1954. Following internal conflicts, Malcolm X eventually left the Nation of Islam after doing his pilgrimage (Hajj) to Mecca in March 1964 (Rashad/Miller 1995, 134). Amongst other tensions, he denounced Elijah Muhammad's polygamous relations and accused the Nation of Islam of being a racist organisation. Before his assassination in February 1965, he started his own Sunni group in 1964, the Muslim Mosque, Inc. and the secular Organization of African-American Unity.

Following the death of Elijah Muhammad in 1975, the Nation of Islam also somewhat changed orientation under new Muslim leadership (Karim 2010, 115).[32] Overall, the period of black nationalism and the popular engagement of Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X from the 1920s to 1975 was perceived as a threat at the time, a perception that imaginably has been transposed within the common memory of Americans as an example of violent activism, in which Islam represented a "dangerous weapon of liberation" for black Americans to use against white Americans. This narrative, highly entrenched in Orientalist scholarship and colonial discrimination towards black Americans and Islam, further erected the discursive construction of Islam as a militant religion in North America. Concurrently, the spread of Sufi ideology as

[32] Although the new leaders claimed their group's legitimacy on the basis of the Sunni tradition, it nonetheless upheld some of the original theological and teleological narratives of the Nation of Islam. As such the portrait is much more nuanced in terms of Islamic authenticity and adherence to the Sunni standards of orthodoxy, but these dynamics go beyond the scope of this chapter. For more information on this topic, see Edward E. Curtis, IV, *Islam in Black America: Identity, Liberation, and Difference in African-American Islamic Thought* (Albany: 2002), pp. 107-128.

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universal and the exotification of Sufism in popular culture reinforced the discursive dichotomy between violent, militant American Muslims and apolitical, peaceful Sufis.

Part Two: The Exotification of Sufism in the United States

The first figure said to have intentionally transmitted Sufi philosophies and traditions in North America was Hazrat Inayat Khan (1882-1927), a Muslim and Indian musician who arrived in New York City in 1910 (Hermansen 2014, 121). However, before him, we must acknowledge the proselytising work of the American convert Muhammad Alexander Russell Webb (1846-1916), for he was one of the first activist Muslim missionaries in the United States at the end of the nineteenth century. Webb's proselytising activities started after his conversion to Islam in 1888 when he founded a mission to spread Islam and participated in the Chicago Parliament of the World's Religions in 1893 as the sole Muslim spokesman.[33] Like Khan, whom we will later address, Webb "regarded esoteric Mohammedanism," namely Sufism, as "superior to anything else in the religion" (Abd-Allah 2006, 170). However, Webb did not seek to spread Sufism per se, for he believed that practical "exoteric Mohammedanism," as Islam's universal "moral system," was already "far superior to Christianity" and fit the moral needs of Americans (Abd-Allah 2006, 170). In this way criticising Protestant Christianity and its sense of superiority in the United States, Webb was not warmly received at the Parliament of the World's Religions.

Webb, born in Hudson, New York, to a Presbyterian family, became dissatisfied early on with Christianity and joined the Theosophical Society in 1881, motivated by an

[33] In 1887, he was sent as the American consul to the Philippines and, while posted in Manila, formally converted to Islam in 1888 (Knight 2013, 85).

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interest in Buddhism (GhaneaBassiri 2010, 115). Founded in 1875, the Theosophical Society "advocated an esoteric perennialism and spiritual advancement through the comparative study of religion, particularly 'Eastern' traditions" (Knight 2013, 85).[34] Like fellow Theosophists, Webb sought in Eastern religions a way to assimilate science into a "new Western religious discourse," and explored Theosophy, Buddhism, and spirituality (mysticism) (GhaneaBassiri 2010, 113).[35] The Theosophical Society was founded as a group inclined towards Eastern spirituality at the outset, wherein "the goal of the society was to popularize the teachings of esoteric Buddhism and Hinduism" (Abd-Allah 2006, 58).[36]

In fact, Webb, like many Theosophists, considered Theosophy and "esoteric Mohammedanism" to be almost identical, which reflects an existing current of fascination at the time with Sufi traditions, apart from Islam, among some intellectuals and elites (Abd-Allah 2006, 170). By the nineteenth century, Transcendentalist scholars such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and William Alger extolled the virtues of the poetry of Hafiz and Rumi, "with Emerson arguing that appropriating such Eastern traditions

[34] The Theosophical Society was very active at the turn of the nineteenth century and influential both in the United States and Europe. In the latter's rejection of religion in favour of Enlightenment rationality, theosophy emerged as a solution in which inner reflection and contemplation were central, influenced by Indian religions and philosophy (Jironet 2009, 174). In this sense, theosophy "accommodated the concerns of scientific rationalism, to a degree, by subordinating theology to cosmology" (Zia 2006, 292).
[35] Growing and rich translations of texts on Buddhism and Hinduism, as early as 1844, made "the two faiths attractive and viable religious options for the spiritually disillusioned" of Webb's American society (Abd-Allah 2006, 57). Like many other Theosophists as himself who were "idealistic and liberally minded," Webb became very interested in Buddhism and adopted the faith around the time he joined the Society in 1881 (Abd-Allah 2006, 53; 57).
[36] The perceived "inclusive universalism" characteristic of these two traditions was a refreshing alternative to Protestantism's "exclusivism and intolerance," especially to Theosophists who sought a universal religion (Abd-Allah 2006, 57). Although this concern is beyond the realm of my thesis, it must be mentioned that the Theosophists' appeal to Hinduism and Buddhism was also strongly asserted based on an Orientalist exotification of these two latter traditions as "universal" in essence.

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(though not Islam, specifically) was necessary for modern progress" (Corbett 2016, 72).[37] Therefore, Webb's interest in Sufism, leading to his conversion to Islam, took place within an existing exotification of Sufism in the United States in the nineteenth century.[38]

Following his conversion, Mohammed Webb travelled to India in 1892 in search of wealthy patrons to support his missionary endeavour in America, which he called the American Islamic Propaganda, later to be headquartered in New York (Knight 2013, 85). Webb also founded the American Moslem Brotherhood and the Moslem Publishing Company in 1893 (Knight 2013, 85). In his numerous writings and lectures over the next five years, Webb promoted "Islam as harmonious with science and reason, compatible with the teachings of Christ, opposed to bigotry and violence, and advocating full equality between women and men" (Knight 2013, 86).

In spite of his efforts and affluence amongst local and international circles, Webb's proselytising mission failed to gather enough funds and followers, in part because his fellow Theosophists would not adhere to his claims regarding Islam.[39] Although they regarded Sufism favourably, and even compatible with Theosophy, they perceived "Islam as fundamentally intolerant and hostile to the universalizing spirituality that they perceived in Buddhism and other Eastern traditions" (Knight 2013, 86). This view reflects the profound prejudices held at the time against Islam, while Hinduism,

[37] Emerson's godson, William James, also praised the virtues of Sufism while teaching at Harvard, following his godfather, and contrasted the esoteric tradition with Islam and the "hot and rigid" attitude of Arab Muslims (Corbett 2016, 72).
[38] His early readings of Islamic texts "led him to see Islam as an instantiation of 'rational' and 'universal' religion (outside 'orthodoxy' or 'priestcraft')," which supported his spirituality and search for "happiness in the next life" (GhaneaBassiri 2010, 117). Finally, he found that Islam generally resonated "with the values that shaped his own world and drove his spiritual quest: Victorian morality, Protestant opposition to priestly hierarchy and divine intermediaries, scientific rationality, and the Theosophical belief in an esoteric wisdom that united the world's religions" (Knight 2013, 85).
[39] Despite his local and international connections (he was a journalist and US consulate in the Philippines), he did not manage to attract converts in his home country (Knight 2013, 86).

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Buddhism, and even Sufism were romanticised as the natural religions of the spiritual "mystical East" as documented in Orientalist writings. Within five years, Webb had to forsake his organisations due to lack of funding.

Although he did not achieve his goal of reconciling Islam with rationality and progress in the American mind, Webb did successfully manage to contribute to a discourse on Islam from an "insider's" point of view, opening up a dialogue or, at least, planting the seed in America of the idea of Islam as a universal religion. This discourse was transmitted through his proselytising mission as well as writings, but most significantly through his guest appearance at the Chicago Parliament of the World's Religions in 1893.[40] Webb was the sole Muslim representing Islam at the conference, a fact that points again to the enduring racism that was held against Islam, constructed as a violent religion as opposed to mystical Buddhism and Hinduism.[41] Despite his being a white American, the two talks he gave were not warmly received by his audience. In his address, Webb emphasised that Islam was *the* universal religion of humanity that all were seeking and that America needed, stating:

> There is not a Mussulman on earth who does not believe that ultimately Islam will be the universal faith… I have not returned to the United States to make you all Mussulmans in spite of yourselves… But I have faith in the American intellect, in

[40] The Theosophical Society had been central in the 1893 Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago. The importance of the Parliament cannot be emphasised enough as it "was to change the face of interreligious understanding" (Chryssides 2001, 7).
[41] As a figure of comparison, Swami Vivekananda, an Indian Hindu Brahmin, gave conferences on Vedanta Hinduism that were warmly welcomed. Vivekananda became widely famous in America after this public event. He was the first to successfully articulate a modern vision of Hinduism as a universal religion, a belief that was already held and popularised by Theosophists as discussed. For more information on Swami Vivekananda and the impact of his conferences on the construction of India and Hinduism as universal, see Eric Jozef Ziolkowski (1993) *A Museum of Faiths: Histories and Legacies of the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions* and Meena Khandelwal (2007) *Foreign Swamis at Home in India: Transmigration to the Birthplace of Spirituality*.

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> the American intelligence, and in the American love of fair play, and will defy any intelligent man to understand Islam and not love it.[42]

GhaneaBassiri recounts that Webb's lecture at the Parliament was received with "hisses," and that "the audience listened to him in the spirit of tolerance called for by the occasion, but it did so reluctantly" (2010, 119).[43] Webb was not seen as a rational subject by his audience due to his conversion to a religion perceived similarly as "irrational;" rather he was seen as an "object of curiosity," literally embodying his faith as "the face of Islam" (Curiel 2015, 19). His discourse and his appearance challenged Protestant Americans' as well as Theosophists' "rational" and superior perceptions of white America.[44] His new identity was resented by most Americans who "ridiculed him because of the inverse space his liminality as a 'Yankee Mohammedan' broached for Islam in the United States" at a time when racism against Muslims persisted (GhaneaBassiri 2010, 127).[45]

Finally, Webb, who remained a Muslim and a Theosophist until his death, failed to gain popularity because he did not pierce the wall of prejudice against Islam that shaped post-Civil War America. Considering Theosophists were themselves already inclined to such esoteric views of a universal religion, it could be said that Webb's

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[42] Mohammed Alexander Russell Webb, "The Spirit of Islam," reprinted in Seager, Dawn of Religious Pluralism, 270-273, cited in GhaneaBassiri 2010, 119. Webb also tried to defend polygamy and associate Islam with Christianity, but his message did not resonate with his audience.

[43] It seems that Webb perhaps relied too much on, firstly, the "American intellect," and secondly on his own American identity as something that would be familiar to his audience, and as such would make them somehow relate to him and understand his conversion. However, "in his alternative vision for America and his optimistic outlook of his mission, Webb misread the depth of prejudice among most Americans against Islam" (GhaneaBassiri 2010, 119). His optimistic outlook, calling upon the reasonable American man, was in vain.

[44] In a newspaper describing his look at the Parliament, he was estranged "from his compatriots by drawing attention to his 'odd' appearance: 'his head surmounted by a red fez and his bushy brown beard'" (GhaneaBassiri 2010, 120). As such, Webb became "the familiar in strange clothing," racialised as a result of his Muslim garb and appearance (GhaneaBassiri 2010, 120).

[45] He tried to preach for an Islamic America and by adopting a Muslim outlook, he became entirely foreign to his audience and challenged their "deep-seated belief in the enviable superiority of America and its Protestant faith" (GhaneaBassiri 2010, 120). In other words, Webb misjudged his audience, and as such Alexander was no longer familiar, but instead became the estranged, inferior Muhammad, described as another "Eastern" "backward Muslim."

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missionary work proselytised a vision of the spirituality of Asia that was too close to the reality of Islam and, as such, incompatible with the envisioned "metaphysical Asia" that other Theosophists sought in India (Knight 2013, 86). Moreover, Webb's proselytisation of Islam as *the* universal religion challenged Protestants' dominant supersessive view of religious hierarchy, especially considering Webb was a white American male.

What is worthy of note is that Webb's experience reflects the strong prejudices held against Islam, and against white Americans who converted to Islam. The subsequent proselytising of Inayat Khan is thus revealing in light of Webb's story, particularly in relation to Khan's message and early Theosophist audience.[46] In comparing Inayat Khan's approach to more traditional forms of Islam as promoted by Webb, I will contend that Khan successfully grasped the tensions shaping his American audience at the time and as such refashioned his religious message as one of an American Islam, focused on Sufism, rather than the Islamic America that characterised Webb's project. Khan did not reinvent the wheel per se, but he was able to find a successful message by tapping into the ongoing exotification discourse regarding Sufism and "esoteric Eastern spiritualities" amongst his mainly Theosophist audience, which hearkened to an Orientalist envisioning of the "mystical East." Inayat Khan's translation of Sufism, therefore, further dichotomised the two categories, as I discuss below.

The Indian Sufi and musician Inayat Khan (1882-1927) came to America in 1910 and founded a movement called "Universal Sufism," which gained a number of followers in the United States and Western Europe over the next decade. He preached an "esoteric interpretation of Sufism [that] stripped the Sufi tradition from Islam" (GhaneaBassiri

[46] In England as well, most of Khan's early followers "were also important leaders within the Theosophical movement" who found in Khan's teachings resonance with their spiritual quest, and thus played a sort of mediating role in the adaptation of Khan's teachings for non-Sufis (Jironet 2009, 175).

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2010, 128).[47] Sufism was popularised as a universal tradition of mysticism and tolerance, that fell along the lines of world religions and Eastern spirituality as envisioned by the Theosophical Society.[48] To the Theosophists, Inayat Khan was "an exemplar of Oriental wisdom in the flesh, one that came with a genuine initiatic pedigree and was capable of offering practical instruction in time-honored techniques of meditation" (Zia 2006, 115).[49] The Theosophist fascination with the "Orient" legitimised Khan as an authentic Sufi teacher, whereas the white convert Muhammad Webb had failed to gain such a racial legitimation due to his American identity.

Conversely, Khan became well aware of the racism and prejudices held against Muslims and Islam as articulated in eighteenth-century Orientalist scholarship and, as such, expressed his message accordingly. In the early 1900s, Inayat Khan, reflecting on these obstacles, stated:

> The prejudice against Islam that exists in the West was another difficulty for me. Many think Sufism to be a mystical side of Islam, and the thought was supported by the encyclopedias, which speak of Sufism as having sprung from Islam, and they were confirmed in this by knowing that I am Moslim (sic) by birth. Naturally

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[47] Inayat Khan was a prominent Indian classical musician from Baroda, Gujarat, and a Sufi disciple of the Hyderabadi Chishti Abu Hashim Madani (d. 1907) (Hermansen 2012, 248). It is said that Madani "instructed him that his mission lay far to the West," after which Inayat Khan travelled to America with his brother and cousin on a performance tour in 1910, with the intention of spreading classical Hindustani music. There, he married an American, and soon started spreading Sufi teachings instead of music (Hermansen 2012, 248). During his lifetime, Hermansen says that "a group of followers successfully established his teachings as the Sufi Order of the West, which combined Khan's training in the India-based Chishti Sufi order with motifs and practices drawn from other religions as well as metaphysical strands from theosophy, esotericism, and religious eclecticism that were popular among a privileged class of spiritual seekers during that era" (2014, 121). For more information on the Chishti roots and influence of this Indian Sufi order on Inayat Khan's movement in the United States, see Celia Genn (2007) *The Development of a Modern Western Sufism*.

[48] For instance, Khan incorporated in his teachings and practices many traditions, including Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, and sometimes Jewish kabbalism as exemplified with the "Universal Worship" he instituted (Chryssides 2001, 6). The Universal Worship is intended to honour all religions and forms of worship, directing attention and focus to the unity found amongst all of them. Candles are used to represent Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Such a service completely departs from any traditional Sufi practice.

[49] Zia explains that "for Theosophists and ex-Theosophists who sought technical instruction in esoteric practice, but continued to favor Eastern spirituality over Western magic, the Sufi Order filled a pressing need" (Zia 2006, 113).

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> I could not tell them that it is a Universal Message of the time, for every man is not ready to understand this.[50]

As such, we could suggest here that Inayat Khan saw Islam as *the* universal religion, like Webb, but reformed it according to the exoticised view of Sufism held at the time that fell along the lines of Orientalist romanticisation amongst his predominantly Theosophist audience.[51]

In fact, Zia Inayat-Khan, the grandson of Inayat Khan who is today the leader of the Sufi Order International (SOI), further explains his ancestor's approach as a "conscious-hybrid" tradition and institution, like other such "groups for whom the dense imbrication of identities that characterizes the modern period is negotiated via acts of intentional creative fusion" (2006, 4).[52] According to the early twentieth-century context marked by fascination with occultism and the "triumph of rationalism" in which the movement emerged, "the mysticism of the Sufi Order is to a significant degree framed by the concerns of post-Enlightenment secularism" (Zia 2006, 7).[53] Khan's Universal Sufism is therefore a "conscious hybrid" movement according to the fact that it "sought to assimilate religious and national differences within an innovative universalizing project

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[50] Inayat Khan et al., *Biography of Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan* (Madras: East-West Publications, 1979), 84, cited in GhaneaBassiri 2010, 130.

[51] This citation seems to suggest that Inayat Khan conceived of Sufism as being confined in Islam, but that "every man" is not ready to understand this message, notably that Islam is the universal message of the time. Gisela Webb remarks and wonders herself, in a footnote, "given Hazrat Khan's articulation of Americans' aversion to things 'Islam,' one must consider to what extent Hazrat developed his 'universal' teachings and dances—and distancing himself from Islamic *religion*—as a pedagogical necessity given the political and social realities of his host country" (2013, 192, footnote 6).

[52] I based my discussion of the identity of the SOI here mostly on the PhD thesis of Zia Inayat-Khan, entitled *A Hybrid Sufi Order at the Crossroads of Modernity: The Sufi Order and Sufi Movement of Pir-O-Murshid Inayat Khan.* Zia Inayat-Khan holds a PhD in Religions from Duke University, 2006.

[53] This fusion of mysticism and post-Enlightenment secularism characterising the "modern West," according to Zia, can be seen in Inayat Khan's specific teachings through "his approach to theology in terms of psychology of idealization (i.e., 'belief' as an incremental movement through a series of 'God-ideals'); its identification of spiritual attainment with 'unlearning', a process involving the progressive suspension of judgment (also termed *viparīt karnā*: 'going against the grain'); and its move to relativize the truth claims of all religious traditions (including Islam)" (Zia 2006, 7).

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that was indicative of larger cultural trends in the interwar period" (Zia 2006, v).[54] This hybridity is thus marked by a "synthesis of traditional Islamicate and modern Western motifs" (Zia 2006, 7).[55]

Zia builds his argument around theories of "affirmative Orientalism" as well as hybridity, wherein the former is a criticism of Edward Said's Orientalism.[56] For Zia, Said's criticism of the Orientalist "totalizing gaze" "fails to acknowledge the genuinely dialogical dimensions of the encounter between the intellectual and cultural traditions of Europe and India or the Islamic world" (Zia 2006, 16).[57] Whether Inayat Khan consciously tried to overcome Orientalism's "totalising gaze" in his approach is beyond the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, for the broader American community, his movement aimed to perpetuate an image of Sufism as falling outside Islam, which his successor and son, Vilayat Khan (1916-2004), further reinforced in conjuncture with the

[54] Hybridity, as a theoretical framework to conceive of Sufi orders in North America, has been criticised and revised by different scholars. Although I myself have not used this theoretical framework throughout my thesis, I have kept the term and theory in this section to offer another perspective.
[55] The term "Islamicate" was coined by Marshall Hodgson, referring "not directly to the religion, Islam, itself, but to the social and cultural complex historically associated with Islam and the Muslims, both among Muslims themselves and even when found among non-Muslims" (Hodgson 1974, 13).
[56] The postcolonial theorist Edward Said's influential work, *Orientalism,* addresses the power dynamics of knowledge embedded in discourses produced by "Western nations," as they create an essentialised fictional concept of the "Orient" for political purposes (1979, 3). Said seeks to expose the relation between knowledge and power, in order to reveal the historical processes that constitute the Orient as modelled by European colonialism, perpetuating a "complex hegemony" (1979, 5). Said argues that the discipline of Orientalism reflects not only political power, but intellectual, cultural and moral power, focusing more on the West than the Orient itself, as a tool of self-reflection for the former (Said 1979, 12). In Zia's view, Said rightfully demonstrates that "because of Orientalism the Orient was not (and is not) a free subject of thought or action," wherein "Orientalism's relation to the East consisted of a soliloquy rather than a dialogue" (Said 2, in Zia 2006, 14; Zia 2006, 15). However, Zia's problem with this theory, like other post-colonial scholars, "is that, in attributing to Orientalism the power to silence the subjects of its discourse, Said effectively denies agency to the same subjects" (Zia 2006, 15). Therefore, Zia's approach to the SOI follows previous scholars "to reclaim the suppressed voice of the subaltern by documenting the strategies by which colonized people resisted the hegemony of Orientalist discourse and asserted their own self-representations" (Zia 2006, 16).
[57] As such, Said's theory appears to deny the possibility of an "affirmative Orientalism," one coming from "sympathetic and anti-colonialist European writers who collectively represent a subversive 'counter-movement' against Western imperialism" (J.J. Clarke 1997, 9 cited in Zia 2006, 16).

