# Sufism and Moroccan Political Culture:
# From the Theatrics of Domination to Neoliberal Development

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**Abstract**: From the colonial period to post-Independence to the present, scholarly and state discourses have treated Sufism as a defining element of Morocco's political culture. Yet while state discourses have consistently emphasized Moroccan Sufi *culture*'s deep historical foundations, social historians and ethnographers now argue for *Moroccan* Sufi culture's distinctly modern provenance, that is, its fundamental re-formation as a facet of modern national identity and statecraft. In this article we reassess key works in this critical scholarship in light of the Mohammed VI's signature doctrine of "spiritual security." Affirming the scholarship's historicist approach, we argue nevertheless that theoretical alternatives to master-and-discipleship and performative domination are needed to explain the distinctive role of Sufism under Morocco's contemporary neoliberal dispensation. More specifically, drawing on our ethnographic research and textual analysis of state doctrine, we propose that Sufism's current framing as spiritual self-development is wholly congruous with national socio-economic development, and indeed, that its political influence (even among ostensibly anti-Sufi Muslims) reflects Muslims' broader reimagining of Islam, in Morocco and globally, in accordance with neoliberal ethics. In short, Sufism's role in contemporary Moroccan political culture is to make economic self-sufficiency and entrepreneurial conduct a spiritual virtue. At the same time, we maintain that if Moroccan Sufism reflects more a global Calvinist work ethic than a master-disciple paradigm, it is equally conducive to authoritarianism in its new neoliberal forms.

**Keywords:** Sufism, Moroccan Politics, Spiritual Security, Monarchy, Neoliberal Development, Domination.

## Introduction

From the colonial period to the present, social scientists and historians have treated Sufism as a defining feature of Moroccan (and Maghrebi) culture and politics. The recurrence of the theme is not due merely to academic taste, of course. As Abdellah Hammoudi and Edmund Burke III proposed decades ago, and Burke has elaborated recently, the twentieth century French colonial state's discursive construction of sharifian Sufi forms of kingship as "Moroccan Islam" helped consolidate state rule.[1] In Hammoudi's well-known reading,

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1. Edmund Burke III, *The Ethnographic State: France and the Invention of Moroccan Islam* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2014), 66-82. Abdellah Hammoudi, *Master and Disciple: The Cultural Foundations of Moroccan Authoritarianism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997). For an extensive reading of the colonial era construction of Moroccan national identity, see Jonathan Wyrtzen, *Making Morocco: Colonial Intervention and the Politics of Identity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015).

colonial French and independent Moroccan regimes alike seized upon and expanded an embodied cultural model of Sufi master-discipleship into mass political domination. Burke's reading, extending from the nineteenth century to the twenty-first, sees French colonial discourse at work in Mohammed VI's instrumentalization of Sufi institutions, authorities, and practices both old and new.

Given the independent Moroccan state's adoption of the colonial apparatus and its techniques in other domains, such repetitions should perhaps be expected. Yet this recurrence of Sufi themes should not be mistaken for a single logic of statecraft[2] – and certainly not for ancient tradition, which colonial French scholars and the contemporary Moroccan state alike have claimed. While both Hammoudi and Burke acknowledge Sufism's lengthy history in Morocco, their interventions are meant to unveil the fundamental historical discontinuity resulting, ironically enough, from the modern state's instrumentalist claim to *national* tradition. Their point is not that the French colonial state invented Sufism in Morocco, but that it incorporated Sufism into the modern national-state framework. The key innovation in "Moroccan Islam" was not the Islam but rather its *Moroccanness.*

Agreeing with Burke and Hammoudi that Sufism's role in Morocco's political culture is inextricable from modern national statecraft – from *Moroccan* political culture rather than political culture *in* Morocco[3] – we take their arguments as unquestionably relevant to the present. Indeed, for Burke the "mesmerizing influence of Moroccan Islam (...) continues to shape perceptions, diverting attention away from its discursive domination."[4] Also recognizing, however, that repetition always entails rupture, here we ask how Mohammed VI's distinctive "neoliberal authoritarian" rule has transformed Sufism's political role. How does Sufism influence and infuse twenty-first Moroccan political culture? What new theoretical frameworks, if any, are needed to explain its contemporary role?