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counter-cultural New Age currents of the time, contributing to "another surge of interest in Sufism among white Americans" (Corbett 2016, 73).[58]

Following Inayat Khan's death in 1927, a number of Universal Sufi movements emerged in the United States that drew on his writings of Sufism as not strictly within Islam (Corbett 2016, 73).[59] Notably, Vilayat Khan revived his father's movement in the 1960s under the original name, Sufi Order in the West, or the Message in our Time (Hermansen 2014, 121).[60] Most significantly, his teachings departed from his father's in their reflection of the countercultural New Age spirituality of the 1960s.[61] On the one hand, his approach followed in the footsteps of his father in certain aspects, such as the teachings of "universal worship" and the practice of Islamic *zikr* to remember God. On the other hand, as Hermansen says, "he was also eclectic in his Sufi practices," integrating healing practices in his meditations which "resemble Jungian-inspired or psycho-synthesis 'wakeful dreaming,' where the listeners go into a trance-like state and

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[58] The phenomenon known as "the New Age movement" in America and England reflects a mixture and borrowing of different movements, wherein "Sufism, the mystical tradition of Islam, is one such tradition which has had a great influence on the formation and character of the New Age" (Koszegi 1992, 211).
[59] From this spiritual teacher, multiple branches have fractioned with subsequent leaders coming out of his lineage in North America and Europe, such as the International Sufi Movement (ISM), the Sufi Way (TSW), the Sufi Ruhaniat International (SRI), the Sufi Order International (SOI), and other smaller groups. Other influential Universal Sufi New Religious Movement in the 1960s include Sufi Sam's Dances of Universal Worship, which was a driving force in the San Francisco hippie movement. To this day, "none of the groups founded upon Inayat Khan's teachings consider themselves specifically Islamic, even though they call themselves Sufi and employ Sufi terminology and rituals" (GhaneaBassiri 2010, 128). Rather, "they focus on what they regard as the universal wisdom found within the Sufi tradition, which they believe happened to be associated with Islam as a matter of historical accident," thus not requiring formal conversion to Islam (GhaneaBassiri 2010,129).
[60] Vilayat Khan, like his father, married an American woman and travelled extensively, sharing his time between Europe and America.
[61] Vilayat established in 1975 a permanent centre or headquarters for his community in New Lebanon, New York, baptised The Abode of the Message. This institutionalisation marked the influence of his group in the United States (Hermansen 2014, 122). Hermansen further makes the interesting observation that "his organization later adopted the name Sufi Order International, perhaps reflecting the transnational currents of the time" and also a rapprochement with the other Inayati movements that had branched out following the death of the Indian founder as discussed above, such as Sam Lewis' Dances of Universal Peace and the Sufi Movement, which has been more active in Europe, Canada, and Australia (Hermansen 2014, 122).

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Vilayat talks them through various images and moods" (2000, 162).[62] To this day, the International Sufi Order, now headed by Zia since 2000 and known as the Inayati Order, remains an important player within New Age spiritual movements and the religious landscape of the United States, with 86 centres throughout the country.[63]

In parallel with the rise of Sufism as a New Religious Movement at the time of the hippie ferment of the 1960s, another factor that further exotified Sufism was its popularisation in North American culture. The Sufi market has become increasingly popular in the United States since the 1960s, including Sufi music, whirling dervish dances, poetry, and Sufi-inspired forms of therapy. For instance, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan (1948-1997), known as the "King of Qawwali," was a Pakistani musician whose devotional Sufi music is now world-famous.[64] Another example is Jalaluddin Rumi, the bestselling poet in the United States, whose poetry has become a defining marker of Sufism. Based on the translations of Coleman Barks, his poetry is almost never classified as "Islamic," although Rumi was in fact a religious scholar.[65] With the growing popularity of non-Islamic "mystical Sufism" in North America, Sufi beliefs and practices "have been assigned a role as bridge between Eastern and Western spiritual or mystical philosophy" (Dressler & Geaves 2009, 2). This decentred trans-local link is central to Sufi New Religious Movements and is "also manifested in everyday life in the

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[62] At the height of the movement it is hard to evaluate the number of converts, but Hermansen estimated in 2000 "that some 10,000 people in North America have become initiated into this order [by Vilayat Khan], although perhaps only 2,000 are currently participating in regular Sufi Order activities" (2000, 162).
[63] The Inayati Order counts 86 centres in the United States, 7 in Canada, 12 throughout Europe, 5 in Oceania and 1 in Asia, for a grand total of 111 centres across the world (Khan, Satya Inayat. "Centers." *Inayati Order*. N.p., n.d. Web. 16 July 2016).
[64] Qawwali is a form of Islamic devotional music that originated in the Indian subcontinent around the thirteenth century. The devotee of Nizam al-Din *Auliyā*, Amir Khusrau (d. 1325), is attributed with its invention. Qawwali was traditionally sung at the shrines of Sufi saints, but today has become widely popular around the world as "Sufi music."
[65] For more information, the New York Times published an interesting article on the subject: Ali, Rozina. "The Erasure of Islam from the Poetry of Rumi." *The New Yorker*. N.p., 5 Jan. 2017. Web. 31 May 2017.

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commodification of Sufism in the West, expressed in a thriving Sufi market" (Dressler & Geaves 2009, 2).

If we look back through the history of North America, the concept of a universal form of Sufism, adapted for Americans, arose due to particular epistemic constructs and social movements. These historical moments and ensuing translations into popular culture and inter-faith New Religious Movements reinforced the view of Sufism as a tradition holding a universal truth predating Islam, the latter exemplified by movements such as the Nation of Islam perceived as militant. Consequently, Sufism emerged as a tradition that could, so the logic goes, be compatible with American values and society. In this narrative, Sufism is constructed as the tolerant vein of Islam due to the perception that it is "particularly suited for interreligious and intercultural harmony of different peoples and cultures in democratic pluralist societies" (Malik 2006, 25). In light of these frameworks, a discussion of American legislation and foreign policies towards Sufism will echo the depth of this narrative, especially in relation to the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis in the United States and Quebec, as we will later see.

Part Three: Sufism in US State Politics at the Crossroads of the "War on Terror"

Since the Eisenhower administration (1953-1961), "Americans have led projects to foster 'moderate' (and, before that, 'modern') Islam," courting Sufi leaders as allies well prior to 9/11, as witnessed with the Clinton and Bush Jr. administrations in particular (Corbett 2016, 38). These governments most notably worked with the US representative of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Sufi order, Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, who also founded the Islamic Supreme Council of America in 1998 (Corbett 2016, 88). Shaykh Kabbani

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established the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order politically in the United States, with activities like "his meeting with the Clintons featured on the cover of the *Muslim Magazine*" (Hermansen 2004, 44).[66] In 1999, Shaykh Kabbani was invited to a Washington D.C. State Department forum on Islam that focused on the positive role Sufism can play in US policies. On this occasion, Shaykh Kabbani told the audience "that he had visited over one hundred American mosques and found 80 percent of them to be run by 'extremists' and 'fundamentalists'" (Corbett 2016, 88).[67] While Kabbani's comment was heavily criticised by the broader Muslim community, which ostracised his group, it nonetheless "reinforced the tendency among State Department officials to identify Sufis as peaceful, apolitical, and moderate and to view all other Muslims as possible extremists" (Corbett 2016, 88).

With this view, the United States further turned to Sufi groups in order to solve problems of assimilation and Islamic extremism following 9/11 (Malik 2006, 25). George Bush Jr.'s State Department placed "even greater emphasis on seeking Sufi allies at home and abroad, as both the United States and Britain condemned extremism 'by praising Sufism as the tolerant form of Islam'" (Corbett 2016, 88). For instance, in 2003, the National Security Research Division of the RAND Corporation (a federally funded research and policy advising organisation) published a report "identifying Sufis as likely proponents of the 'civil democratic Islam' that the United States and other world powers hoped to cultivate" (Corbett 2016, 99 ft23). This report offers a "religion building strategy" through "evolutionary assistance" for American Muslims, suggesting they must

[66] Shaykh Kabbani is the founder and editor in chief of this magazine.
[67] Subsequently, Shaykh Hisham Kabbani was ostracised from the broader American Muslim community and failed to gain access to major Muslim organisations in the 1990s.

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"depart from, modify, and selectively ignore elements of original religious doctrine," through the promotion of Sufism (Cheryl Bernard 2003, 37 in Lipton 2011, 433; 434).

Such examples of this promotion in the United States include another important Sufi figure, Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf. Shaykh Rauf, a Kuwaiti-American Sufi who served as imam of Masjid al-Farah in New York City from 1983 to 2009, became widely mediatised following the "Ground Zero Mosque" polemic. As will be explained, this controversy marks in itself a watershed in the articulation and limitations of "moderate Muslimness" as Sufism. In her book *Making Moderate Islam*, Rosemary Corbett investigates the correlation between Sufism, Muslim moderation, and economic affluence in post-9/11 America through the central figure of Shaykh Rauf.[68]

In 2009, Imam Rauf proposed to build an Islamic community centre, initially named the "Cordoba House" and now known as Park51, near the site of "Ground Zero." His reputation as a representative of "moderate Islam" and American Muslimness, which he had built over two decades, formed the foundations of his project to foster relations between Islam and North America. Following 9/11, Rauf advocated for Muslim moderation and Americanness along the lines of "Abrahamic commonality" to facilitate Muslim assimilation in the United States. Rauf emphasised a perception of Sufism as similar to Christianity and accordingly amenable to North American liberal democracy.[69]

[68] In her book, Corbett seeks to understand the pressures exercised on Muslims to present themselves in particular ways in order to assimilate American society, while also documenting the difficulties they encountered in that process (2016, 9).

[69] According to Rauf, Protestant ethics share Islam's "defining ideals" that "religion and knowledge are compatible and that religion and wealth are compatible" (Rauf in Corbett 2016, 32). In his view, the practice of striving for spiritual and material affluence is at once an embodiment of Islamic ethos and Americanness, hence bringing Muslims closer to other Americans (Corbett 2016, 32). Corbett contends that it is this very connection between "religious practice and free-market institutions that sets Rauf apart from the progressives with whom he is often grouped" (2016, 33). Following Rauf's approach, the way to strive for spiritual affluence emerges out of Sufi practices which "foster 'heightened consciousness' and lead to acting in conformity with God's commands" (Corbett 2016, 32). Through their personal striving for God

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Constructed over two decades of public speeches, sermons at the mosques, interfaith activities, and published books, Rauf's message became widely known and acknowledged as the desirable and appropriate American Muslim voice, so much so that the US State Department cooperated with Rauf on many projects (Corbett 2016, 92). Moreover, it was after asserting his position as the "pious Sufi and affluent Muslim" that Rauf proposed the "Cordoba House" project, an initiative he thought would be well received based on the ground work he had done to legitimate his social service and political engagement as simultaneously American and Sufi.

Interestingly, Rauf's message reinforced pre-existing tensions in the United States between "militant black American Muslims" and "peaceful tolerant Sufis." As Corbett explains, Rauf's message of "moderate Islam" is problematic for a number of reasons, one of which is its emphasis on the social and economic mobility of "affluent Muslims" that ignores the political dimensions and racial discrimination against black Americans (2016, 4).[70] Rauf's message and work emphasises "Islam's compatibility with American meritocracy and exceptionalism," namely democracy and capitalism (Corbett 2016, 7). As such, to be a moderate Muslim is to do service in society and contribute financially to its economic affluence, while also practicing moderate forms of Islamic religiosity that are malleable to American society, meaning Sufi-inclined. Rauf's "economic philosophy" resonated with most of his followers who, like him, came from an affluent socio-economic bracket (Corbett 2016, 8). However, this message overlooked the history of

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and worldly goods, Sufis can in turn "moderate America's excesses without sacrificing its abundance," and hence "serve as global models of religious and economic achievement" (Corbett 2016, 34).

[70] For Rauf, the immigrant process of gaining acceptance is "one that involved acculturating by embracing free-market capitalism and creating organizations to contribute to society through various kinds of service" (Corbett 2016, 6).

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racial oppression and continuing discrimination towards black Americans, who constitute an important segment of Muslim Americans, as I have discussed in the first section.

Moreover, the way the project was defended in public discourse further revealed the dialectical dichotomy found in the United States regarding Sufism and political Islam. For instance, former New York State Governor David Paterson is notorious for having supported Imam Rauf's Cordoba House project on the basis that is was going to be built and led by Sufi Muslims, who are not representative of "mainland Muslim practice" (Muedini 2015). Paterson told CBS News that "… [t]his group who has put this mosque together, they are known as the Suffi [*sic*] Muslims. This is not like the Shiites [. . .]. They're almost like a hybrid, almost westernized. They are not really what I would classify in the sort of mainland [*sic*] Muslim practice" (Lipton 2011, 427).[71] This particular statement embodies at once the "apolitical Sufi" discourse in the United States as well as its impact on the broader Muslim community.[72]

As such, the example of Imam Rauf goes to show how Sufism in the United States has become valorised post-9/11 as an apolitical and tolerant branch of Islam. Moderate Muslims are those who can let go of Islamic beliefs and ritual practices considered to be "extremist" and, as such, integrate normative American standards of religiosity and social service. In such a narrative, Muslims—and even the majority of Sufis—who maintain their "non-moderate" forms of Islamic religiosity are perceived as "fundamentalist" and "fanatical," and as such "denied the very tolerance that they

[71] "Paterson: Mosque Developers 'Hybrid, Almost Westernized' Muslims." *CBS New York*. N.p., 26 Aug. 2010. Web. 29 June 2017.
[72] Through its comparison with Shi'i Islam as a symbol of politicised Islam and Iran, the "common and simplistic antithesis posed between Sufism and Islamic Fundamentalism" is reinforced (Lipton 2011, 428). Moreover, this statement assumes that Sufism is not *really* Islamic because it is rather "hybrid, almost westernized," and, as such, non-threatening and amiable to North American culture and politics (Lipton 2011, 428).

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themselves are said to lack" (Lipton 2011, 440). Therefore, this discourse on Sufism in the United States goes to show that Muslim Americans who strive to integrate in this country are placed into impossible positions and left with very few choices (Corbett 2016, 10).

Keeping in mind these popular perceptions and political strategies, the next chapter will focus on the work of the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis in Montreal as a Sufi group that has assimilated, to a certain extent, these American romanticised tropes regarding the exotification of Sufism, while they have in turn internalised Quebecois mores as projected in their political participation with the provincial government.[73] This Sufi order was founded by Shaykh Nazim al-Qubrusi al-Haqqani (1922-2014), a native of Cyprus who joined the Naqshbandiyya of Dagestan (Russia) after finding his spiritual teacher, Shaykh ʻAbdallah al-Daghestani (d. 1973), in Damascus (Syria) in 1945 (Nielsen et al. 2006, 104). The Naqshbandi order took shape under the guidance of the Central Asian Shaykh Khwaja Baha'al-Din Naqshband (d. 1389), buried in Bukhara, present-day Uzbekistan. Over time, this brotherhood has spread across the world and remains active today especially in Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, the Balkans, South and Central Asia, Malaysia, and Indonesia (Damrel 2006, 116). According to Damrel, a set of key features "defines the Naqshbandis across these diverse ethnic, social and historic settings. These include: (1) an uncompromising Sunni orientation, (2) emphasis on *sharī'a* and *Sunna* (3) a tradition of full social and political engagement with the world, and (4) as noted by K.

[73] An exploration of Islam and Sufism in the United States was offered in order to reveal the tensions and movements that have shaped the popularisation of Sufism as a New Age spirituality and the subsequent emergent "peaceful Islamic mystics" political narrative that has informed knowledge circulated about Sufism in Canada since the twentieth century.

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A. Nizami, a willingness to guide and, if necessary, confront the state in order to bring it closer to religion" (2006, 116).

Following the death of his teacher, Shaykh Nazim "received permission 'from the Prophet (Muhammad) to spread the light of Islam into European countries,'" marking the beginning of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani sub-branch (Werbner 2003 in Damrel 2006, 117). Long before sending Shaykh Hisham to the United States in 1990, Shaykh Nazim had proselytised all over Asia and went to Britain in 1974 to begin his "mission in the West" (Nielsen et al. 2006, 104). By 1995, his Sufi order had properly become transnational, possessing one of the largest and most diverse international memberships of any Sufi order (Nielsen et al. 2006, 103). Across the many Haqqani branches, we can identify common themes such as the attitude to political authority, the looseness of definition of "membership," and the centrality of their Internet platform in sharing information regarding their order and the Muslim world (Nielsen et al. 2006, 103).[74]

In debates around universal and traditional or orthodox Sufism in North America, the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order remains unique and central as characteristically American in its outreach, influence, and community. Genn, who studied the Naqshbandi-Haqqani branches in the United States, describes them as "non-traditional institutions […] blending traditional and universalistic elements" (2007, 257). As an example of their universalistic approach, Shaykh Hisham Kabbani participated jointly with Zia Inayat-Khan in a number of events and conferences, such as the "Meeting of the Five Sheikhs"

[74] Nielsen et al. contrast the Haqqani ease of adherence "with most other Sufi groups, including others in the Naqshbandi tradition" (2006, 110). The borders of the *tarīqa* are "porous" also in the sense that only in the cases of members falsely calling themselves shaykhs do we find any form of official expulsion (Nielsen et al. 2006, 110). Finally, in this *tarīqa*, the internet has become a central means of communication across the transnational Haqqani sub-branches, sharing news and ideas around the network (Nielsen et al. 2006, 112).

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in 2000, "featuring Sufi teachers advocating a range of *shari'a* adherence" (Hermansen 2004, 46). Shaykhs Nazim Haqqani and Hisham Kabbani have been particularly involved in such outreach, showing respect to all manifestations of Sufism in North America.[75]

On account of the delocalisation and de-culturation of this Sufi order due to its transnational nature, Nielsen et al. have found that, in fact, different Haqqani centres have developed re-localised identities. They argue that the *tarīqa* is transnational at the level of ideal construction, realised when Shaykh Nazim is visiting, "while at the level of existence in society it is local" (Nielsen et al. 2006, 113). In this sense, the autonomy of the local group remains the most important characteristic of the *tarīqa*, a point I will argue in my following chapter with regards to the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order of Montreal who have come to embody a new localised community that reflects Quebec's sensitivities regarding religion, immigration, and its Francophone cultural identity.

[75] They even paid a visit together to the New Age leader Vilayat Khan at the Abode in New York state in 1991 ("Nazim Al-Haqqani (1922 - 2014)." *CIF International Association*. N.p., 2017. Web. 20 June 2017).

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Chapter Two
Local Tales of Sufis in Quebec: From Global Community to Cosmopolitan Identity

Through exploring the political participation of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Sufi order in Montreal, this chapter analyses the relationship between this group and political authority in Quebec, focusing on the role of their spiritual leader, Shaykh Omar Koné. As such, I offer an in-depth but necessarily bounded ethnographic account of this Sufi group in an attempt to expose a process of localisation and instrumentalisation of a particular Muslim identity in Canada. First, I will briefly address the waves of Muslim immigration in Canada and Sufi groups in Quebec in parallel with the different Quebecois realities that have influenced the constitution of Muslim settlements across Canada. Then, I will introduce the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order of Montreal, before exposing interactions between this centre's leader and the Quebec government on questions of immigration, secularity, and Islamic radicalisation. This discussion will bring me to my concluding point concerning the production of "moderate Islam" and notions of Muslim "authenticity" in local Quebecois imaginaries. I will argue that the charisma attached to the Naqshband-Haqqani order, as articulated by its members as well as non-Muslim Montrealers, is one that has emerged most particularly in the past 15 years and is embodied in the current leader of the community, Shaykh Omar Koné. Writing as a French-Canadian, in this chapter, I will offer an insight into the development of the Sufi community in Quebec, a tale that I traced through multiple accounts, though primarily through my interactions with the Montreal Naqshbandi-Haqqani Sufi Centre and Shaykh Omar Koné.[76]

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[76] My interactions at the centre were facilitated by the fact that I am a bilingual Francophone, as I could understand Shaykh Omar's sermons, predominantly held in French (at least during my visits), as well as

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Part One: Historical Reflections on Quebec and Islam

I open my discussion of Islam in Quebec by offering my reading of our recent political history, one in which language, religion, and immigration feature prominently. The religious and political reality of this province is tainted. Quebec's unique history with Catholicism includes public distrust of organised religions, while the province's situation as a predominantly Francophone region within an ocean of English-speaking nations has influenced local politics. These realities, produced by separate dominant English (Protestant) and French (Catholic) Canadian identities, as reflected in the idea of "two solitudes," have tremendously influenced the evolution of the Muslim community here and across Canada.[77] I have identified the following three specifically Quebecois phenomena as relating particularly to this evolution.

Firstly, after the long reign of Conservative premier Maurice Duplessis over his Franco-Catholic nation, a hard-fought division of state and religion was carried out with the 1960's Quiet Revolution (*la Révolution tranquille*), a social movement that sought, amongst other things, to displace the Church from its dominant role in the public

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mingle easily with the members who spoke French and English. However, it must be mentioned that during my sporadic visits to the Sufi Centre, from November 2014 to July 2017, I have not conducted any official interviews with its members. Rather, I decided against it in an effort to integrate the space more naturally (for instance, joining them during the holy month of Ramadan, helping with the cleaning, the serving of food, etc.). In response to the members' hospitality in welcoming me within the community (which they do with any newcomer), I similarly attempted to respect the Sufi Centre as a sacred communal space, one in which I would participate and observe its members, but not intervene or conduct formal interviews. Therefore, the only person with whom I have conducted official interviews is Shaykh Omar Koné for the purpose of this thesis.

[77] I refer to Hugh MacLennan's masterpiece *Two Solitudes* concerning English and French Canada(s) (1945). The story takes place in Montreal, and attempts to expose the clashes and anxieties between English and French-Canadians. It studies the beliefs, behaviours, and myths that have caused French-Canadian Catholics and English-Canadian Protestants to resist amalgamation into a homogeneous nation and to exist as two separate, linguistically and religiously, isolated peoples.

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sphere.[78] This transition was not without its fair share of trauma in the Quebecois self-perception of their own nation, the latter subsequently rejecting all later religious organisations from the public sphere.[79] This reactionary attitude is reflected today in the animosity towards so-called "orthodox non-secular" ethno-religious groups, as witnessed in the 2000s with the "accommodation crisis."[80] In the 2008 Final Report of the Commission Bouchard-Taylor on Reasonable Accommodations (*Building the Future*), Gerard Bouchard and Charles Taylor acknowledge that the wave of accommodation cases in the media "clearly touched an emotional chord among French-Canadian Quebecers in such a way that requests for religious adjustments have spawned fears about the most valuable heritage of the Quiet Revolution, in particular gender equality and secularism" (2008, 18).[81]

Secondly, the Francophone identity of Quebec and concomitant fear of being swallowed by the Anglophone majority has fuelled a number of policies to preserve the

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[78] Duplessis' agenda was to promote an identity tied to Quebec's traditional values (tied to a Catholic heritage), which are much stronger in rural areas than in Montreal. Historically, this strategy has been a leverage mechanism, or a legitimisation narrative, used by nationalist parties to rally popular support around Quebecois values as traditional and not multicultural, to maintain a French-Canadian identity, to frighten immigrants, and to advance other political agendas.

[79] Leblanc further explains that "in this context, religious experience has been privatized, and religion has been reframed as more plural" (2013, 432). The reality is more complicated, in the sense that even if a break was performed at the state level and that Quebecers have departed *en masse* from the Catholic churches, the religio-cultural heritage and template for acceptable religiosity in Quebec remains Catholic.

[80] Here, I explicitly refer to the social unrest around "unreasonable accommodations." According to Typhaine Leservot, the debate in Quebec around reasonable accommodations was developed around 59 controversies, involving the publicised Jewish Hasidic, Sikh, and Muslim cases of the YMCA windows (2006), the *kirpan* (2002-06), and the *hijab* in private schools (2003-05) (2009, 326). In order to calm popular opinion, panicked by accommodations increasingly called "unreasonable," the government of Quebec, then the Liberal Party headed by premier Jean Charest, created a commission in 2007 to give an overview of the practices of accommodation in Quebec, drawing on the public to inform the commission and report led by Charles Taylor (philosopher) and Gerard Bouchard (sociologist) (Leservot 2009, 326). Meena Sharify-Funk states that the Commission Bouchard-Taylor was appointed "to conduct a public inquiry into the scope and limits of 'reasonable accommodations' and draft recommendations for the provincial government," to which the Final Report (*Building the Future*) was delivered in 2008 (Sharify-Funk 2010, 535).

[81] Following the release of the Final Report, the Liberal Party has been critiqued for shelving the report and for conducting the commission only for political motives without further addressing the problem after its release (Sharify-Funk 2010, 535).

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French language, and thus "our" identity, in the midst of mass transnational influx. Although the situation is much more complex, I focus here on Bill 101 (the Charter of the French Language) and the immigration decree of *interculturalisme*. In 1977, the Party Quebecois and its premier, René Lévesque, passed Bill 101, also known as The Charter of the French Language, instituting French as Quebec's public official language (Sharify-Funk 2010, 535). As for *interculturalisme*, Lassalle states that it "has been used in Quebec since the early 1980s when the Belle Province [Quebec] formally introduced its special policy of respect for diversity subordinated to the need to support the French language culture" (2011, 239). The idea behind this immigration policy "was to promote a 'Quebec citizenship' as a 'moral contract' between the host society and immigrants, in order to build a common public culture" (Satzewich and Liodakis 2007, cited in Lassalle 2011, 239).

Thirdly, motivated by the social unrest around the "accommodation crisis," the Party Quebecois, then a minority government headed by Pauline Marois, proposed the Charter of Values (Bill 60) in September 2013 in an attempt to rigidify the separation of Church and State in Quebec and provide a framework for accommodation requests.[82] Amongst its five proposals, the Charter focused on the neutrality of the state, equality between women and men, and on "conspicuous" religious symbols. The latter is the clause that caused popular outcry, as it aimed to restrict "ostentatious" symbols to the private sphere, thus preventing public sector employees such as police officers or doctors from wearing religious symbols that "attract notice." The religious symbols directly

[82] In relation to Duplessis' politics, the Charter of Values points to another instance where the identity question has been used to create division by exploiting local cultural insecurity, through a focus on Quebec's traditional values that have historically been tied to and defended by, ironically, the Catholic Church. Quebec's cultural identity, which is bound to language, has always been tied to the Catholic Church, promoting French language as opposed to the Protestant Church that was English.

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targeted were the Muslim hijab, the Sikh turban, and the Jewish *kippah*. Support for the Charter mainly came from secular French-Canadians who fear religious fundamentalists and from feminist groups that perceive the hijab as patriarchal oppression of women.[83] Thus, it can be argued that Bill 60 was based on a "crisis narrative" reflecting a myth used to perpetuate fear. This narrative was built on the following recent "alarming" events: the *laïcité* crisis in France, increasing Muslim immigration to Quebec as a result of the policy of *interculturalisme* that favours French speakers, and cases of so-called "unreasonable" accommodation.[84]

These three phenomena greatly affected the development and integration of Muslim communities in Quebec, particularly impacting the province's immigration programme. In contrast with the federal policy of multiculturalism, the interculturalist approach of the Quebec government drastically changed patterns of immigration and greatly disturbed the constituency of the Muslim social body in Quebec.[85] South Asians, mostly Anglophones who initially dominated local Muslim circles in the 1950s-1960s, felt compelled to immigrate elsewhere in Canada, and the Muslim community coming

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[83] This discourse against the *hijab* illustrates the popular myth that this "conspicuous" religious symbol is a tool of oppression enforced by Muslim men, portraying Islam as a patriarchal religion.
[84] According to Lassalle, who wrote on *laïcité* in France, "Islam had often been presented as incompatible with *laïcité* in the French media as well as by a large number of calculating right-wing politicians" (2011, 232). As such, the massive Muslim immigration and harsh secular policies have propelled a *laïcité* crisis in France, in which Muslims "are the victims of a form of social and cultural marginalisation, due to their inferior status as former colonised people, intensified by rampant racism and discrimination" (Lassalle 2011, 232). In the broader debate around secularism in Quebec, the France approach to *laïcité* has often been critiqued as a model "against religion," whereas *sécularisme* is a model that is not against religions, but aims at not favouring any one religion over another.
[85] In 1994, McDonough assesses the Muslim population to be mostly comprised of immigrants, evenly divided, from South Asia and the Arab world, which began developing in the early 1950s and estimated in Montreal to 50,000 (1994, 317). Since the 1980s, McDonough observes that the Muslim communities of Montreal are young and active, although debates in Quebec at the time concerning its future relations with the rest of Canada, with regards to immigration policies, threatens to impede the development of Muslim communities (1994, 317). The crux of the debate evolved around *interculturalisme* which gave "increasing preference to immigrants who are native Francophones (stronger links expected with France and North Africa)" (1994, 317).

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from Lebanon and North Africa saw itself growing in numbers in the 1970s and 1980s (McDonough 1994, 318).[86]

This alteration indirectly hampered the development of the pan-Canadian Muslim communities, considering that Muslim immigrants of Francophone origin were not required to learn English unless they needed to widen their cultural contacts (McDonough 1994, 323). Two distinct linguistically and regionally opposite groups emerged across Canada and in Quebec between the initial Anglo-South Asian dominated population and the Franco-Lebanese North African second wave post-*interculturalisme*. In Quebec, English, French, and Arabic became the three languages spoken in every mosque in an attempt to accommodate all diasporic groups.[87]

With the growth of the Muslim communities, official Sufi organisations emerged in Quebec in the 1980s. One of the first organisations, the Burhaniya movement originating in Egypt and Sudan, was registered in 1987 and recorded as the most active Sufi group in 1994 (McDonough 1994, 321).[88] Set up by an Egyptian and a French-Canadian, the Burhaniya order was mainly composed of Egyptians, Sudanese, Somalis and some French-Canadian converts.[89] It created a space of "shared fellowship and mutual acceptance" between Quebecois and African members (McDonough 1994, 322).[90]

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[86] Whereas Pakistanis and other South Asian groups initially dominated in number and leadership positions within Muslim circles (i.e.: on the board of the Islamic Centre of Quebec), in the 1970s post-*interculturalisme* this tendency was altered completely (McDonough 1994, 318). The Islamic Centre of Quebec is the oldest (Sunni) mosque in the city, dating back to 1958 (McDonough 1994, 318). In 1994, there were eight other Sunni mosques in Montreal (McDonough 1994, 318).
[87] McDonough explains that in mosques where neither French nor English was mutually understood, Arabic was used as the medium of communication (1994, 323).
[88] The oldest Sufi community recorded in Canada was established in the 1960s in Ontario, which was home to the largest Muslim community in 2001 (352 525), followed by Quebec (108 620) (Haddad 2008, 198).
[89] For more information on the Burhaniya and its history in Quebec, see Jason Sparkes' Masters thesis (2013) *Doctrines and Practices of the Burhaniya Sufi Order in the Arab World and in the West between 1938 and 2012: A Decolonial and Transdisciplinary Analysis from an Insider Perspective*.
[90] As an aside, within the wider Muslim community, certain Muslim reformers in Montreal tended to condemn the Sufis' practice of Islam, accusing them of "losing the original Islamic vision and adhering to a

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In 2000, the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order had become one of the most active of that time. Introduced in Montreal in 1984, the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order grew rapidly, drawing a significant number of natives through its marked outreach to the French-Canadian community along the lines of New Age spirituality (Hermansen 2000, 176). While strongly rooted in Islam, the Naqshbandi-Haqqani approach resonates with New Religious Movements in its focus on the universal truth of Sufism and liberal stance concerning official conversion to Islam, as discussed in Chapter One. What is more, considering the "anti-church, anti-religion reaction" of Quebecois society since the 1960s' Quiet Revolution, the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order has introduced "more formal aspects of the tradition" in a gradual manner to draw and accommodate its French-Canadian members (Hermansen 2000, 176). The hybrid space distinctive of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order is further made possible through the capacity of Sufi orders to tap into a romanticised discourse around mysticism as universal and apolitical, and therefore non-threatening to secular ideals, a point to which I will come back.[91]

Media representations of Islam came to constitute another major defining factor in the establishment and integration of Muslims in Quebec. By 2001, the Muslim community had grown to 600,000, comprising 2% of the total population of Canada, and represented the second largest religious group after Christianity. In that year, media representations perpetuated an image of Muslims as outsiders and terrorists due, in part,

perspective that wrongly leads to passivity in the face of imperialist foreign domination" (McDonough 1994, 325). In response, Montreal Sufis asserted their "Muslimness" in the spiritual lineage of their masters that they traced back to the Prophet and defended their practices on the ground of the "timeless" validity of their spiritual exercises, "whose end is liberating personal transformation" (McDonough 1994, 325).

[91] According to Leblanc, the mysticism associated with Sufism according to the Montreal Naqshbandi-Haqqani devotees is "consonant with the new forms of spirituality in the West post-secular societies, including New Age mysticism and the long Western fascination with Eastern mysticism" (Genn 2007; Haenni and Voix 2007; Abu-Manneh 2007 cited in Leblanc 2013, 432).

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to preconceived Orientalist ideas and a number of international events.[92] Building on the impact of global technologies, Antonius' focus on media representations of Arabs and Muslims in Quebec sheds light on these enduring negative attitudes towards Islam (2006, 255). Like Sufism, Islam, as a category, is defined by enduring Orientalist constructions affecting the stereotypes projected in Quebec media. Arab and Muslim communities are circumscribed within a set of elements of Arab culture perceived as immutable and strongly rooted in an assumption that Islam is inherently violent, ignoring temporal and local political situations (Antonius 2006, 256).

This negative stereotyping, predominant in North American media, thus creates a sense of Muslims' detachment or estrangement from the local space, which represents an additional difficulty in re-localising Islamic identities outside Muslim-majority countries. In parallel to this dynamic, Haddad describes how the Internet has smoothed the path of the acclimatisation of global Sufi groups in Quebec by facilitating their expressions of delocalised Sufism (Haddad 2008, 200). Sufi brotherhoods can connect with affiliated branches around the world, re-localising their spiritual identity outside cultural differences and within a collective spiritual cyber-space (Haddad 2008, 206).[93] In this sense, the Internet has enabled the constitution, and re-localisation, of a virtual communal space for some Muslims in North America that fosters a strong sense of belonging to a

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[92] McDonough states that Muslims started becoming the target of widespread media negative stereotyping after the 1979 Iranian revolution, which was only reinforced in the ongoing conflicts in Palestine and Kashmir as well as the World Trade Centre in New York City in 2001 (2005, 137). As a result of this massive stereotyping, Muslims came to be equated with terrorists, which created a new fear of Islam to be termed "Islamophobia," namely, "dread or hatred of Islam and of Muslims" (McDonough 2005, 137).
[93] McDonough asserts that in order to cope with external pressures regarding their religion, Canadian "Muslims learn to emphasize the strong 'universal' element of the faith and adopt a 'transnational' form of Islam" disregarding local customs that could lead to division (2005, 134). Correspondingly, as argued by Haddad, North American Muslim-Sufi expressions are likewise delocalised, inscribing their group's identity narratives within trans-national romanced universal mysticism, further reinforced today by the virtual web platform. According to Haddad, the identities of Quebec *tarīqa*s were strongly influenced by virtual processes of Internet connections with brotherhoods in France in an attempt to "reconstitute a communal virtual space" (2008, 206).

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single spiritual community. Incidentally, this virtual space can replace the similar sense of communal belonging to a global *umma* (the global community of Muslims) provided in the pilgrimage to Mecca, or Hajj (Haddad 2008, 208).

According to Frishkopf, this cultural delocalisation was reinforced not only by a desire to overcome diversity and external pressures as perpetuated by the media, but also due to the fact that Muslims were physically displaced outside of traditional Islamic societies. Frishkopf explains how, initially, Islamic globalisation took place via localisation, enabled by Islam's "ability to absorb local cultures without losing its *élan*, and this property in turn required a flexible, non-literal interpretation of Islamic practice and doctrine" (2009, 11).[94] In this process, what he refers to as the "soundworld," or oral tradition, was essential to the localisation of Islam in foreign cultures and local conditions, as I explain below. Frishkopf uses the concept of the soundworld to explain how the "sacred sonic dimensions of Islam tended to ramify, while a parallel sacred discursive textual tradition (especially Qur'an and Hadith) remained relatively fixed" (Frishkopf 2009, 11).[95] One suspects that the supposed fixity of the textual tradition, to which Frishkopf refers, is a modern development rather than being timeless.[96]

Frishkopf refers to the immigration of Muslims to North America and Western Europe, as opposed to the initial localisation of Islam in the Middle East, Africa, and

[94] Frishkopf states that following the initial localised globalisation wave wherein Muslim communities successfully fused with their new homelands, creating emerging musical traditions all over the Arab world, the postmodern or second phase of Islamic globalisation was characterised by a counter movement, which induced a "fracturing of the Islamic soundworld" (2009, 14).

[95] According to Frishkopf, "the soundworld is a critical factor in the dialectical formation of the Islamic *habitus* to represent the individual's collection of non-discursive yet strongly inculcated dispositions, values, and strategies – structuring social structures, even as it is structured by them" (Pierre Bourdieu 1977, 72 in Frishkopf 2009, 13).

[96] Held within unsystematised oral traditions, the Islamic soundworld was easily criticised as heresy (*bid'a*) by reformists who excluded it from what they perceived and constructed as a codified Muslim textual tradition, rooted in the Qur'an and the Hadith (or Sunna) (Frishkopf 2009, 15). The idea of a fixed textual tradition, from the time of the Prophet Muhammad to this day, is thus a modern phenomenon emerging out of reformist Muslim ideology.

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Asia, as the "second wave" of Islamic globalisation. This latter phenomenon corresponds to a re-emergence of the Islamic soundworld in delocalised, universal Muslim communities to be found online rather than in diverse indigenous, localised traditions (2009, 14).[97] Concomitant with the advent of growing literacy, Muslim identity was sought increasingly within the written tradition, reinforced by globalisation as Muslim diasporic groups physically disconnected from the Muslim world could not have access to sources of oral tradition, such as music, folklore, poetry, stories, which comprised social networks of authority (2009, 15).[98] According to Frishkopf, this alteration of authority could partially explain why Sufism is not well established in Canada, where the ideology of Islamic reformists enables them to criticise what they consider to be eclectic Sufism or "locally adaptive oral traditions" (2009, 15).[99] In other words, in search of a "common Islamic denominator" amongst immigrants in Canada, Muslim communities have tended to seek unity online while overlooking localised cultural differences, especially in the face of increasing prejudices.

Regarding this negative portrayal of the Arab world, McDonough adds that Sufism is never represented in the media (2005, 133). For McDonough, Sufism could

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[97] As a result, the Muslim soundworld(s) were disconnected from their social landscapes, despised for their mystical and aesthetic aspects, "which, operating in the discursive spaces was not only diverse (thus presenting the appearance of disunity), but lacking explicit discursive justification within the sacred texts" (Frishkopf 2009, 15).

[98] Frishkopf explains that "the strength of oral tradition over a rich social network in traditionally Muslim societies, combined with the affective logic of the soundworld itself, ensures its inertial survival despite the depredations of reformism, and is here compatible with internal unity, since localization is by definition locally unified; there is no social juxtaposition of difference. However, in an immigrant society, this inertia is reduced or eliminated, even as the need to eliminate internal difference is felt more acutely, and equated with the negation of Islamic localizations as a means of seeking a common Islamic denominator" (Frishkopf 2009, 17).

[99] In smaller cities like Edmonton, the Islamic community heavily depends on the presence of a unified Muslim body to partake in Canadian social life and politics, disregarding Sufism as a marginal position in western Canada (Frishkopf 2009, 17). In larger, more multicultural cities such as Toronto and Montreal, Sufi activities are much more present, but "constantly threatened by more powerful reformist ideology eyeing their activities as un-Islamic, and seeking to unify the *umma* on a more 'rational' basis" (Frishkopf 2009, 17).

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serve a particular function by providing an alternative picture of Muslim identity and thus "counter[ing] the demonization of Islam currently found in so much of the Western media" (McDonough 2005, 134). McDonough, pointing to the ways Sufism is transforming Islam as it takes root in Canadian soil, argues that Sufis can provide an alternative space for Muslim constructions of selfhood (2005, 134). McDonough describes how in the early 2000s a number of Muslim Canadian immigrants turned to Sufism to "find sources for a spiritual dimension in their lives to counter the confusion created by the challenges of a life in a new and demanding culture" (2005, 133). However, the existence of this "alternative space" in a non-Muslim majority society runs the danger of underpinning the pejorative classification of Islam as strictly political and Sufism as its spiritual dimension.