To respond to these questions, we first situate Hammoudi and Burke within the broader twentieth-century scholarship on religion and politics in Morocco, which emphasized Sufism as ritual theatricality, later supplemented by the state's mass media platforms, an approach we describe as a "theatrics

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2. Isabelle Werenfels, "Beyond Authoritarian Upgrading: The Re-Emergence of Sufi Orders in Maghrebi Politics," *The Journal of North African Studies* 19, 3 (2014): 279.

3. See George Joffe, "Maghrebi Islam and Islam in the Maghreb: The Eternal Dichotomy," in *African Islam and Islam in Africa: Encounters between Sufis and Islamists*, eds. Eva Evers Rosander and David Westerlund (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1997), 55-78.

4. Burke, *The Ethnographic State*, 193.

of domination."[5]  Shifting our analysis then to studies of twenty-first century Islam and politics, we highlight Sufism's place within Mohammed VI's signature religious reforms and his social-economic developmentalist rule more broadly, what Konraad Bogaert has described as Morocco's contemporary neoliberal authoritarianism.[6] Here, linking Bogaert's insights with studies of Islam and neoliberalism beyond Morocco, we propose that Sufism's place in Moroccan political culture is best grasped as mediating and thus localizing this global developmentalist ethic. In the final section, drawing on our primary field research on Moroccan state discourses and practices of religious reform, we argue that Sufism's primary role is to read spiritual self-development as wholly congruous with national socio-economic development. That is to say, Sufism's role in contemporary Moroccan political culture is to make socio-economic growth, entrepreneurial will a spiritual virtue. Yet, if Sufism today draws less on the master-disciple schema than on neo-Calvinist currents in global Islam, we suggest that it is no less conducive to authoritarianism in its new neoliberal forms.

## I. Twentieth Century Sufi Politics: Theatrics of Domination

Writing of the French in West Africa, Robert Launay and Benjamin Soares identify colonial scholars' ambivalent relationship with Islam and Muslims. On the one hand, they feared the anti-colonial arguments of Islamic reformists; on the other hand, they supported *l'Islam noir*, a West African "fetishistic" Islam of their own devising, as a resource for colonial rule by association.[7] So too in Morocco, Abdellah Hammoudi and Edmund Burke offer distinct arguments that colonial rule entailed a measure of discursive control. For Burke, by authorizing scientific discourses of *l'Islam marocain* (or *le maraboutisme*, from the Arabic, *murābiṭ*) the French built a modern "ethnographic state."[8] For Hammoudi, the colonial state's discursive renaming and remapping of unconscious and embodied hierarchy gave social power relations themselves new material scope and significance. More specifically, Hammoudi argued that French colonization had seized and built the Sufi master-disciple relation as a "cultural schema"

5. For an extensive reading of mass mediation and Moroccan modernity, see Emilio Spadola, *The Calls of Islam: Sufis, Islamists, and Mass Mediation in Urban Morocco* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014).

6. Koenraad Bogaert, *Globalized Authoritarianism: Megaprojects, Slums, and Class Relations in Urban Morocco* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018). See also Sami Zemni and Koenraad Bogaert, "Urban Renewal and Social Development in Morocco in an Age of Neoliberal Government," *Review of African Political Economy* 38, 129 (2011): 403-17.

7. Robert Launay and Benjamin F. Soares, "The Formation of an 'Islamic Sphere' in French Colonial West Africa," *Economy and Society* 28, 4 (1999): 498-504.

8. Burke, *The Ethnographic State*.

of hierarchical domination and submission into the very machinery of the state and mass political rule.[9]

Their differences notwithstanding, Burke and Hammoudi both show the historical emergence of Sufi-infused political culture in Morocco to be inseparable from modern state formation and national identity, that is, from Moroccan political culture as a national-state phenomenon. In thus emphasizing the historical variability of nationalized Sufism, they advance beyond earlier postcolonial cultural longue durée studies, and compelling explanations for further historicizing nationalized Sufism in the present. In our view, however, both scholars also rely on and reproduce a key facet of those older theoretical approaches – a theatrics of domination – that render them insufficient for historicizing the present. Reviewing those older theories and reading Burke and Hammoudi more closely highlights the need for not only historical updating, but also for new theoretical approaches.