In the face of the media's widespread negative stereotyping and essentialisation of Islam as political, McDonough states that Canadian Muslims have coalesced under umbrella organisations in major cities which have created stronger ties with the broader Muslim community and non-Muslim Canadians, a fact that points to the "transformation of identity, roles, and institutions, as well as groups and associations" of Islam in Canada (2005, 148; 149). As such, the resulting pressure on Muslims in Canada to nurture a cohesive front countering these prejudices simultaneously reinforces the delocalisation of diverse manifestations of Muslim social life, as examined below.

The Muslim communities of Canada, and that of Quebec more precisely, had to overcome a number of internal challenges, from their ethnic diversity to debates around religious reform, from language boundaries to media discrimination. Their communities have prospered in a number of ways, but the relationship between Sufism and "orthodox"

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Islam remains a fraught one within Muslim circles and in the Canadian perspective. Today, and since the 1970s, Canadian Muslims are "concerned to transcend these differences to achieve a more satisfactory experience of common life and practice," while also struggling to overcome local political prejudices, such as media representations and Marois' 2013 Charter of Values (McDonough 1994, 323).

This assessment of the Canadian Muslim community in relation to local historical moments speaks to the wider political discourse today in Quebec that seeks to find a tolerant religious space which nurtures intercultural and inter-faith negotiations (Leblanc 2013, 426). In 2013, Marie-Nathalie Leblanc published an extensive ethnographic study on the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order of Montreal that falls along the lines of previous scholarship in Quebec looking at "privileged sites for intercultural tolerance and for the production of cosmopolitan identities" (Leblanc 2013, 426). Her research thus reflects broader trends in Quebecois society that result from the historical processes mentioned above, pointing to the "renewed concern for vivre ensemble" in Quebec's post-French Bill 101 era (Leblanc 2013, 425). Concerning the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order, she argues that they have initiated forms of civil involvement, which suggests the adaptation of a Sufi tradition of Islam to its non-Muslim context in the diaspora (2013, 426). Adding to this assessment, I will discuss the Quebec government's appeal to the Sufi Naqshbandi-Haqqanis, and more precisely Shaykh Omar Koné.[100] This appeal does not operate in a vacuum, but is tainted by preconceived ideas of a non-Islamist apolitical Sufism.

[100] Whereas Leblanc has focused at length on the cosmopolitan identities adopted by the members of the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis and the apolitical discourse of Shaykh Omar Koné in promoting this community's alignment with Quebecois ethos, I will build on her research and emphasise Quebec authorities' appeal to Shaykh Koné as the authentic Muslim voice to counter Islamic radicalisation while keeping in mind the global context in which this trope of peaceful Sufism arises, as discussed in Chapter One. In other words, I trace the political potential of Sufi groups in Quebec as the current moderate and charismatic Muslims.

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Therefore, we need to keep this perennial romantic idealisation in mind as I explore the construction and "authentification" process of moderate Islam in Quebec.

Part Two: Politics of Identity and Authenticity: The Re-Localisation of Sufism

As we have seen above, the expansion of Islam in Canada has come to express a certain removed, delocalised adaptability, allowing it to function outside any specific ethnic or cultural boundaries. Incidentally, some Muslim and Sufi communities have found ways of re-locating a certain spiritual identity online within global Internet platforms. In addition to the online virtual community, Sufism has also become increasingly delocalised in North America as witnessed with the exotification of Sufism in popular culture and non-Muslim Sufi New Religious Movements (as discussed in Chapter One). These transformations point to the re-localisation of twenty-first century Sufism's identity as trans-historical as well as distinct from so-called political Islam. Ultimately, this new identity reveals the political potential and efficiency of Sufism, Sufi ideology, and Sufi agents in Quebec within radicalisation discourses and Muslim accommodation debates.

These observations impel the questions: are we witnessing the delocalisation of Islam in North America, which fosters the solidification of the textual traditions of Islam as envisioned by the reformist movement? Have widening globalisation and transmigration networks deepened the dichotomy between Islam and Sufism through the delocalisation of Islam in conjuncture with the growing presence of re-localised Sufi cyber-communities within online platforms? If these questions are answerable in the affirmative, what can be said about the Montreal Naqshbandi-Haqqani order? What can

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their example tell us about the re-localisation and "Islamic authenticity" of Sufism in Quebec?

The Sufi Centre of Montreal, currently located on Fairmount Street in the Mile End neighbourhood, has been active since the 1990s and is a distinctively multicultural space; it does not claim any particular ethnic affiliation and its members include a noticeable number of local converts, while online they foster an active North American community.[101] In this sense, Haddad's argument regarding the re-localised global identity of Sufi groups in Quebec emphasised through online platforms is valid. However, as I will argue, although their Muslim identity is transnational on some level and strongly asserted within an online Naqshbandi-Haqqani community most active in North America, the Muslim identity projected by this particular Sufi group in Montreal has undergone a re-localisation within the dominant Quebecois society. As I will explain, their localised identity at once reaffirms romanticised tropes regarding Sufism and is amenable to normative Quebecois notions of immigration and secularism.

From 1995 to 2010, "in their inter-religious phase" as Imam Omar Koné phrased it, the Sufi Centre participated extensively in inter-religious activities, festivals, and other inter-communal events, sharing knowledge on their tradition while branching out to other non-Muslims and civil groups (Koné 27/04/17).[102] For instance, major events in which they have participated include "300 Religions, 1 God," and their performance at the Arab World Festival of Montreal at Place-des-Arts, a performing arts centre. Moreover, the

[101] The order was officially registered in 1984, but was organised in people's house before they rented a space on Park Avenue in 1992 (Leblanc 2013, 429). As the community grew, the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis re-located into a permanent space in 2004, buying their current two-storey building on Fairmount Avenue in the Mile-End, which they named the Sufi Centre Masjid Al-Iman.
[102] My interviews in this chapter were conducted in French, for which all the translations here are my own.

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Centre had a lot of contact with the New Age movement, mostly through the Sufi Dance Circle Montreal and the Sufi Order International (SOI), a point to which I will return.[103]

As Leblanc has argued, this activism is a case in point of their willingness to integrate themselves into Quebec society and participate in local outreach activities, shaping cosmopolitan identities with the non-Muslim community. Leblanc frames their cosmopolitanism "in terms of openness to cultural and religious differences while promoting a sense of moral responsibility to both the umma and Quebec society" (2013, 426). The cosmopolitanism that characterises the Montreal Naqshbandi-Haqqanis is not a secular or doctrinal neutrality. Rather, it is rooted in "moral content, which is embodied by what followers describe as the specificity of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani mystical experience" (Leblanc 2013, 426). This moral content is endowed with Islamic moral principles while simultaneously "opposed to so-called political Islam or Islamism" (Leblanc 2013, 426).[104] The Centre's Islamic religious identity as well is endowed with universalism, exemplified when Shaykh Koné says that "Because Sufis have a more advanced form of knowledge, this openness of the heart to everybody, seeing wisdom in all traditions is special to Sufism" (Leblanc 2013, 431).[105] Therefore, the cosmopolitan identity and religiosity of the Sufi Centre is shaped by its environment in Montreal. This

[103] The latter organisation, SOI, falls under the umbrella of Universal Sufism in North America brought by Hazrat Inayat Khan, today headed by his grandson Zia Inayat Khan as discussed in Chapter One.
[104] Leblanc relates clear instances in which Shaykh Omar Koné, in his sermons and in interviews with her, positions Sufism as a very open and tolerant form of Islam. For instance, in one such interview, Shaykh Koné says: "Because Sufis have a more advanced form of knowledge, this openness of the heart to everybody, seeing wisdom in all traditions is special to Sufism" (Leblanc 2013, 431). Their Sufi identity and training, in this sense, allows them to understand and share "many things with people of all horizons, of all orientations," including reformist Muslims and non-Muslim Quebecers (Leblanc 2013, 431).
[105] The commonly used sense of universalism consists in seeing all traditions as having some element of universal truth within them, or even believing them all to be the same.

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environment is shaped in turn by the Quebec politics of *interculturalisme* and secularism discussed above, as well as the fear of "radical Islam."[106]

The Sufi Centre of Montreal is not the only Sufi group based in Quebec to have initiated forms of civil involvement in local politics and outreach activities. For instance, the Sufi Institute of Montreal, a Boutchichiyya Sufi Order, has also been very active in some of the same events (such as "300 Religions, 1 God"), and its founder, Karim Ben-Driss, is a public figure as well, though more on the academic side, as a lecturer of Sufism at the University of Montreal. The fact of the matter is that the spiritual leader of the Sufi Centre, Shaykh Omar Koné, has been at the forefront of Muslim-based inter-religious activities in the media and more directly involved with the Quebec government and civil groups.

Since 2005, Imam Koné has been increasingly visible on the Quebecois political scene, especially for intercultural activities and public debates (Leblanc 2013, 429). According to Leblanc, he became a "public religious personality" in Quebec between 2007 and 2008 in the context of debates around The Bouchard-Taylor Commission, known for "defending the openness and cosmopolitanism of 'moderate' Muslims in Montreal" (2013, 432). But, as I have mentioned above, Omar Koné's activism with the Centre was prominent from 1995 to 2010, when the Centre was very energetic in its outreach. Therefore, it is after a decade of leading inter-communal activities that Imam Koné became a Muslim authority in popular, local political discourses.

[106] Leblanc further notes that members draw on this constructed "ideological boundary" between Sufism and political Islamism "to assert that Sufism is an open and tolerant form of Islam," especially evoking Sufi notions of "Love, Unity, and Truth" (2013, 426). When I explained my thesis topic to one member, along the lines of unpacking and challenging this ideological constructions of the notion of Sufism as peaceful in opposition to political Islam, she responded that, in fact, many Sufis would relate to their tradition in those terms as well, pointing to the internalisation of such tropes (Anonymous 08/06/17).

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His work with the government started in the early 2000s with the Chair of Research Denise Helly from the CRI (*Conseil des relations interculturelles du Quebec*).[107] The central organisation with which he worked afterward and with which he continues to work is the Ministry of Immigration (formerly with Lise Thériault, from 2005 to 2007), as well as the Ministries of Employment, Education, and Social Services, proving that the government deems the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Sufi Centre to be a landing point and resource for newly arrived Muslims in Quebec. As the government-sanctioned representative of moderate Muslims in Quebec, Imam Koné was invited to participate in multiple roundtables and committees on Reasonable Accommodations organised by community organisations (Koné 27/04/17).

In 2014, he was approached by the current Premier of Quebec, Philippe Couillard, to discuss ways of dealing with Islamic reformism outside and inside Canada (Koné 19/05/17). A roundtable was organised by one of his ministers, focused on security, social care for youth to prevent the "trap of radicalisation," and the integration of immigrants through employment (Koné 19/05/17). According to Imam Koné, the point of the project, piloted by the Ministry of Immigration, was to recruit ten individuals of the Arabo-Muslim community to ask for their advice concerning measures to prevent problems in the community (Koné 19/05/17).[108]

Concerning security services, Imam Koné worked and continues to collaborate with multiple groups, such as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). As part of

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[107] Denise Helly is currently a professor at l'INRS (*Institut national de la recherche scientifique*) in Montreal and has published extensively on the Muslim community in Canada, immigration, and nationalism.

[108] Interestingly, Omar Koné was the only religious leader and representative of a mosque; the others were research chairs, professors, and the president of the Association of Muslims and Arabs for the *Laïcité* of Quebec (AMAL), amongst others.

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the RCMP programme to fight radicalisation and terrorism, he is invited every year at the end of their three-day training camp as a guest speaker to deconstruct preconceptions officers have around Islam (Koné 27/04/17).[109] He also collaborates with the police service of Montreal (SPVM) to build stronger relations between them and the Muslim Council (Koné 27/04/17). Consequently, the Sufi Centre, through the figure of Imam Omar Koné, has served the government as a central channel of integration for Muslim youth from across the diaspora in Montreal, as well as an educational resource to counter negative North American stereotypes within the ranks of civil security services for more than ten years. These events point to the political ramifications of this particular Sufi group's involvement in Quebecois public life.

According to Imam Koné, the most significant passage that concretised his mediatised position was at *Tout le monde en parle* in 2007, a very popular French-Canadian Sunday night talk show watched by a third of Quebecers, which addressed popular controversial issues such as the status of women in Islam, the veil, and homosexuality (Koné 19/05/17).[110] His fame, as a Muslim public personality, exploded following this appearance. Since then, local news networks such as Radio-Canada and

[109] As he described to me, Shaykh Koné comes in and "shakes them a bit." He has not been able to free himself from this engagement he has been pursuing for more than ten years (Koné 27/04/17).

[110] Following the expulsion from Canada in 2007 of the controversial Imam Saïd Jaziri, another Muslim leader in Quebec, right before the scheduled date of the television programme, Shaykh Omar Koné was invited to replace him on the set (Koné 19/05/17). That period, during the reasonable accommodations "crisis" of 2007-2008, as Shaykh Koné recalled, was the worst time for Muslims in Quebec; they were insulted and spat on in the streets every day. Following his appearance on the set of *Tout le monde en parle*, the next day, Shaykh Koné said that it was as if the social tension in the air had deflated, the media describing him as "un Imam rassurant," meaning a reassuring Imam (Koné 19/05/17). This passage at *Tout le monde en parle* marked an important moment for the government as well as Muslim and non-Muslim Quebecers. Before that moment, Shaykh Koné had only joined one public event, which was a minimally mediatised debate with Bernard Landry in 2004 in a Westmount library. However, after that passage on Quebecois television, Imam Koné became widely known amongst these three groups mentioned above, and, to this day, Muslims and non-Muslims alike recognise and thank him for his reassuring words (Koné 19/05/17).

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TVA have contacted him punctually to conduct interviews and hear his opinions on major events related to Muslims (Koné 27/04/17).

In retrospect, Imam Koné has come to epitomise two ways in which Sufism is politically involved in Quebec. Koné is politically engaged externally, through the government which has contacted him personally to solve religious questions around reformist groups, and internally, by consciously carving himself a space within Quebecois popular debates through his authority as a popular religious figure. The involvement of Shaykh Omar Koné is a case in point of the impact of Sufi orders in Quebec, valued in politics for their "tolerant" and "liberal" nature, including their religiosity as articulated by the imam, that suits the religious ideals of Quebecois society, secularism, and "moderate" (read apolitical) Islam. Ironically enough, this cooperation reveals a crucial ramification, namely the political potential of Sufism, even if the group is approached for its seemingly inherent non-political nature. Accordingly, Imam Koné has become the "prototypical 'good Muslim'" in the Quebec public imaginary as an "open and tolerant imam" who is involved in community building, civil education, and the forming of inter-religious bridges (Leblanc 2013, 434).

Conversely, Imam Koné says that political and inter-religious participation was not ideal for the Centre's primary spiritual goal, but that it was "necessary" to take part in civil affairs, and that it was a question of being pragmatic—both for the broader Muslim community and for their own survival I assume (Koné 19/05/17). According to him, his group cannot simply stay in its corner and perform religious practice in isolation. This approach also reflects a traditional Naqshbandi principle: to be active socially while isolated spiritually—*khalwat dar anjuman*, or "solitude in the crowd" (Schimmel 1975,

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364). Therefore, we can further see how their cosmopolitan and political identities are not completely "unnatural" for a Sufi order or unorthodox, which is rather a perception reinforced in Orientalist re-evaluation, as explained in Chapter One. As emphasised by Imam Koné, "*il faut s'associer avec le pouvoir pour mieux le conseiller*" (Koné 19/05/17).[111]

However, Shaykh Koné's implication in civil affairs has led to a falling-out with some of the other less active and smaller Sufi groups in Montreal who have cut ties with the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis (Koné 19/05/17). Imam Koné explains that, for instance, they used to have a lot of contact with the Boutchichi Order, the Alawi Order, and the Order of Mourids, but these three groups have withdrawn themselves out of fear of the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis' "dynamism"—which I suspect refers to their involvement with the government.[112] The conscious inter-religious and political outreach efforts of the Sufi Centre has given them legitimacy in public appeal and in the media while simultaneously isolating them within the broader Sufi circle of Montreal. Therefore, their "authenticity" as "moderate Muslims" produced in the Quebecois imaginary in turn becomes marginalised by other Sufi groups who possibly consider that the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis

[111] I have intentionally decided to leave this quote in French. My best translation would be: "we have to associate ourselves with political power to better advise it."
[112] As a further note on this rejection of public recognition, when I called the founder of the Sufi Institute, Karim Ben-Driss (PhD in sociology), he was quick to turn me down, thinking I wanted to interview him concerning Muslim reformism, ISIS, or other popular media subjects (Ben-Driss 07/04/15). He insisted that "*le terrain est fatigué, vous comprenez?*" suggesting, like Shaykh Omar Koné, that he was constantly being contacted by media networks to comment on Muslim-related events around the world (Ben-Driss 07/04/15). We were off to a bad start. However, when I explained that I was seeking to learn about the Sufi Institute in relation to the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis, he instantly became friendly and invited me to join the weekly Sufi workshops he gives at the Institute on Tuesdays, where we could meet and discuss this further (however he made it clear that I could not join their *zikr* circle to join prayer or conduct ethnographic fieldwork). Although I have not met him yet, this interaction is a case in point of the importance of Karim Ben-Driss and Shaykh Omar Koné from a media perspective; they are the voices called upon to justify, comment on, and defend Muslim behaviours, based on their apparent "secular," "moderate," and "authentic" Muslim Sufi labels.

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have lost their “authentic” Sufi roots.[113] As Koné suggested, whenever asked to speak on behalf of the Quebec Muslims regarding Islam or related topics—despite knowing that it is an impossible task to fulfil—he would respond knowing that whatever he would say, he would be criticised for speaking on behalf of an entire community.[114]

Given that Omar Koné and the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis are both critiqued within the Sufi community and the broader Muslim social body, and simultaneously acclaimed for their activism, notions of “authenticity” become more convoluted. What are the foundations of these narratives around Islam and Sufi tales of identity in Quebec? Mahmood Mamdani argues that these imagined discourses opposing “Good” to “Bad Muslim” in North America and Western Europe are rooted in a “Culture Talk [that] assumes that every culture has a tangible essence that defines it, and it then explains politics as a consequence of that essence” (2004, 17). The Culture Talk he mentions is “both a description and explanation of the events of 9/11,” which “qualified and explained the practice of ‘terrorism’ as ‘Islamic’” (Mamdani 2004, 17; 18).[115] It is culture (as modernity) that is the dividing line between “Good” and “Bad,” opposing “us” and “them” (Mamdani 2004, 18). In this perspective, all Muslims are inherently “Other” and therefore “Bad” and in need of proving themselves to be “Good” by fighting against radical Islam with the “modern” North American and western European countries. Sufis, in this trope, have emerged as the “moderate Muslims,” as discussed in Chapter One. Transposing this mindset to Quebec, Imam Omar Koné has managed to adapt and

[113] These are my deductions, but they have not been confirmed by Imam Omar Koné nor have I been able to confirm them with any of the other groups mentioned.
[114] Shaykh Koné further implied that as a Sufi outspoken figure, he would also receive threats saying “people do not realise that we put our lives on the line every time we speak in public” (Koné 19/05/17).
[115] As a matter of contextualisation, Mamdani posits this dichotomy as a result of the events of 9/11, which did not operate in a vacuum, but can rather be traced back to the late Cold War era.

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accommodate his group's culture to the standards of non-Muslim Quebecois society under public scrutiny in the past 15 years. Of course, this is not necessarily the case—this perception of the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis is a subjective Quebecois interpretation. Nonetheless, in local tales, the Sufi Centre of Montreal has "proven itself" to be worthy of the "moderate Muslim" label, fighting the war against the "Others," namely Islamic "radical Muslims." And it is this very same peaceful identity that is precisely the potent political force they represent as charismatic Sufis in Quebec.

Part Three: The Production of the "Moderate Muslim" in Quebec: The Charismatic Sufi

The question remains: how did Omar Koné come to occupy this position as the "authentic" Muslim voice against "the trap of radicalisation"? Here, I turn to discussing notions of authenticity and universality. I suspect that his linguistic identity as a Francophone from Mali gives him considerable credibility and approval that would not be granted to an Anglophone.[116] I doubt that Shaykh Koné could have become so widely popular as a public religious figure were it not for this important element. He is both familiar and Other. Most notably during his passage at *Tout le monde en parle*, Shaykh Koné skilfully articulated his discourse taking in consideration first and foremost his audience.[117] By appealing to Quebecois history, linguistic idioms, and sensibilities with a

[116] In interviews, Shaykh Koné also expressed this feeling to me, stating that he can properly express himself in French and also before the media. As a figure of comparison, he stated the example of Imam Saïd Jaziri, who was expulsed from Canada in 2007. The latter, according to Shaykh Koné, could not express himself properly in French and did not understand Quebec society, its sensibilities, and the dynamics of the media (Koné 19/05/17). He was not someone reassuring to non-Muslims, or someone to whom the broader Muslim community could relate. In fact, Imam Jaziri had become notorious before Shaykh Koné, as well as highly controversial, during the reasonable accommodations period.

[117] On *Tout le monde en parle*, Shaykh Koné made important cultural references to Quebecois society, such as when he expressed his first impressions of Quebec as a university student; he recounts telling his mother "*tu sais, ici c'est un univers. Ici j'ai rencontré une couple de gars, et ya son char, sa bière, son hockey, sa blonde, yé ben correct! J'ai trouvé ça si beau*" (Koné on TLMEP 21/10/07). This line speaks to

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certain sense of humour, Shaykh Koné further shaped for himself a place as the "reassuring" and charismatic Imam, one who is not completely "Other," but increasingly familiar. He thus came to represent the moderate and charismatic Sufi leader before the Francophone audience, sufficiently "Other" as a Muslim while adhering to Quebec's predominant cultural-linguistic identity.

The distinctively "Muslim-looking" physical appearance of Imam Koné further legitimises claims around his "authenticity" in the eyes of the Quebec media and government (Said 1979). For instance, Shaykh Koné has a medium-sized beard and is always fully dressed in traditional Muslim garb in public, a Naqshbandi tradition (see appendix). Drawing from Said's theory of postcolonial power dynamics, I contend that the production of knowledge around Shaykh Koné is tainted by an Orientalist understanding of "us" (North America) as opposed to the "Other" (Islam). Omar Koné's physical appearance and social status as a Muslim spiritual leader gives him credibility in public, and works to legitimate and reinforce his position as the "moderate Muslim" in Quebecois rhetoric of Muslim identities. Within a Saidian framework, it can be said that the emphasis on Omar Koné as the poster child of the Muslim community is in fact more revelatory of Quebecois motives than of Islam itself, for it serves the former. Shaykh Koné becomes "authentic" according to the fact that he reflects Quebecois ideals of inter-

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the character of Shaykh Omar Koné as someone who not only knows Quebec and its culture, but has integrated it to the extent that, in fact, he spoke "Quebecois" and expressed the mentality behind its slang, which touched some emotional core within the non-Muslim population. Moreover, he addressed non-Muslim Quebecers through an appeal to their fundamental values of liberty and gender equality as the province experienced it with the Quiet Revolution, saying, "you fought for your rights, and you fought well. And future generations will thank you. The movement that happened here, a movement of liberation, was totally justified and noble. Therefore, we have to give Muslims the time to progress on their faith, to progress, because constraint/coercion does not always work. I think that sometimes it has the opposite effect. Ostracisation and the continuous accusation tend to create a ghettoization and a confinement. […] It is a community that needs more to be helped than to be accused" (Koné on TLMEP 21/10/07, translations are my own). With these statements, Shaykh Koné makes a plea to the broader non-Muslim Quebecois community to remember its own history of struggle and emancipation, and similarly to help Muslim Quebecers to progress, but with their faith.

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religious secular civil participation and discourse. His presence in public debates or events serves a specific purpose.[118] Hence, I have transposed Said's theory to politico-religious notions of the Muslim "Other" in Quebec, focused more on the local political parties and institutions than on Islam. I contend that this partnership between Sufism and central bodies benefits the government, for they have created an ally amongst the Muslims, one they can turn to concerning questions of radicalisation. This "authentification" process benefits the government in the long run in a way that might increasingly isolate the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Centre from the Montreal Sufi community and broader Muslim circles.

On a collective level, the Montreal Naqshbandi-Haqqani order has carved itself a distinctively "moderate" place on what I am calling a "scale of universalism." The Sufi Centre of Montreal does not teach a universal religion or spirituality like other non-Muslim New Religious Movements such as the Universal Sufis of Hazrat Inayat Khan who claim no necessary tie to Islam, thus confining Sufism to its so-called mystical esoteric teachings. Indeed, the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis of Montreal, as is the case with other branches in North America, are undeniably anchored in Islam and enforce different recognisably Islamic codes, such as gender segregation. However, when compared to other Sufi groups in Montreal, the Sufi Centre emerges as "universal" in its outreach as

[118] Shaykh Koné further confirmed this theory of mine, saying he was invited to every new initiative of the provincial government and knew that it was due to his public notoriety as a respected imam within Muslim and non-Muslim circles (especially following *Tout le monde en parle*), and that he played the game fully aware that they were using his distinctively Muslim image because it brought them a legitimacy (Koné 19/05/17). In his words: "*Je sais pourquoi je suis là*," when invited to these public events. Having said this, Shaykh Koné praised the work of the current Premier of Quebec Philippe Couillard, saying that for the first time the provincial government was nurturing a maintained relationship with the Muslim community, as opposed to previous administrations that only called upon Muslim leaders in cases of "*patates chaudes*" as was the case with the reasonable accommodation crisis (Koné 19/05/17). The deeper problem remains, according to Shaykh Koné, that the government is a big machine and that, despite Couillard's efforts, more needs to be done to understand Quebec's plural and eclectic Muslim population, as well as support it financially to counter the powerful influence of Wahhabi-financed groups from Saudi Arabia (Koné 19/05/17).

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being the most dynamic and welcoming Sufi order, as well as in religious theology according to the universalistic articulation of Sufism by Imam Koné, as mentioned earlier. In comparison, the Sufi Institute founded by Karim Ben-Driss is more secluded than the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis. The Boutchihchi Sufi Institute organises weekly workshops on Sufism ("*Échange et méditation: la quête du sense*") as well as Arabic calligraphy courses open to everyone, but it is rather hard to join their religious meetings and sacred chants, especially for women.[119] In contrast, the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis' Montreal website strongly encourages Muslims and non-Muslims of all walks of life to come for *zikr* and offers an exhaustive list of the educational institutions that have joined them over the years.[120]

On the other end of the spectrum of universalism and "welcomeness," Imam Koné mentioned the Pakistani Jamaat-e-Islami, known to be a very closed circle comprised only of men (Koné 19/05/17).[121] And then, we have a variety of other underground Sufi orders in Montreal that are informal, hard to find, and whose members do not want to be involved in outreach or civil activities. Therefore, the willingness of Imam Omar Koné and his group to engage with Quebecois society and participate in political affairs, in partnership with Koné's assessment of his group's theological approach to Sufism, present a more universal form of Sufism in comparison to other

[119] This emphasis on religious privacy is made evident by the fact that one cannot find out the time and place of their meetings for *zikr* on their website. On the phone, Karim Ben-Driss further added that he would be happy to meet for an interview at the Institute, but could not help me with ethnographic material on Sufi practices, suggesting clearly that I could not join them for *zikr* and thus corroborating the words of Omar Koné (Ben-Driss 07/04/15). For further information about this Sufi order, see: http://www.institut-soufi.ca/IsmFr/Ateliers.htm
[120] I myself have witnessed two different groups coming to join and observe the Sufi Centre on Thursday nights, one from McGill (about 20 people) and another from an anglophone CEGEP in Montreal (15 people). The students are invited to join the Shaykh before *zikr* in order to discuss the purpose of the Sufi centre and ask any questions they might have regarding Islam and Sufism.
[121] In between these two poles, Imam Koné mentioned other Sufi groups in Montreal, such as the Tijani *tarīqa*, the Alawiya *tarīqa*, the Nimatullahi Order, *L'ordre des Mourides*, and the Burhaniya *tarīqa*.

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groups in Montreal, which has brought them considerable recognition and fame in the media.[122]

The conclusion I seek to draw here is that the "authenticity" attached to the Sufi Centre and Shaykh Omar Koné is one that has been socially constructed and articulated by the imam in Quebec over the past twenty years. The fact that Naqshbandi-Haqqanis are regarded as "authentic Sufis" points to the effectiveness of the Sufi Centre politically, since they are seen as moderate-liberal Muslims. In other words, their authenticity works politically to their advantage because their civil involvement and their theology converge with Quebecois ideals of universalism and a proper religious affiliation.

While reflecting on these dynamics, one has to wonder: on this scale of universalism and authenticity, who is excluded? Which groups fail to make the qualification as "authentic" Muslims or Sufis, and therefore fall outside of the political discussion around religious affiliations and Islam in Quebec? For instance, other Sufi groups in Montreal are barely ever mentioned in the media. From another perspective, what about Sufi-based New Religious Movements, such as the Sufi Order International (SOI), which is active in the United States and Canada?[123] Are they excluded from this

[122] Despite this "universal" label, as mentioned, in the eyes of many of my informants, the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis remain "orthodox" or traditional on certain aspects, such as the division of men and women within the Centre. The chanting takes place amongst the men, closer to the front and the Shaykh, whereas the women pray and sing behind them. More than once, this gender separation was either mentioned to me or critiqued by non-Naqshbandi-Haqqani women as something particular about the Centre or not seemingly matching their "moderate" "cosmopolitan" identity.

[123] I have met informally with the SOI leaders of Montreal (Sarah Leila) and Vancouver (Amir O'Loughlin), as well as one of the leaders (main coordinator) of the Toronto group (Habib Fred Maycock), the biggest SOI group in Canada. Across the nation, the SOI has been active in inter-religious dialogue and outreach, participating in sacred chanting and Sufi dances mostly with the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis and sometimes the Mevlevis, another Sufi group of Turkish origins (Leila 21/04/15; Habib 19/04/15; Amir 07/03/15). In Montreal particularly, the SOI was collaborating more actively with the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis ten years ago, when the SOI group was younger and more dynamic than today. Furthermore, Sarah Leila revealed to me that her group organised a Sufi retreat in 2002 in collaboration with the Sufi Rifai *tarīqa*, whose Shaykh Sherif Baba Catalkaya joined from the United States to lead *zikr* during a big Saturday night event attended by over 100 people on the corner of Saint-Laurent and Mont-Royal (Leila

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"authentic label" for lack of biological Arab roots, or for not looking distinctively "Other" enough? Although this thesis does not seek to evaluate the political legitimacy of Sufi New Religious Movements in Quebec, we need to think of the normative roles imposed on Muslim groups in the current anti-radicalisation quest and concomitant production of authentic "moderate Muslims."

My intent throughout this chapter was to expose the romanticisation of Sufism and Sufis as mystical and apolitical (discussed in Chapter One), which has dominated Quebecois tales of Muslimness. We can see a palimpsestic process of Orientalisation, from Sufi romanticisation to distorted perceptions of Muslims, which further isolates and discriminates between "moderate" Sufis and "radical" Muslims in scholarship, the media, and the Quebecois popular imaginary. By building on the narrative of Sufism as apolitical, the media and government's fabrication of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Sufi Centre as "authentic" works to legitimate their civil participation in Quebecois imaginaries. I overheard a man in the neighbourhood say about the "community centre" to his guests as he passed by the Sufi Centre: "They are charismatic Muslims." This description adequately sums up in one sentence current Sufi tales in Quebec.

Finally, I have focused on this constructed narrative as a social phenomenon propelled by the delocalisation of Muslims in Canada and re-localisation of Sufis in Quebec. However, in Chapter Three, I will demonstrate how these dynamics around "moderate Sufis" and "radical Muslims" are not unique to North America or simply a result of anti-Islamic sentiment, but have also evolved within some Muslim-majority countries, particularly in Pakistan. Indeed, the social processes of delocalised traditional

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21/04/15). At this *zikr* night, the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis also joined and started whirling as Shaykh Sherif Baba Catalkaya was leading *zikr*, producing a significant inter-communal spiritual exchange with the SOI (Leila 21/04/15).

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authority and practices, often associated with Sufi institutions, have also provoked concomitant re-localised identity within a “third space” against growing Islamic reformist persecution within Muslim societies. This social process has indeed taken place within traditional Muslim communities that were not physically displaced, as witnessed with the epistemic circulation of knowledge about Sufism and its power in Pakistan.

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Chapter Three
Sufis and Politics in Pakistan: Tracing Networks of Sufi Knowledge and Power

As elsewhere in the Muslim world, the history and growth of Islam in Pakistan is deeply attached to the figures of saints, also known as *walī* (from Arabic, plural *auliyā*), meaning "friend of God," and as *pīr*s (from Persian, Sufi leaders or elders).[124] The experience of saints and their descendants, as hereditary keepers of their ancestors' shrines known as *sajjāda nashīn* (literally meaning "he who sits on the prayer rug"), living *pīr*s, or *pīrzāda* ("son of a saint"), is a defining marker of Islam in the Indian subcontinent, a significant contrast with the recent North American "second wave" of Muslim immigration.[125] The ways in which different Muslim and colonial leaders have patronised saints and their shrines across the centuries have shaped the epistemic circulation of knowledge about Sufism and its ostensible power in Pakistan. To this day, leaders in Pakistan must contend with *pīrs* and their descendants to remain in power,

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[124] Philippon explains that early in the history of Islam in the subcontinent, from the eighth-ninth century onwards, as elsewhere in the Muslim world, Sufism became more devotional than purely mystical, namely through its activities surrounding Sufi shrines, comprising socio-economic and political dimensions (2015, 196). As discussed in my introduction, the writings of early European scholars of Sufism have not only caused a disjunction between Islam and Sufism, but also within the practice of Sufism itself; Orientalist writings emphasised the literary tradition of what they considered Sufism, excluding the "cult of saints" and other more "mundane" practices, such as the religiosity surrounding these saints' shrines. Nile Green explains that "the dichotomy once drawn by an earlier generation of scholars between an 'authentic' sophisticated and textual Sufi tradition and a 'decadent' popular and non-literate tradition of the veneration of living or dead saints has done much to obscure the actual nature of Sufis and Sufism in the different societies of the past" (2006, xiii). Indeed, these early Orientalist scholars' overreliance on written materials (especially poetical and doctrinal works) deemphasised the saints' wider contexts and lived vernacular practices. Green further explains that "with a few notable exceptions, until the 1990s the scholarly marginalization of Sufi shrines and the variety of activities surrounding them continued, phenomena which traditional scholarship had regarded as related only tenuously to Sufism if related to it at all" (2006, xiv).

[125] Gilmartin explains that "the hereditary religious authority of the *sajjāda nashīn* was largely based on the transmission of *barakāt*, or religious charisma, from the original saint to his descendants and to his tomb" (1979, 486). To my understanding, *sajjāda nashīn*s are thus always keepers of their forefathers' shrines as well as linked by ancestry to the saints, giving them considerable social reverence within Muslim circles, especially in Pakistan. However, not all descendants of saints are *sajjāda nashīn*s (shrine custodians), and they do not necessarily carry *barakāt.* On the other hand, some *sajjāda nashīn*s are also known to be *pīr*s, having received the hereditary religious charisma and divine grace of their saintly forefathers. Finally, some *pīr*s operate independently of the shrine system and are, as such, not custodians.

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pointing to an affiliation between Sufis and political power going back to the expansion of Islam in the subcontinent from the eighth century onwards.[126]

In this chapter, I will trace the different policies that have shaped this complex "push-and-pull" relationship between saints and Muslim rulers as well as Sufi actors and central leadership from the period of the Delhi Sultanate (1206) to modern day governments, with an emphasis on the regimes of Ayub Khan and Zia ul-Haq in Pakistan. In order to do this, I will first briefly outline the expansion of Islam in South Asia, beginning in 711; followed by an analysis of the dynamics between the different central governments (focusing on the Delhi Sultanate, 1206-1526, the Mughals, 1526-1857, and the British Raj, 1857-1947) and Sufi saints as well as *sajjāda nashīn*s; and finally of the diverse ideological, political, and international movements that have come to influence the perceived role and place of Sufism as a state ideology and Sufis in post-9/11 Pakistani society.[127] As shall be discussed, the current dialectic around Sufism and Sufis in Pakistan today is reflective, on the one hand, of its own particular history, colonial experience, and reformist movements, but also, on the other hand, of the broader twenty-first century trends mentioned in Chapters One and Two. As such, tracing a history of

[126] Although my focus will be on the Delhi Sultanate (1206-1526) and the Mughal Dynasty (1526-1857), many Muslim rulers had, in fact, established kingdoms in the Indian subcontinent before these two empires. The province of Sindh, in present-day Pakistan, was first conquered in 711 by the Umayyad caliphate (Ahmad 1964, 3). In 750 the Umayyad caliphate was overthrown by the 'Abbasid caliphate in the Sindh province (Ahmad 1964, 4). Recognised under 'Abbasid investitures, the first conquerors of North-West India were the Ghaznavids (Persian dynasty of Turkic origin), ruling from 977-1186 (Ahmad 1969, 1). The Ghaznavids were succeeded by the notorious Ghūrid ruler (also under the 'Abbasid caliphate), who became the first Muslim conqueror and ruler of North India, from 1174-1206 (Ahmad 1964, 6).

[127] Although tracing a comprehensive history of Islam in South Asia is hard within the frameworks of this Masters thesis chapter, I attempt to offer a brief overview in order to complicate the idea of a "religious conversion" of the Indian subcontinent as well as that of an "Islamic Golden age" narrative (Malik 2008, 4). As Jamal Malik notes, "most of the literature available is characterised by 'sweeping narratives,' mostly focusing on dynastic history, teleologically oriented with a beginning and usually ending with a grim scenario" (Bruce Lawrence in Malik 2008, 3). This point resonates with Nile Green's assertion that the academic study and recorded history of Islam and Sufism in South Asia has been parochially focused on certain literary genres without paying much attention to the lived realities of different Islam(s) and Sufism(s).

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Sufism and its human agents in Pakistan will reveal the global and local networks of knowledge and power that have come to shape twenty-first century Sufism not just in North America, but also in Muslim-majority countries like Pakistan.

In this case, the social context in which Sufi groups emerged and expanded was centred on shrines as traditional localised "third spaces" of Sufi teachings and influence over the population and the central state. Studying the centrality and then the persecution of these third spaces and institutions of localised identities will reveal the two ways in which Sufism was similarly delocalised within the context of an Islamic country, namely institutionally post-1970 and later physically post-2005. Just as in the case of the delocalised "second wave" of Muslim immigration in North America, Sufism and Sufis became increasingly sought out within social and political circles after 2001 in the framework of their Orientalised exotification in the face of the growing threat of "Islamic radicalism."

Part One: Islam in the Indian Subcontinent: The Patronage of Saints and Shrines

Islam in the Indian subcontinent spread shortly after the passing of Prophet Muhammad in 632, wherein the earliest Sufi writings were recorded in 777, well before the establishment of the first substantial Indo-Muslim empire, the Delhi Sultanate, in 1206 (Ahmad 1969, 34).[128] Subsequently, large numbers of Turkish-speaking groups from Central Asia, often organised as Islamic mystical fraternities under a charismatic Sufi leader, are said to have converged in this early period towards the Iranian plateau and India, up to eastern Bengal (Eaton 1993, 71). The first Muslim inscription in Bengal

[128] Aziz Ahmad notes that this literary work describes the meeting of the Indian mystics Abu-'Ali as-Sindi and Abu-Yazid al-Bistami (Ahmad 1969, 34).

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recorded in 1221 the establishment of a Sufi lodge, which testifies to the first Muslim migrants reaching this eastern periphery of the Muslim world.[129]

Theories of mass religious or forced conversion tend to dominate popular and academic discourse. To counter such narratives, in his book entitled *The Rise of Islam in the Bengal Frontier, 1204-1760*, Richard Eaton highlights the very intricate and fluid process that cannot be simplified as "religious conversion."[130] As he explains, the term *conversion* itself is misleading for it corroborates an idea of a sudden and total transformation in which one's religious identity is completely replaced at once by another, which was not the case in the subcontinent (Eaton 1993, 269). Thus, the spread of Islam in the subcontinent can better be described as a social phenomenon that bears many complexities.

According to Eaton, the process of Islamisation was so gradual it was imperceptible. Yet, from a historical point of view, he proposes to think of this process using three analytically distinct aspects, namely *inclusion*, *identification*, and *displacement*. In a nutshell, Eaton's argument rests in the fact that, at first, Islamic superhuman agencies (Allah, the Prophet Muhammad, Iblis (Satan), the Angel Gabriel, Sufi saints, etc.) would slowly integrate indigenous cosmologies (he uses Bengali ones) alongside their own divinities; followed by a process of merging between indigenous divinities and Islamic superhuman agencies; which would finally give way to the total

[129] The inscription, recorded seventeen years after the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate, speaks to these early Muslim migrants' character, not as holy warriors, but as mystics or settlers travelling under a Sufi leader (Eaton 1993, 77).
[130] Eaton describes this trope according to four mainstream theories which he systemically challenges, namely the Immigration theory (Islam as the diffusion of people as opposed to the diffusion of belief); the Religion of the Sword thesis (Islam diffused through military insurgency and forced conversion); the Religion of Patronage theory (Indians converting to Islam to gain social and political benefits from the Muslim rulers); the Religion of Social Liberation Thesis (Hindus converting to Islam to liberate themselves from the caste system) (1993, 114-117).