### *Sufism and the Sultanate: Theaters of Power*

In the later era of Africa's decolonization under the sway of modernization theory, Anglo-American scholars posited Moroccan politics as a modernized form for the continuation of established cultural and religious meanings. As Clifford Geertz put it in his celebrated comparison of Moroccan and Indonesian national forms of Islam, "Old wine goes as easily into new bottles as old bottles contain new wine."[10] While the very logic of modernization recognized historical change, the emphasis on the state as the new form and national religious culture itself as the unchanging 'content' overlooked their inextricable emergence under colonial and postcolonial regimes. The result was to place national identity – a large-scale and more or less homogeneous sense of Moroccan-ness – anachronistically in the deep past. Thus, Geertz's study of Morocco, and even the later scholarship of M. Elaine Combs-Schilling, followed colonial scholars in reading new forms and logics of political stagecraft as signs and substance of historical continuity and depth.[11]

Adopting the language of Muslim 'sainthood' from Ignaz Goldziher and the historical framework from Alfred Bel, Geertz traced Moroccan Islam to the 15th century "maraboutic crisis" in which Sufi *sharifs* – "warrior saints" or "*hommes fétiches*" – channeled God's *baraka* to fight defensive jihads against

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9. Hammoudi, *Master and Disciple*, 7, 41-43.
10. Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971 [1968]), 1.
11. M. Elaine Combs-Schilling, *Sacred Performances: Islam, Sexuality, and Sacrifice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).

waves of Iberian expansion.[12] Yet, analyzing the power of symbols just as photography, radio, and television were amplifying and extending their world historical force, Geertz viewed Muslim 'saints' not as divine intercessors so much as divine intermediaries – embodied 'warrior mediums' (as it were) for baraka's spectacular display.[13] Indeed, Geertz argued, after a brief colonial-era reformist "scripturalist interlude," Moroccan Islam now found its perfect embodiment in Mohammed V, a beloved "maraboutic king" for the illiterate masses.[14]

In a similar deep historical reading of symbolic display, M. Elaine Combs-Schilling traced the Morocco's dominant sharifian Sufism to the sultan's ritual role within "Moroccan collective representations" which long predated colonial-era national identity.[15] From the 16th century Saadian Dynasty's establishment of sharifian Sufi rule to the late twentieth century present, she argued, Moroccan unity rested not merely on enacting a common ritual, but on the established collective conscience which the ritual reaffirmed. Like Geertz, Combs-Schilling took inspiration from contemporary mass media, from Mohammed V's unprecedented popularity and Hassan II's televised addresses. Despite the obvious novelty of these political forms and technologies, they were, for Combs-Schilling, simply the culmination of history: The king's power as collective medium of divine force and figure of *national* identification was proof of its cultural continuity and depth as a source of "a symbol of self for over a thousand years."[16]

Grounded in intensive archival research from the pre-colonial Alawi sultanate and early Protectorate, Burke's fine-grained historical analysis focuses not on historically resonant symbols of potency but on the power of scientific discursive invention and repetition. Building on his earlier studies, *The Ethnographic State* traces the French colonial production of a "discursively policed new field, 'Moroccan Islam'" and its ostensibly "unbroken history" from Islam's establishment in seventh-century Morocco to the present.[17] Reflecting Geertz's and Combs-Schilling's colonial sources, the French discourses Burke highlights picture a proto-nation-state formed by the sultan and the people. On one side, it posits "the timeless role of the

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12. Geertz, Islam Observed, 46. See also, Alfred Bel, La religion musulmane en Berbérie: Esquisse d'histoire et de sociologie religieuses (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1938). Ignaz Goldziher, "The Veneration of Saints in Islam," in *Muslim Studies*, Vol. 2, (London: Allen and Unwin, 1971), 256-67.