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replacement of those previous local divinities by Islamic agencies (1993, 269). Although these categories are simply “heuristic,” as Eaton notes, they nonetheless help us think through the growth of Islam in South Asia. As such, we can conclude that this process was not enforced within the Muslim emperors’ courts, but can be best described as “grass-roots” change centred on saints within Sufi circles and centres.

Indeed, Sufi saints can be described as having acted as “missionaries,” spreading the teachings of Islam within the subcontinent while being mostly established in *khānqāh*s—Sufi hospices capable of accommodating visitors—where they would live, pray, and heal various spiritual or bodily illnesses (Ahmad 1969, 36). Local Sufi centres, first the *khānqāh*s and later the shrines of these Sufi saints, provided a space where indigenous cosmologies could interact with Islamic superhuman agencies and teachings. The gradual and widespread geographical diffusion of these *khānqāh*s and shrines proved to be crucial to the Delhi Sultanate, as it corresponded to a form of religious leadership outside the fold of Muslim central power, located in Delhi (Gilmartin 1979, 488). Eventually, these centres came to act as the dominant focus for Islamic organisation in most of rural western Punjab as well as eastern Bengal, where Muslim communities were most strongly concentrated under the Delhi Sultanate and Mughal empires (Gilmartin 1979, 485).[131] Although some Sufis were already establishing *khānqāh*s before the coming of the Delhi Sultanate in 1206, they were further encouraged and supported in teaching Islam to locals in these centres with the help of financial and other types of sponsorship for shrine construction, which I briefly outline below.

[131] Gilmartin notes that the different Sufi orders, the Chishti, the Suhrawardi, and the Qadri, were introduced during that time in western Punjab (Gilmartin 1979, 485).

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Under the Delhi Sultanate, 1206-1526 (dynasties of Turk and Afghan Muslim descents), Sufi saints and shrines were patronised by the sultans due to their sacredness as well as their political potential and influence over the masses. According to Eaton, a "mutual patronage and even dependency" developed, wherein rulers would appeal to Sufis in order to gain sacred benefaction for sovereignty (1993, 91).[132] In return, the sultan rulers would offer material gifts, land grants, and funding for the construction of shrines, as well as perform public pilgrimages to their respective saints every year. Most strikingly in regions that were at the periphery of the empire such as western Punjab and eastern Bengal, imposing Sufi tombs constructed by the Muslim sultans "drew the tribes gradually, and perhaps insensibly, into the state's political—and religious—orbit" (Gilmartin 1988, 41). In this sense, "the shrines served as symbols of the distant, yet transcendent, cultural authority of the Muslim state," while simultaneously acting as indigenised spaces capable of incorporating local cultural identities wherever they were erected (Gilmartin 1988, 41). The sultans bound themselves to the shrines, in part, due to the sacredness of the saints as God's representatives in this realm, but also due to the shrines' local political influence in regions that were often outside the direct control of imperial Muslim states.[133]

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[132] Muslim saints, as God's representatives on earth, were perceived as predicting and giving rulers the "temporary lease on such power" through their grace (Eaton 1993, 83). In this very act of "predicting" who would be ruling the Indian subcontinent, Eaton explains that it was also an act in which the saint would "entrust" his *wilāyat* (earthly domain) to a prince or future ruler, giving for a fixed period a "natural right to earthly power" (1993, 83). For instance, Eaton relates one such anecdote in which the future Sultan Ghiyath al-Din Tughluq (the founder of the Tughluq dynasty, 1321-1398), when still a governor, visited numerous times the grandson of the Chishti Shaikh Farid al-Din Ganj-i Shakar (d.1265) in Punjab, recognising his spiritual power. On one of these occasions, the saint told Ghiyath and his son and nephew that they were destined to rule, and gave them three turbans, each of different lengths, which corresponded to the respective length of their reign (Eaton 1993, 83). For Eaton, this anecdote goes to show "the seeds of the complex pattern of mutual patronage between shaykhs of the Chishti order and one of the mightiest empires in India's history" (Eaton 1993, 83).

[133] Over the course of this dynasty (1206-1526), it was the Chishti order that emerged as the most influential and prominent Sufi order, due to the fact that they had become "thoroughly indigenised" as

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However, this affiliation was tenuous at times and characterised by distrust or even opposition on both sides. The saints enjoyed great popularity within the masses as sacred figures and benefactors, sharing their wealth and possessions with the poor. They also tended to live a religious life of seclusion, renouncing worldly matters, and were critical of the wealth and luxurious lifestyle of the royal sultans (Eaton 1993, 91). Similarly, the sultan rulers were also highly suspicious of their Sufi allies because of their popular appeal, and therefore, their capacity to provoke riots and rebellions (Eaton 1993, 93).[134] Thus, the Sufis and sultans "were fatefully connected by ties of mutual attraction and repulsion," which set the tone for the succeeding rulers' relationship with the saints and their shrines (Eaton 1993, 93).

After the fall of the Delhi Sultanate in 1526 due to a number of internal rifts and the growing threat from foreign powers, Muslim leader of Turco-Mongol origins, Babur, emerged as the ruler of a new dynasty in the subcontinent, the Mughal Empire (1526-1857).[135] Following in the footsteps of his sultan predecessors, the new Mughal ruler was quick to patronise the central Chishti shrine of Delhi (Eaton 2001, 75). The Mughals realised early on the considerable influence *auliyā* had over their respective regions and

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opposed to other Sufi orders. The Chishti order had developed a distinctively Indian-Muslim identity, which is a distinctiveness that the Indo-Muslim sultan rulers themselves tried to ascertain over their population to reinforce their legitimacy (Eaton 1993, 84). The Chishtis, Eaton contends, were predominantly located in the Indian subcontinent with their major shrines, whereas other Sufi orders in India were still looking towards Central Asia or the Middle East as their spiritual home (1993, 84). Moreover, Chishti saints were amongst the most influential of the early fourteenth century in Delhi, as was the case of Nizam al-Din *Auliyā* (d.1325), who was the most eminent shaykh of the time and remains one of the most important saints of the subcontinent (Eaton 1993, 84).

[134] Eaton records different instances in which sultans have banned saints from their city due to the perceived threat of the shaykh's wealth and influence over the former's political authority. On the other hand, Eaton also reports that some Sufis "sought royal patronage out of their own reformist impulses" to reconcile the material world with their understanding of normative religiosity (1993, 94).

[135] Babur was a direct descendant of the Timurid Empire on his father's side, and of Genghis Khan, the famous Mongol ruler, on his mother's side. In fact, Babur rose to power by taking over the remnant of the Timurid Empire in Afghanistan and subsequently defeating the Lodi Dynasty of the Delhi Sultanate in 1526 (Hodgson 1974, 25).

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followers as channels of communication with God (Ewing 1983, 256). While contributing to the building of shrines as the sultans had done before, Mughal rulers further granted the saints' descendants, *sajjāda nashīn*s, large properties in order to secure the religious and political legitimacy of the state (Eaton 1978 in Ewing 1983, 256).[136]

More importantly, the state treated the *sajjāda nashīn*s not only as charismatic figures, but also as local chiefs or tribal leaders due to their political influence in the districts surrounding the shrine (1979, 488). The Mughal state needed the support of the *pīr*s and their hereditary custodians in order to ensure their legitimacy among the population, thus developing a religious and a political alliance between the two parties.[137] Under the Mughals, as custodians of localised centres of Islam under governmental patronage, the *sajjāda nashīn*s became important economic actors as *zamīndār*s (landowners) and politically influential ones as local outposts of the Muslim state (Gilmartin 1979, 489).

From the end of the eighteenth century onwards, the Mughal Empire slowly declined in conjuncture with the rise of the British East India Company in the subcontinent (1757-1857), which was eventually replaced by the British Raj under the tutelage of the Queen of Britain (1857-1947).[138] Noticing the privileged positions of the *sajjāda nashīn*s, the British Raj reinforced the patronage system instituted by the

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[136] Gilmartin notes that in some cases, in exchange for these land grants, Mughals demanded solely that the *sajjāda nashīn*s offer payers "for the prosperity of the government" (1988, 45).
[137] In other words, while the Muslim state's relation with saints and their descendants was religious, as a sacred exchange of *barakāt*, it was also very clearly a political alliance considering the indispensable influence these figures held within rural regions.
[138] Before the complete collapse of the Mughal Empire and coming to power of the British Raj in the subcontinent in 1857, the East India Company of Britain had been active in this region as a commercial enterprise chartered by the government from 1757 to 1857. During that time, the Company, with its important army, came to control and administer many parts of India. Following the "mutiny" or Indian rebellion of 1857, Britain took over the task of controlling India as the British Raj (Ahmad 1967, 31).

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Mughals, further giving grants and legal power to important living *pīr*s. In Punjab, for instance, Gilmartin observes how the British not only secured the *sajjāda nashīn*s' land possessions in rural areas, but also granted them positions of local administrative authority (1979, 494).[139] Just as with their ruling predecessors, the colonial government contracted agreements with *pīr*s and their descendants to protect their land assets, providing benefits in exchange for their cooperation with the central power (Ewing 1983, 256). However, what is interesting to note, is that the British Raj's approach towards shrines and their custodians was unique in the way they dealt with religious authority. Whereas we can say that the Mughal rulers had appealed to the *sajjāda nashīn*s in order "to extend their hegemony and to dramatize the religious foundations of their regime," British imperial ideology had different motivations (Gilmartin 1988, 45). Their approach further institutionalised the religious authority of the saints and their descendants in terms of both their assets and political influence.

From the beginning of the nineteenth century, as Gilmartin documents, the British Raj promoted an official government policy that rejected any religious foundations to the

[139] The Muslims were one of the religious communities under the British Raj that demanded land concessions and recognition of central religious authority. Especially in Punjab, the Muslim, Sikh, and Hindu communities were all contending for influence over land and religious spaces with the British. For instance, the Sikhs successfully managed to organise its community in order to bring all the Gurdwaras under the administration of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (S.G.P.C.) with the Gurdwara Act of 1925 (Murphy 2012, 154). With this bill, the Sikh community proved that they had come together to assert a uniform structure of religious and political organisation and control in the province. The successful adoption of the Gurdwara Act in 1925 reflected the broader context of the time wherein increasingly politicised religious identities were coming into agreement with colonial policies (Murphy 2012, 195). Similarly, some Muslim groups, such as the Unionist Party (leading Punjab in 1937), attempted to propose a bill that "reflected, in large part, the Unionists' concern to establish a more uniform structure of religious organization and control in the province" (Gilmartin 1988, 162). However, the broader Muslim community lacked such a popular consensus on which it could assert a "unified Muslim voice" to advocate a bill with the British. As will be discussed, there were serious dissonances within the Muslim community between the traditional system of *pīr*s and the reformist Muslim groups in the subcontinent, known as *'ulamā*, as well as the emergent, British-educated, Muslim political parties and leaders.

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state (1988, 46).[140] In this sense, the colonial state's formal approach to governing the subcontinent was a secular one in an attempt to dissociate itself from religious authority. However, Gilmartin explains that some administrators, realising the vitality of the local political authority wielded by *sajjāda nashīn*s to the state, nonetheless established a close relationship with many of the rural shrines in the twentieth century.[141]

Most notably, British administrators eventually "overrode" the "technical consideration" of official British religious policy with the help of other policies, such as the Alienation of Land Act of 1900 (Gilmartin 1988, 51). Under this Act, the *sajjāda nashīn*s, considered as "tribal" leaders, were incorporated directly into the British administration.[142] The *sajjāda nashīn*s and their "tribes" were recognised as "agricultural tribes," and as such constituted an important part of agricultural classes in need of protection "for political reasons from expropriation" (Gilmartin 1979, 494). Based on this Act, the British Raj then distributed canal colony land grants to "Landed Gentry" starting in 1914, of which the *sajjāda nashīn*s now comprised an important segment. Therefore, through this Act, the British Raj was able to further distribute land, not for religious

[140] In the second half of the nineteenth century, the British further tried to dissociate themselves from any affiliations with religious authority and erected a policy, Act XX of 1863, to regulate legal procedures in dealing with local religious institutions, clearly banning any forms of direct sponsoring, maintenance, or control over them (Gilmartin 1988, 46). This approach towards religious communities was an evolution from the early days of the East India Company which attempted no regulations of religious sensibilities, promoting a hands-off approach towards the religions of Indians.

[141] Another historical factor mentioned by Gilmartin that influenced the shift in perception of the British Raj administrators was the 1857 "mutiny," which caused the state to increasingly fear rebellion and, especially so, the powerful influence *sajjāda nashīn*s could wield in rural Punjab over a massive "population almost exclusively pastoral and agricultural" (1988, 47). Faced with this local authority and political reality, the lieutenant governor concluded in 1860 that the support of these men of influence was "in our obvious interest" (in Gilmartin 1988, 47). These administrators came to participate in many shrines' religious functioning and local affairs, attending for instance the *dastārbandī* (turban-tying) ceremonies recognising the spiritual heir of a saint and dealing with shrines' land disputes, amongst others (Gilmartin 1988, 48).

[142] This idea of "tribe" comes from the fact that the British came to treat *sajjāda nashīn*s not only as vectors of political influence, but also like "tribal" leaders as cultural embodiments or foci of local identities, in the sense that they were the local patrons, or heads of the entire district surrounding their shrine (Gilmartin 1988, 50).

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purposes but as "political grants," to the *sajjāda nashīn*s who came to be considered as "Landed Gentry," thus increasingly bringing the shrines under their control (Gilmartin 1988, 51). As a result, technically speaking, the British were giving grants not to saints or religious figures, but to "tribal leaders" of agricultural "tribes" that they had classified as "Landed Gentry."

Hence, in order to keep the traditional social structure intact while securing their loyalty, the British Raj's overall approach towards the *pīr*s and their descendants was to treat them as landlords and "tribal leaders" according to their financial power and social influence, which reinforced their economic positions and also gave them access to the British system of education and administration (Gilmartin 1979 in Ewing 1983, 256). With this support, *sajjāda nashīn*s managed to access important political positions within the British Raj (Philippon 2014, 278).

These land reforms and political contentions were reflective of the broader context of the twentieth century in which the different religious communities in the subcontinent were becoming increasingly politicised with regards to their definition of religious identity and group belonging in the face of British imperial policies (Murphy 2012, 195). For the *'ulamā*, the fall of the Mughal empire and the rise of colonial rule was nothing short of a "catastrophe" because it meant they had to reorient the cultural axis on which they had developed the entire Indian Islamic system (Gilmartin 1988, 53).[143] In order to redefine the meaning of the Islamic community in India under non-

[143] As Gilmartin notes, defining the '*ulamā* as a single "class" is not possible. However, generally speaking, the '*ulamā* refers to a religious body of Muslims in India who are not tied by heredity or local positions, but by learning in Islam's classical, normative texts (Gilmartin 1988, 52). Historically, the '*ulamā*'s relationship with the Mughal state has been very different from the *pīr*s' and *sajjāda nashīn*s'; they had served as learned interpreters of Islamic law and Islam's classical texts, helping to define the Islamic legitimacy of Muslim states themselves (as *muftī*s (legal scholars), imams (prayer leaders), or *qazī*s (judges within the state administration)) (Gilmartin 1988, 53).

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Muslim rulers, the leading Delhi ‘*ulamā* instituted a movement of reform that ultimately transformed the model of Islamic leadership in the subcontinent and prioritised “the personal adherence of individual Muslims to Islamic norms” over saintly intermediaries (Gilmartin 1988, 54). Amongst other activities, the ‘*ulamā* developed a network of schools to uphold the conscience of the Muslim community under the British Raj.[144] The leading schools erected at the time were the Deobandi, the Ahl-e Hadis, and the Barelwi. All of these schools came to play important roles in the reformist movement and the perception of saints following partition, as will be further discussed in this chapter.[145]

By the time Pakistan became a sovereign republic in 1947, hereditary *pīr*s had become influential feudal lords and politicians with a composite authority (Philippon 2014, 278).[146] Due to the administrative patronage of the British Raj, the spiritual legacy and influence of these living *pīr*s had also translated into a more “profane” heritage in land possessions and prominent social positions in the political spheres (Philippon 2016, 45). Considering the British administration’s reliance on these rural religious leaders, they came to be regarded very critically by other religious organisations, resulting in profound tensions with the ‘*ulamā* and especially so with groups such as the Deobandis who had become an influential reformist voice in the nineteenth and twentieth

[144] In order to fill the void left by the absence of a central Islamic state to regulate Islamic norms under a colonial regime, the ‘*ulamā*’s reform movement also included the massive dissemination of religious literature in Urdu, the organisation of religious public debates, and popular preaching (Metcalf 1982, 198; 234).

[145] The Barelwi, as opposed to the former two schools, wanted to uphold the social and religious order around saints and shrines, and as such identified itself as a Sufi reformist movement upholding traditional practices.

[146] Followers who continued seeking blessings from their *pīr* through the latter’s descendants thus give *sajjāda nashīn*s authority over their relationship with God as well as with the government (Gilmartin 1979 in Ewing 1983, 256).

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centuries.[147] The Deobandis were not completely opposed to Sufism, unlike the Ahl-e Hadis, but were critical of the authority structure centred on shrines and the religious practices surrounding them, which they viewed as un-Islamic and in need of reformation.[148] The Barelwi *'ulamā*, on the other hand, are said to have emerged last during that time as a reaction to the two former schools in order to preserve traditional Sufi practices and institutions (Metcalf 1982, 296).[149]

To this day, these tensions have characterised the relationship between governmental leaders, Sufi agents, and other Islamic religious organisations in Pakistan. Interestingly enough, following Partition, rural religious leaders remained as some of the main players in local power structures, but were mostly ostracised from central state governance, which came to be dominated by ideologies and groups like the Deobandi.[150] As I discuss these tensions in the following section, we will come to see that Sufi figures and shrines have made a resurgence within central political circles, especially in post-

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[147] The first Deobandi school was erected at Deoband, a town in North India, in 1867 (Metcalf 1982, 133). The Deobandi reform education system was meant to train a new class of leaders and religious activists, and eventually clashed with the traditional authority system of saints and their descendants who had come to constitute the backbone of the British administration system (Metcalf 1982, 252).

[148] The Deobandi's position regarding Sufism was nuanced; on the one hand, Deobandis "recognized the continuing importance in religious experience of allegiance to *pīr*s," but on the other hand, like the Ahl-e Hadis, they rejected the worship at tombs and the traditional mediatory organisational system around shrines that had adapted Islam to local cultures- which they incidentally saw related to the demise of Islam as a powerful axis in the subcontinent (Metcalf 1982, 273-274). Indeed, the '*ulamā* of the Ahl-e Hadis perspective regarded only the Qur'an and the Hadith as sources of religious authority, and completely rejected Sufism, the hereditary religious authority of *sajjāda nashīn*s, and the worship of saints in shrines, deeming them un-Islamic (Gilmartin 1988, 55).

[149] In the words of Metcalf, the Barelwi *'ulamā* "wanted to preserve Islam unchanged: not Islam as it was idealized in texts or the historical past, but Islam as it had evolved to the present," in order to justify the "mediational, custom-laden Islam, closely tied to the intercession of the *pīrs* of the shrines" (1982, 296).

[150] Before Partition, the '*ulamā* was strongly opposed to the Muslim League's project of a separate "Pakistan" while the idea was gaining ground in the 1930s and 1940s. Therefore, in order to secure a victory in the Punjab, the Muslim League had to appeal to the support of important *sajjāda nashīn*s. Thanks to the support of hereditary rural leaders, the Muslim League managed to win the local elections of 1946, a victory that was crucial in confirming the partition and creation of Pakistan in 1947. This goes to show, firstly, that despite the increasing popularity of these '*ulamā* schools in Punjab, the power of hereditary *pīr*s in rural areas remained very strong. Secondly, it is also interesting to take note of the fact that the nascent central state quickly replaced the authority of rural leaders with Deobandi ideologies, even if these '*ulamā* were initially opposed to the project of Pakistan.

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9/11 Pakistan. This "revival," in turn, has given place to rising political conflicts and sectarian violence, some directed towards shrines and perpetuated by extremist groups like the Pakistani Taliban. It is my hope to demonstrate that the vicissitudes of Sufi ideology and human agents attached to shrines in Pakistan, point, on the one hand to the constructed perceptions of Islam and Sufism within this Muslim-majority country and also to the global dialectic production of knowledge about Sufism and its power in the twenty-first century as witnessed in post-9/11 North America.

Part Two: The Marginalisation and "Resurgence" of Sufis in Pakistan

In the newly formed Pakistan, state leaders identified the social and religious organisation of shrines as a force hampering their administrative control while attempting to reform the country. The enduring influence of *sajjāda nashīn*s within the masses was seen as the main force upholding this traditional system (Ewing 1983, 251). To this effect, the secular governments of General Ayub Khan (1958-1969) and his successor Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (1971-1977) and the Islamist General Zia ul-Haq (1978-1988) (although this last case is different, but I will come back to that) opted to ally themselves with Sufi actors in order to create for themselves a link with religious authority through living *pīr*s while undercutting the latter's authority (Ewing 1983, 253).[151] In order to formally weaken both the *sajjāda nashīn*s' religious and political influence over the population and the beliefs associated around them, Ayub Khan created the *Awqaf*, or

[151] In other Muslim countries such as Turkey and Saudi Arabia, Sufi orders and organisations were banned. In Turkey, it was done on behalf of secularism, and in Saudi Arabia, propelled by a reformist interpretation of Islam, the state went on a more radical path, going as far as destroying shrines.

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"Ministry of Religious Endowments" in 1959 (Philippon 2014, 278).[152] The *Awqaf* was meant to undermine the political power and influence of the hereditary *pīr* families in rural areas through the removal of land holdings and religious authority in the shrines (Ewing 1983, 258). According to these state leaders, the only way to cause real political reorganisation in the country was by "changing the religious significance of the *pīr* and the world view of his followers" (Ewing 1983, 258). This outlook was also held by the pre-Partition Unionist Party who had proposed this same bill, but failed to pass it under the British Raj due to the lack of consensus among the Muslim community.

As such, these governments managed to nationalise some of the major shrines in the country, bringing their organisation and maintenance under state authority, including the shrine of Shah Abdul Latif Kazmi, known as Bari Imam Sarkar, the patron saint of Islamabad, as well as that of *Sayyid* Ali Bin Uthman al-Hujweri, the patron saint of Lahore and one of the biggest shrines of Pakistan known as Data Darbar.[153] Moreover, it also attempted to remove some of the *pīr*s' hereditary land holdings dating back to the Mughal period, which Ewing describes as "equivalent to the breaking up of the lands of

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[152] The Ministry of *Awqaf* had already been proposed in 1937 by the Unionist Party (in power at the time in Punjab) who "saw it as an avenue for linking Punjab's diffuse system of rural religious authority firmly to its own regime" under the British (Gilmartin 1988, 229). As mentioned earlier in relation to the broader context of twentieth-century South Asia, this bill was proposed as a Muslim effort to match the Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Act of 1925 that sought to bring all the Gurdwaras under the administration of the S.G.P.C. which acted as a structure for communal organisation among Punjab's Sikhs (Murphy 2012, 154). As opposed to the Gurdwaras Act in which Sikhs had come together to prove they wanted to take possession of their religious sites, the Muslim *Awqaf* Bill lacked the support of a broader "Muslim community" as it caused serious opposition from different classes, such as the *sajjāda nashīn*s and many '*ulamā* (Gilmartin 1988, 163). A year later, the Unionists had to abandon the project without coming to a conclusion.

[153] I cautiously use the word "manage" because the government's endeavour was not accomplished as proposed in its entirety. First of all, the Ministry only nationalised the main shrines that received the most pilgrims and as such the most income (Malik 1998, 60). Secondly, the process was rather slow, taking decades, and some hereditary families in fact fought in court with the state to retain some shares and responsibility within the shrines, as was the case with the shrine of Barī Imam Sarkār near Islamabad (this information was related to me by the current *sajjāda nashīn* of this tomb). Thirdly, the government did not fully implement the provision of land removal, as that would have alienated the important *pīr zamīndār*s within the rural regions of Punjab, the biggest province of Pakistan.

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major landlords" (1983, 258).[154] The leaders' hope was to convert "the devotion to the saints and their descendants to an allegiance towards the state" (Malik 1998, 61).

Khan and Bhutto both crafted their approach towards *Awqaf* in an attempt to "modernise" Pakistan through the shrines and more precisely in breaking the mediatory traditional system based around *sajjāda nashīn*s. They wanted to modernise the authority structure in the hope of creating a direct connection between the people and the state. The *Awqaf* minister, in taking over the role of the living *pīr* as custodian of the tomb, could be seen on one level as conceptually institutionalising the state as patron of that saint and its *barakāt*. On another level, the *Awqaf* Ministry, as a secular institution, was taking away the sacred religious character of the shrine, and as such saw itself as "emancipating" the pilgrims (Malik 1988, 61); without a *sajjāda nashīn* "monopolising" access to God, so their logic went, the pilgrims could liberate themselves from this authority (Malik 1988, 61). Moreover, the state further secularised the shrines in constructing schools and hospitals associated with the tombs to replace the sacred healing powers traditionally rendered by the descendants of saints (Malik 1988, 61). In other words, the Ministry was hoping to break the traditional meditating role of shrine-holders between the pilgrims and God that was hampering the state's attempt to modernise Pakistan and the centralisation of power. The shrines became a locus of modernisation for the state as envisioned by Khan and Bhutto.

[154] With this approach, these three leaders strove at once to glorify Islam and Pakistan through the sponsoring of these shrines and their origins, while also claiming the hereditary powers of the living *pīr*s (Ewing 1983, 253). The state undermined their authority by claiming that the *sajjāda nashīn*s were not properly conducting their hereditary duty of upholding the maintenance nor the sanctity of their forefathers' shrines, and as such should not be seen as sacred *pīr*s anymore. In other words, the state tried to legitimate claims to religious and political power through their affiliation with Sufism, and more specifically by directly controlling strategic shrines, while displacing the central figure of *pīr*s.

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Zia, on the other hand, had different motivations in his approach towards Sufism. Although he too pursued the policy of *Awqaf*, "turning shrines into multifunctional religious and social welfare centres," he also undertook a uniform policy of Islamisation in collaboration with reformist forces, turning a constitutionally secular Muslim republic into an Islamic nation (Malik 1988, 8; 63).[155] Zia carried on Ayub's secularisation policy within the shrines, pushing the *Awqaf* Ministry to more closely control the ongoing activities of the shrines, as well as those within the schools and mosques associated with the tombs (Malik 1988, 63).[156] Having regulated the "un-Islamic" activities previously taking place in important shrines with the help of the *Awqaf*, Zia pushed the Tourism Department to popularise shrines as tourist attractions for foreigners, further undermining the religious aspects of these spaces (Malik 1988, 64).[157]

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[155] According to Malik, Islamisation in this context "is an approach to curb autonomous and autochthonous institutions that have not only hitherto existed and functioned more or less peacefully but have also given identities to masses" (1988, 289). In his book *Colonization of Islam*, Malik documents at length *le comment et le pourquoi* of Islamisation in Pakistan, a country supposed to be Islamic and created for Muslims of the subcontinent. He concludes, overall, that the policy of Islamisation in fact was supported only by a small religious elite and those integrated into a (post-)colonial system (Malik 1988, 289). Interestingly, Malik asserts that the more a group of people is secularised by virtue of their socio-economic background, the more they advance an "integrationist" interpretation of Islam that demands the changing of society as a whole, in contrast as well as in conformity with colonial ideologies of the State and society (Malik 1988, 290). In this "integrationist" framework supporting Islamisation, in opposition to traditional "isolationist" interpretations of Islam, Malik locates the postulates of the Islamic *avant-garde* and the religious elite (1988, 290).

[156] In terms of basic content, Malik reports one such example under Zia from a 1983's Pakistan Tourist Development Corporation booklet: "Human being is made of two entities, namely body and soul. Of these, the soul is more important. Islam has underlined the need to develop the soul by prayers and meditation. Those who train their souls in this manner are called 'Sufi'." (cited from Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation, *Journey into light*, Islamabad 1985, 3 in Malik 1988, 63). This rendition of Sufism emphasises a "secular" view of Sufis not as mystics, saints, or spiritual healers, but as exemplary Muslims who focus on Islam's understanding of the soul. Just as Khan and Bhutto had undertaken, this example undermines the mediating role of *sajjāda nashīn*s between God and people, and instructs that any Muslim can become a Sufi.

[157] In another such Tourism Development booklet, 137 shrines were listed according to the criteria of being in "moderate condition" and accessible to foreign tourists (Malik 1988, 63). These criteria implied that, firstly, the *Awqaf* had effectively come to administrate these shrines. Secondly, they implied that shrines that still practiced "un-Islamic" practices were not to be listed in the booklet for foreign tourists. Malik cites another 1985 "working paper" from the *Awqaf* in which 24 shrines, following investigation, were reported as pursuing "illegal activities," thus excluding them from the booklet of the Tourism Department (1988, 64, footnote 79).

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Zia's ongoing interest in the *Awqaf* ministry, accordingly, was not motivated by a desire to "modernise" Pakistan as much as it was driven by an aspiration to nationalise Islamic endowments in order to fulfil his overall policy of Islamisation. Essentially, Zia's Islamisation consisted of nationalising the foundations of Pakistani society in order to better control it, and clearly targeted shrines as being in need of "regulation" (Malik 1988, 292). In absorbing autonomous and autochthonous institutions, as Malik argues, the state "enriches itself, pushes through its ideology and legitimizes it Islamically" (1988, 292). The social void caused by the dissolution of traditional autochthonous institutions, which previously gave localised identities to masses, also fuelled a hardening of religious identities.

With the implementation of Zia's policy of Islamisation, which was also realised in the imposition of Islamic taxation (Zakat) and the reformation of Islamic education, Pakistan concomitantly saw a rise in sectarian conflicts.[158] Highly influenced by Saudi

[158] The Zakat and Ushr system was first proposed in the sixties, but was only realised under Zia in 1980. Elaborated by secularised forces rather than by Islamic scholars, this system "aims at extracting resources from a certain part of the society, namely the middle class, and leaves the upper and lower ends of the social hierarchy untouched, as also the Non-Muslim, Shia, and Non-Pakistani groups" (Malik 1988, 292). As Malik demonstrates, this organisation caused severe social tensions and problems in its realisation, wherein state officials would receive high segments of the tax, "stabilising the main pillar of the State," instead of distributing it to the poor (1988, 292). In this sense, instead of abolishing the colonial system of taxation, Zia legitimised it with the introduction of this Islamic tax, while traditional social services were not adequately replaced (Malik 1988, 292). In terms of Islamic education, Zia's regime attempted to modernise and regulate the *'ulamā*'s places of learning according to their own understanding of Islamisation, in close partnership with Wahhabi ideology as propelled in Saudi Arabia. In order to advance its reforms, Zia could not alienate the *'ulamā*, but nonetheless attempted various reforms, that were partially successful, "compromising the traditional curriculum of the religious schools, their administrative set-up as well as their financial resources, displaying a strategy of limited participation" (Malik 1988, 293). Malik explains that the State did not manage to directly reform the curriculum of all clerical schools, but were successful to some extent through the Zakat and Ushr system in which students would receive Zakat from their professor only if the school was registered with the State (Malik 1988, 294). As such, the State came to monitor these schools' administration and curricula. Interestingly, one *'ulamā* group that strongly resisted the State's attempt at regulating them was the Deobandi school, which refused Zakat money and organised strong opposition, launching nationwide campaigns (Malik 1988, 294). Conversely, the Government introduced Zakat to more conformist schools such as the Barelwi, the Ahl-e Hadis and Jama'at-e Islami in order to resolve this national struggle with the *'ulamā* (Malik 1988, 294). Finally, as

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Arabia's more puritan, sober interpretation of Islam, a Wahhabi ideology that rejects all forms of saint cult and practices associated to Shi'ism, Zia's Islamisation corresponded to a colonisation of Islam through the dissolution and regulation of existing traditional institutions. In this sense, Zia's Islamisation paralleled a particular "Sunnification" of Pakistan along the lines of hardline Wahhabism, which institutionalised a delocalisation of Muslim indigenous identities outside traditional Sufi spaces such as shrines. In parallel to this vacuum, many political organisations emerged, leading to increasing sectarian violence between the different Muslim sects, vindicated in their parochial agenda against religious minorities as exemplified by the Zia regime.[159]

With the internal turmoil caused by Zia's controversial policies and the influence of Saudi Arabian Wahhabism, international tensions contributed to the heightening of hard-lined religious identities. Of notable importance, Zia's military regime coincided with the 1979 Iranian Revolution as well as the beginning of the Afghan War in 1980. Firstly, the Iran Revolution gave Pakistani Shiites more self-confidence and funding in fighting against the oppressive Islamisation of Zia, which imposed a very sober version of Sunnism on the country, and thus propelled anti-Shia militant groups.[160] With the

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Malik points out, Zia's Zakat and Ushr system was not a means to set up a social welfare system, but was rather used as a political tool to integrate religious schools under State control (1988, 294).

[159] Of these groups, the Deobandi *'ulamā* became politicised and radically engaged in their claims, as was demonstrated with the creation of the Anjuman-e Sipah-e Sahaba (ASS) militant wing of the Deobandi Jam'iyyat-e 'Ulama'-e Islam (JUI), a religio-political party established in 1945 (Malik 1988 (1995), 303). The ASS was organised in 1985 "particularly for the elimination of the Shia minority," constituting 15 to 25 per cent of the Pakistani population (1988 (1995), 303). Pages 297-307 from Malik's 1988 book comprise an Epilogue written and added in the 1995 edition. I have included both dates in parenthesis to avoid confusion.

[160] As Nasr notes, the successful Revolution "set in motion, first, a power struggle between the Pakistani State and its Shia community, and later a broader competition for power between Shias and Sunnis (2002, 87). These struggles for domination, he explains, mirrored the competition for influence in Pakistan between Saudi Arabia and Iraq on one side against revolutionary Iran on the other, further radicalising sectarian identities (Nasr 2002, 87). Pakistan effectively became a "new proxy war fuelled by foreign money," opposing the Gulf Sunni influence to the Iranian Shia one (Jaffrelot 2002, 35). This proxy war also echoed the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988), the latter seen as a Shia-Sunni war in Pakistan. Moreover,

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example and help of Iran, Shiites organised themselves into political militant groups, such as the Tahrik-e Nifaf-e Fiqh-e Ja‘fariya and later the Anjuman-e Sipah-e Muhammad (ASM) (Malik 1988 (1995), 303). Malik describes this Shia *Anjuman* (ASM) and the Sunni *Anjuman*-e Sipah-e Sahaba (ASS) as both "the most brutal manifestation of cultural articulations of marginalized urban young men," which also revealed enduring conflict between Iran and Saudi Arabia in Pakistan (1988 (1995), 303).[161]

Secondly, the war in Afghanistan, starting in 1980, also propelled rising sectarian conflict and militarisation in Pakistan. The Pakistani Sunni movements that militarised under Zia sought at once to fight the Shias and support the Taliban against the USSR in Afghanistan (Jaffrelot 2002, 35). Many of the Taliban *mujāhidīn* (*jihād* fighters) in Afghanistan were students and graduates of Deobandi and Ahl-e Hadis schools before joining the war. Pakistan soon emerged as a battlefield between different international forces fighting for authority and influence in the region (Zahab 2002, 117). In the proxy war taking place in Pakistan, *‘ulamā* fighting the Afghan *jihād* with the Taliban were

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following the Revolution, Iran also "funnelled large sums of money to the Pakistani Shias and opened cultural centres in every major town," counterbalancing Saudi patronage of Sunni groups and Zia's Islamisation (Zahab 2002, 116). In reaction to Shia militancy, radical Sunni groups asked for more money, and received it "from the CIA and anti-Iran Arab States and more private donors for widening the gulf between Sunnis and Shias by promoting a narrow extremist interpretation of Sunni Islam" (Zahab 2002, 118). In this scheme, religious schools (*madrasa*s) proliferated as recruiting ground for Sunni extremists and became the beneficiaries of Arab money (Zahab 2002, 118).

[161] In this process of radicalisation of "young men," I have found in my research that their origins and motivations for politicisation have often been overlooked. Here, Malik provides a very helpful observation, in which he notes that with the Islamisation policy and financial help of Saudi Arabia, Zia sponsored the building of religious schools which caused a massive increase in the number of religious scholars (1988 (1995), 303). However, these trained *‘ulamā*, left with no jobs, were dismissed from the process of national integration and consequently turned inwards, funding new schools, which reinforced the building of exclusive identities within the different *‘ulamā* organisations (Malik 1988 (1995), 303). In failing to integrate these *‘ulamā*, the State (under Zia and successive governments until 1995) rejected and stigmatised the clerics, who ultimately took up arms in the 1990s with the concurrent rise in militarisation in the region with the Afghanistan war (Malik 1988 (1995), 304). Many of the *jihād* fighters in Afghanistan were in fact students or graduates of Deobandi, Ahl-e Hadis, and Jama‘at-e Islami schools.

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sponsored by the United States as well as by Saudi Arabia in their hope of simultaneously containing Iran as well as the Soviet Union (Philippon 2011, 91).[162]

With regards to Sufism, Philippon notes that Saudi Arabia exercised pressure on the Pakistani military establishment to prevent Shias and Barelwi *'ulamā* from joining the Afghan *jihād*, on the grounds that they did not adhere to their view of Sunnism (2011, 95). The Sufi Barelwis were thus marginalised despite the fact that they were ready to join *jihād* (Philippon 2011, 95). This ideological discrimination within the *'ulamā* foresaw increasing intra-Sunni tensions, changing the scope of sectarian violence after 1988, following the withdrawal of Soviet powers from Afghanistan (Zahab 2002, 118).[163] The year 1988 also marked the death of Zia and the coming to power of Benazir Bhutto, who reinforced the relations between the state and the new Taliban regime in Afghanistan, further marginalising Sufi figures and the Barelwi *'ulamā* from the political realm (Shaikh 2012, 181).[164] Both the rise of Deobandi reformism encouraged by Zia in Pakistan and the growth of *mujāhidīn* fighters joining *jihād,* backed by US/Saudi Arabian money and Wahhabi ideology, changed the political landscape of the 1990s. Eventually,

[162] The translations from French to English of Alix Philippon's 2011 book *Soufisme et Politique au Pakistan: Le mouvement Barelwi a l'heure de la « guerre contre le terrorisme »* are my own.
[163] Although this thesis cannot cover the extent of the Afghan wars (Soviet-Afghan conflicts as well as the civil wars from 1988 to 2001), I must mention some central events that influenced the rise of sectarianism in Pakistan and anti-Sufi ideologies. At the conclusion of this Soviet-Afghan war, from 1978 to 1988, a civil war ensued between the Afghan communist government, still backed by the Soviet, and different *mujāhidīn* (*jihād* fighters) factions who continued to receive the support of Saudi Arabia, the United States, and Pakistan. After the fall of the Afghan government in 1992, the civil war continued between the different *mujāhidīn*. With the military and financial support of Pakistan and the United States, the Taliban *mujāhidīn* finally captured Kabul in 1996, and established the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, which was formally recognised by Pakistan.
[164] Initially, during her first mandate from 1988-1990, Bhutto, who had strong connections with rural Sindh and Punjab, where Sufi shrine culture was predominant, attempted to revive the state's pronounced engagement with local Sufism (Shaikh 2012, 181). Shaikh explains that with her strong connections to rural Sindh and Punjab, Bhutto was capable of articulating the secular politics of her Pakistan People's Party (PPP) with an enthusiasm for Sufism (2012, 182). She tried to use Sufism to project her idea of a democratic Pakistan as "a modern, progressive society where Muslims and non-Muslims enjoyed equal rights" (Shaikh 2012, 182). However, the political context in which she found herself changed her policies.

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in her second mandate from 1993-1996, Bhutto muted her engagement with Sufism and instead allied herself with the Jam'iyat-e 'Ulama-e Islam (JUI), a Deobandi evangelical faction which convinced her to support the Afghan Taliban (Shaikh 2012, 183).

Therefore, the 1990s saw the intensification of sectarian violence and tensions between the different *'ulamā* and their competing visions of the proper Islam for Pakistan. In the 1990s, Nawaz Sharif (1990-1993; 1997-1999) came to power in a Pakistan wherein violent Sunni sectarianism was only increasing. Sharif, who was a close associate of Zia in the 1980s, gave Wahhabi Islam even more influence and based his campaign "against the scourge of 'ignorant' Islam that was judged to hold sway in Sufi shrines and sanatoriums (*khānqāh*s)" (Shaikh 2012, 183).[165] As such, Sufi *pīr*s and shrines, no longer the mediating platform between the state and the people, were criticised as a backward Islam, while the major Sufi political *'ulamā*, the Barelwis, were sidelined from central power due to the growing partnership between the government, the Deobandi, and the Taliban, who were coming to power in Afghanistan.[166]

Since 2001 and the beginning of the "War on Terror," however, these dynamics have changed. Pakistan was greatly impacted by post-9/11 events and international

[165] Sharif was conscious of his largely urban supporters' hostility regarding the influence of local living *pīr*s, who were, according to Shaikh, "more often than not, rural magnates and Shia" (2012, 183). As such, Sharif chose to reinforce his reformist Muslim credentials to the detriment of popular Sufism as an ideology of Pakistan.

[166] Pakistan's interest in supporting the Taliban in Afghanistan, even after Soviet withdrawal and the end of the Afghan war in 2001, can be attributed to a number of political factors, notably their continued desire to exert influence in the region, especially against India (Manzar 2010, 25). Since partition, Pakistan has been at military imparity with India, constantly affronting each other in regional struggles, most notably over *āzād* (free) Kashmir. Manzar lists three major reasons for Pakistan's continued support of the *mujāhidīn* Taliban fighters even after their defeat in 2001: first, as a form of payback to India "for allegedly fomenting separatism in what was once East Pakistan and which in 1971 became Bangladesh;" second, the Pakistani government, incapable of competing with India's sizeable population, economy, and army, saw the *mujāhidīn* "as a relatively cheap way to keep Indian forces tied down" and out of Pakistani business; third, the new post-war Karzai government in Afghanistan was thought to be pro-India and anti-Pakistan, which pushed the Pakistani government to continue their support of the Taliban to "keep Karzai in check" (Jessica Stern in Manzar 2010, 25; 29).

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policies, sinking "inexorably in an endemic violence, similar to a civil war, causing 80,000 deaths" (Philippon 2016, 13). Sectarian tensions and terrorist violence continued in Pakistan due to the "War on Terror," which was striking next door in Afghanistan, causing the "coming home" of *mujāhidīn* fighters following the end of Taliban rule in Afghanistan in 2001.[167] Notably, the failed demilitarisation of the Taliban *mujāhidīn* in Afghanistan, which pushed the fighters to seek refuge in Pakistan, has caused the rise of a new militant political group, namely the Pakistan Taliban, officially organised in 2007 as the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) under Baitullah Mehsud (Manzar 2010, 55).[168] The TTP's *jihād* is not focused against foreign influence, as is the case of the Afghani Taliban, but is organised against the Pakistani establishment, targeting security forces and government installations (Manzar 2010, 61).

As a response to these post-9/11 pressures, the state turned back to Sufism and the saints, but this time as "the symbols of the fight undertaken by the government against creeping talibanisation, deemed to threaten the very fabric of the nation" (Philippon 2014, 278).[169] In conjuncture with international pressure coming from the United States, the

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[167] Following 9/11, President George W. Bush (junior) declared the "War on Terror" and sought to eliminate Osama Bin Laden, Al-Qaeda, and the Taliban, who were now deemed as the biggest danger to the security of the same two nations who had initially created the Taliban, namely Pakistan and the United States (Manzar 2010, 2). Increasing sectarian violence emerged in Pakistan between different groups supporting "the global war on terrorism," while others were supportive of the Taliban fighting foreign powers, reflecting rising anti-Americanism.

[168] The Taliban, forced to flee Afghanistan in 2001, came "back" to Pakistan and found safe haven in the tribal Pashtun areas, known as FATA, "re-organising and recruiting anew in the process" with the help of Afghani *jihād* war veterans and military artillery (Manzar 2010, 1). Another twist in this evolution is the fact that these "new" Taliban, fighting the Pakistani state and whoever opposes their imposition of an Islamic State, have received funds from India to support their *jihād*. Therefore, the Pakistan who initially had created the Taliban had their *protégé* grow against themselves into a new local organisation that became in turn supported by their archenemy, India.

[169] Manzar defines "talibanisation" as the "destabilizing export of Afghan-style radical political Islam, which used to be a term used in conjunction with Afghan society, but has become commonplace in Pakistan now. As political fragmentation, economic meltdown, ethnosectarian warfare, and Islamic reformism tighten their grip on Pakistan, it is a commonplace reality for ordinary citizens to sit down and discuss this phenomenon which has pervaded their lives in one way or the other" (2010, xviii).

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government attempted to reformulate Sufi saints as metaphors of the "ideal Pakistani nation and of the true Islam in the name of which the country was created" (Philippon 2014, 279). Pakistanis were thus encouraged to re-locate their Islamic identities according to the example of Sufi saints as indigenous identity hallmarks, as opposed to the influence of talibanisation, which was now condemned as a foreign import from Saudi Arabia (Philippon 2014, 279). To this end, the government financed a number of initiatives, such as festivals, conferences, concerts, and TV programmes, amongst others to promote Sufism as Pakistan's true Islamic identity (Philippon 2014, 281).[170] In this trope, the state's promotion of Sufism and Sufi agents, either through education or in art forms, becomes an instrument of legitimisation for its power, both political and religious (Philippon 2014, 285).

In retaliation to this idealisation of Sufism and Sufis, many Sufi shrines have been the target of radical militant Taliban attacks, and have suffered acts of violence unprecedented prior to 2005.[171] State officials were quick to condemn these attacks and

[170] Significant examples of the state's national promotion of Sufism and its tradition includes the launch of the National Sufi Council (NSC) by Pervez Musharraf in November 2006, which brought together the indigenous elite and diplomatic circles (Philippon 2014, 284). An international conference called "Sufism, the way to peace" was also organised the same month by the Punjab Institute of Language, Art and Culture (PILAC) under the direction of the chief minister of the province, Pervez Elahi (Philippon 2014, 284). Moreover, when I visited Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan, in April 2017, I observed innumerable publicity signs across the main avenues of the city advertising a mass conference entitled "Make Pakistan More Peaceful Again," which emphasised the "indigenous" Sufi roots of Pakistan as the true Islam which defines the nation's identity. This conference, advertised in English as well as in Urdu, was held only in the capital of Pakistan, but nonetheless marks a decade of this ongoing Sufi-inclined political agenda to fight the continuous presence of terrorism in the country as dictated by the central state in the capital.

[171] Although it is hard to establish a clear number, between 2005 and 2017, at least 40 different shrines were attacked in Pakistan, causing hundreds of deaths. 2010 was the worst recorded year with 18 attacks (Syed et al. 2016, 267-68). Some were minor shrines in the FATA tribal regions, but most recently the bombing of Lal Shabaz Qalandar's shrine in Sindh province, near Karachi, shook the entire nation due to its place as one of the holiest saints and shrines of South Asia. Moreover, Sufi personalities have also been targeted, such as the widely famous qawwali singer Amjad Sabri, who was shot dead in his car in Karachi in a targeted killing claimed by the Pakistani Taliban group.

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promise severe retaliation against terrorist groups.[172] In media reports and academia, I have found that these shrine attacks have often been described as a form of sectarian violence directed against more "deviant" forms of Islam as condemned by the Wahhabi-inclined Pakistani Taliban. However, taking into consideration the history of Sufi religious authorities and the changing functions of shrines in Pakistan laid out in this chapter, I suggest otherwise. Indeed, I argue that shrines are not currently being targeted as deviating spaces where minorities thrive, which would support the sectarian violence theory; rather, they are targeted as emblems of the state in the Pakistani Taliban's attempt at destabilising the government and its recent political agenda.

Shrines have become, as I have noted in the first section, the emblem of the transcendental Muslim state in regions often outside central authority. Under the colonial rule of the British Raj, shrines were seen as localised centres of authority that simply could not be overlooked, and thus needed to be under the state's control.[173] When Pakistan became an independent nation, subsequent leaders further regulated the shrines in order to desacralise and control their power as loci of modernisation for the nation. Then, under Zia, shrines were reduced in official policies to secularised welfare and tourism centres, with the Islamisation programme dissolving the traditional structure behind saints and living *pīr*s. Finally, with the growth of proxy wars between the Soviet-backed Afghani government and US/Saudi Arabia-backed *mujāhidīn* Deobandi militias, growing sectarianism pushed Sufism and Sufi agents to the periphery of Pakistani politics—up until 9/11, after which Sufis made a comeback in official politics as

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[172] Since 2001, the government has organised many military operations, mostly in the FATA tribal regions, where the Pakistani Taliban are known to mostly hide and organise training camps.
[173] As mentioned in the previous section, Muslims were one group among many religious communities that negotiated for religious real estate with the British at that time, reflecting the broader reformist trends regarding religious identity of twentieth-century India.

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ambassadors of the latest "counter-terrorism" strategy in the state's attempt to re-localise Pakistani identity within Sufism. Sufi ideologies and practices, as the "new" indigenous roots of Pakistan, were then spread across the country in official state-sponsored political and social initiatives to counter growing radicalisation.[174] Another essential motivation was to project this image of a "moderate" Islamic country to foreign countries in the face of the global "War on Terror," with pressures coming from the United States as discussed in Chapter One regarding Sufi knowledge.[175]

Therefore, an analysis of state-sponsored policies and current terrorist violence in Pakistan reveals deep tensions around the institutional delocalisation and re-localisation of Sufism as well as manipulations of Sufi saints and ideologies as powerful authoritative tools. This violence carried out today demands that scholars question the origins of the political agenda in which Sufis are perceived as the secular, peaceful actors of Islam globally. As Philippon rightly observes, the entrepreneurs of initiatives that promote Sufism in Pakistani society "mostly belong to the westernised, cosmopolitan and liberal fringe and are inscribed in common networks of sociability" (2014, 281).[176] This crucial

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[174] Moreover, the state's promotion of Sufism and Sufi groups has led to new forms of intra-Sunni sectarian violence, as has been witnessed with the Sufi-inclined Barelwi Sunni *'ulamā*. According to Philippon, this is the "latest ironic twist in the official promotion of Sufism," wherein "empowering Barelwi groups to fight radical Islam might have actually ended up in the radicalisation of Sufi Islam" (Philippon 2014, 273). Since 2009, a Barelwi group, the Sunni Tehreek, have proven the potential for radicalisation even within Sufi groups as a result of state support and Taliban attacks. However, despite their radical modes of actions, Barelwis are not seen as terrorists precisely because they claim a Sufi identity. Hence, their violence is defensive, and not aggressive. As such, when qualifying this war as an ideological one between "moderate" and "extremist" forces within Islam, as Philippon states, the Barelwis have fallen within the first category due to their alleged Sufi identity, despite radical modes of action and sectarian violence (2011, 350).

[175] Moreover, the United States have directly sponsored Sufi shrines since 2001 in their attempt to promote Sufism in Muslim-majority countries following 9/11, for which it has given $1.5 million for the preservation and renovation of shrines in Pakistan (Syed et al. 2016, 328).

[176] Another such example, since 2000, is a Mystic Music Sufi Festival held in Lahore every year to promote the indigenous roots of Pakistan as well as unity amongst people; Sufi mysticism being promoted as the way to the heart to bring people together. In December 2015, I attended this festival which displayed a crowd of upper-class elite Pakistanis, which explained the high price of the tickets. Therefore, it seems as if this political discourse is nominally taking place only within the Pakistani elite to convince the latter of Sufism's value and political potential.

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point, often overlooked, further indicates the current political roots and social dynamics behind this romanticised discourse and national strategy.[177]

Coupled with the rise of Islamic powers challenging Muslim states and the vilification of political Islam in North America and western Europe, Muslim-majority governments are compelled "to find and promote another more 'politically correct' and socially legitimate expression of the Islamic tradition" (Philippon 2014, 282). In this sense, the recent articulation of "moderate Sufism" versus "radical Islamism" needs to be understood as the resurgence of a delocalised Sufism most notably within the same Pakistani elite circles that had initially supported the Islamisation of Zia and the rejection of shrines as the embodiment of Sufi knowledge and its power. In this view, Sufism and its actors in Pakistan today, as is the case in North America, have re-emerged within a virtual political "third space," outside the physical realm of shrines, and rather within the exotification of Sufi ideologies in popular culture and administrative spheres. Twenty-first century Sufism in North America thus reflects the current global production of knowledge about Sufism and its power as articulated since 9/11 and concurrent proxy wars around the world in light of the perennial linguistic genealogy of Sufism and Sufis as "apolitical."

[177] Although these are preliminary findings, there is an interesting dynamic I have observed as well between, on the one hand, the Pakistani diaspora living in North America which seems to perceive Sufism as a corrupted form of Islam around tomb veneration by the *sajjāda nashīn*s, portraying remnants of an ancient past in need of modernisation, and, on the other hand, with the highly-educated Pakistani elite living in Pakistan, who now perceives Sufism as this modern, peaceful, moderate Islam.

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Conclusion
Twenty-First Century Sufism: Reviewing the Ostensible Power of Peaceful Mystics

In this thesis, I have discussed the romanticisation of Sufism and Sufis as a result of Orientalist literature, colonial anxiety, and Muslim reform movements in order to shed light on the enduring exotification process of "Islamic mysticism" as found in twenty-first century global production of knowledge about Sufism and its ostensible power. In Chapter One, I traced the development of Islam in North America in order to mark different historical moments in which Sufism emerged as an apolitical category in opposition to so-called "militant Islam" in the United States. This dichotomic trope, operating within a particular colonial ideology, reinforced pre-existing Orientalist definitions of mystical Sufis as defined in the Introduction. With the popularisation of Universal Sufism at the turn of the twentieth century, Americans were validated in their view of Sufism as a universal spirituality outside the confines of political Islam. This was a message that Inayat Khan skilfully articulated, taking into consideration his audience's prior exposure to "Eastern spiritualities" and its prejudices against Islam. Sufism was increasingly exotified with the New Age spiritual movement of the 1960s and within popular culture, which gave precedence to the classification of Sufis as inherently moderate and peaceful in Canada as well.

Out of these narratives, with the global "War on Terror" following 9/11, governments in the United States and Canada have increasingly sought "moderate Muslim allies" within their countries in order to fight the perceived threat of creeping radicalisation. The Naqshbandi-Haqqani Sufi order of Shaykh Nazim al-Haqqani had already been active for a decade in shaping a positive image of Islam in North America

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through its distinct moderate and politically involved Sufi identity as well as Muslim community-building work exemplified online on Internet platforms. Shaykh Nazim's US representative, Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, has been personally successful in articulating this image while taking part in different political activities and initiatives in the United States, as demonstrated with his particular engagement with the US State Department.

This American background brought depth to my ethnographic exploration of the Montreal chapter of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order in revealing enduring prejudices against Islam and exotification of Sufism and Sufis in popular culture and now in politics. To give further context from a local perspective, I offered certain observations concerning the study of Islam in Canada in an attempt to deconstruct the Islamophobic narratives that have plagued the representations of Muslim and Sufi communities in the media. Muslim Canadians in these depictions are deprived of positive human qualities via the dichotomic discourse that poses Islam as an immutable violent religion, and Sufism as a peaceful tradition rooted in universal mysticism. Moreover, the analysis of the representations of Muslims in Canada in the face of the "deculturalization of Islam," as defined by Krishkopf, has raised important questions with regards to the re-location of Muslim and Sufi identities within Internet communities as a "third space" outside traditional Muslim societies. The Naqshbandi-Haqqani order is one such Sufi group that has successfully managed to generate an important North American Muslim community through its marked inter-faith efforts with different central governments and its international bridges with its active online resources.

I have reported the recent scholarship in Quebec emphasising the role of the Nashqbandi-Haqqani order of Montreal in providing a space where Sufis are valued for

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their moderating force between local Quebecers and Muslim groups, which assumes that Sufism is a tolerant tradition able to negotiate cosmopolitan identities in a secular society. Based on my own ethnographic fieldwork, I have stressed the Sufi Centre of Montreal's capacity to nurture a re-localisation of Islam in a transnational community encompassing multiethnic diasporic groups as well as local converts, particularly through the work of its local leader, Shaykh Omar Koné.

Despite the international character of the broader Naqshbandi-Haqqani order, the Montreal Sufi Centre has re-localised its identity within its new context by addressing Quebec's history and sensibilities towards religion, language, and immigration. Shaykh Omar Koné, personally, has integrated local imaginaries as the "charismatic Sufi leader" with the help of his distinctively Muslim appearance and Quebecois identity through his appeal to Quebec's particular post-Quiet Revolution cultural heritage. In this sense, he has successfully articulated the cosmopolitan identity of his centre as one localised in Quebec's predominantly Francophone milieu and sensibilities towards secularism. His activism and participation with different local bodies (be it the government, the police services, or media outlets) in conjunction with his universalist Sufi theology testify to the identity he has shaped for himself and his group as the moderate, and, more uniquely, charismatic Muslims of Montreal. By presenting this narrative of Sufis in Quebec while focusing on the work of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Sufi Centre of Montreal through the figure of Shaykh Omar Koné, it was my hope to deconstruct certain assumptions regarding the notion of Sufism and tackle the embedded Orientalist perceptions underlying discourses around Islam in Quebec.

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While tracing the epistemic roots of the categories of “Islam” and “Sufism” in North America, I have attempted to reveal the global tensions that have shaped twenty-first century political discourses in which Sufi groups and ideologies are perceived as the moderate allies of North American liberal democracies with the help of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Sufi order of Montreal as the subject of my ethnographic case study. While these tensions predominate in the United States and Canada where Muslim communities are delocalised out of their original Islamic environments and have had to re-locate their identities, the example of Pakistan explored in Chapter Three was included to widen the reach of my argument. The latter chapter, through a historical overview of the relations between Sufi agents and central governments, further contextualises this exotification trope within the global production of knowledge about Sufism and its power, showing that this circulation is not limited to North American liberal democracies.

Indeed, the characterisation of twenty-first century Sufism as an apolitical and moderate tradition within Islam has in fact proven its political potential globally since the beginning of the “War on Terror.” Accordingly, Chapter Three offered a Muslim-majority country illustration of how indigenous identities were gradually delocalised outside their traditional contexts and spaces, not due to the movement of people, but according to the ideological colonisation and political transformation of these latter bodies. As demonstrated in the case of Pakistan, localised identities customarily attached to Sufi cosmologies and shrines were gradually displaced institutionally with the formation of the country in 1947 and most notably in the 1970s with Zia ul-Haq’s Islamisation programme. Subsequently, traditional identity hallmarks were further delocalised, dramatically, with the physical destruction and bombing of shrines across the

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nation by the Pakistani Taliban as a sign of retaliation against the state's promotion of Sufi ideologies and actors.

The policies and attitudes towards Sufism in Pakistan since 2001 are thus reflective of the social processes of delocalised "autonomous and autochtonous institutions" that have traditionally given identities to masses (Malik 1988, 289). Conversely, as revealed in Chapters One and Two, these political strategies are also undeniably informed by international tensions at the crossroads of the global "War on Terror," which was itself tied to twentieth-century events such as the Iranian Revolution (1979), the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988), and the Afghan wars (1988-2001). As such, tracing the historical patronage of Sufi saints and *sajjāda nashīn*s by central authorities in the Indian subcontinent has enabled us to better understand current politics around Sufi agents in present-day Pakistan in order to grasp a fuller picture of the international circulation of knowledge about Sufism and its power, and concomitant epistemic genealogies of these categories.

Finally, another prospect of this thesis was to offer a pedagogical approach to the study of Sufism. The ethnographic study of Sufi groups in view of their historical constituencies and religious terminology provides an insight into the developments and re-localisations of Muslimness globally to foster a humanising academic approach to such communities in Canada. This approach is proposed to explore Sufism not at the heart of a romanticised depiction of traditional Islam, but at the centre of human experience, affected by politics, power dynamics, and constant globalisation processes of delocalisation and re-localisation. As Carl Ernst rightly observes, "words and concepts do not simply grow on trees," and as such, "knowing the origins and transformations of

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words allows us to decide which of their implications we wish to endorse, and which of our predecessors' objectives we can still subscribe to" (2003b, xix).

In this thesis, I have emphasised specific historical moments and genealogies of meaning around Sufism and Sufis as human agents precisely in this hope of contributing to a greater academic project that seeks to humanise the study of Islam while exposing enduring Orientalist bias in academia and public discourses. Such endeavours as mine thus seek to dismantle naturalised categories in order to help us liberate ourselves from "the tyranny of the current climate of opinion," which has indeed proven increasingly pervasive and persistent since 9/11 and the global "War on Terror" (Ernst 2003b, xviii). However, I am encouraged to see that recent academic studies have also sought to disclose this fraught dichotomic narrative with extensive tangible examples, such as those provided by Fait Muedini and Rosemary Corbett, cited in this thesis. I similarly hope to be able to pursue my engagement towards these humanising discourses in the future not only to deconstruct genealogies of meaning within academic circles, but to tackle the agency of our societies in nourishing such a destructive climate of opinion and in acting as weapons of oppression against Muslim communities globally.

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Appendix

Figure 1.1: The Sufi Centre: communal meal and prayer time (source: author)

Figure 1.2: Shaykh Omar Koné. (source: "Votre Hôte Au Centre Sufi: Cheikh Omar Koné." Montreal Naqshbandi-Haqqani Centre. N.p., n.d. Web. 29 June 2017)

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