13. Spadola, *The Calls of Islam,* 47-63.

14. Geertz, *Islam Observed*, 81.

15. Combs-Schilling, *Sacred Performances*, 276.

16. Ibid., 280.

17. Burke, *The Ethnographic State*, 2.

Moroccan sultan, the rightly ordained commander of the faithful, a quasi-divine person endowed with vast spiritual powers."[18] On the other side, it reads a receptive people primed for the sultan's rule by ceaseless saint veneration.

In contrast to his earlier work, however, Burke's *Ethnographic State* now extends this critique to current political culture in Morocco, and here he runs into the problem of describing the operation of scientific discourse not in state construction but in everyday statecraft. And while he does not cite Geertz or Combs-Schilling, he draws on the symbolic culturalist readings inspired by Geertz, in which ritual displays – the sultan's public adornment with a parasol and the formal act of allegiance [*al-bay'a*] imbue discourse with its functional powers.[19] These acts are of course significant – especially in their mass-mediated versions; yet Burke, reducing ritual to artifice, does not seek to explain that operative power, but only to lament it: As a "discursive prop" for monarchy, he writes, such rituals exert a "mesmerizing influence" and "divert attention away from its discursive domination," so that despite Moroccans' critical efforts, they remain "ensnared" by colonialism's 'crowning achievement.'[20] By presuming 'normal' discourse to require no art or artifice, Burke attributes the powers of "Moroccan Islam" to Moroccans' credulity.

For Hammoudi, hewing closer to Geertz and Combs-Schilling than to Burke, Sufism's political influence rests on the efficacy of ritual, not its artifice – and its national archive is inscribed not only strategically in the ethnographic state, but unconsciously in the bodies and hierarchical relations of individual Moroccans. Unlike his anthropological kin, however, Hammoudi traces Sufism's *national* history to the colonial intervention and no earlier. While he makes clear that the Sufism's master-disciple relation of domination and submission preceded colonization and served as a model for other social hierarchies, he insists that modernity witnessed its wholesale re-invention and re-structuring. That is, even if the precolonial sultan as absolute authority demanded absolute submission from his advisors and subjects, only the colonial and postcolonial state apparatus – its bureaucracies, militaries, and mass communications – enabled the sultan's simultaneous macro- and micro-

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18. Ibid., 9.
19. Burke, *The Ethnographic State*, 199-200. See also Jocelyne Dakhlia, "Pouvoir du parasol et pouvoir nu: Un dépouillement islamique? Le cas de la royauté marocaine," *Bulletin du Centre de recherche du château de Versailles*, December 1, (2005), https://doi.org/10.4000/crcv.233; Mohamed Tozy, *Monarchie et Islam politique au Maroc* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1999).
20. Burke, *The Ethnographic State*, 193; 191.

political extension and enactment of the schema itself across the population as body politic and to every individual body within it.

Yet, this raises a fundamental question of political theory, which Hammoudi elides: Does mass politics simply extend a form of traditional power, i.e., the sultan's personal authority over elites on the second rung of the political hierarchy, who in turn dominate the lesser elites on the third rung? Or, on the contrary, does the modern nation-state not require, rather, a wholly different logic of 'relation' premised on abstraction of particular people into a mass, i.e., 'the People'? Is state *authoritarianism* simply an enlarged and armed version of personal *authority*? Or does it not entail, as Max Weber argued, a wholly different political form? Hammoudi wavers: he suggests on the one hand a mere 'scaling up' such that "essential features of power relations in the society itself [find their] replication in the spheres of bureaucracy and institutionalized political action."[21] Yet at the same time he emphatically denies that the putatively ancient identity of "the People" are any older the colonial period.[22] In the end, he simply assumes Sufism's transformation from an intimately embodied dyadic relation of particular unequal individuals to a national form by passing references to the ubiquity of televised monarchical rituals. In short despite his sophisticated theory of embodiment and power, Hammoudi, like Burke, falls back on the theatrics of domination – the ostensibly self-explanatory force of Moroccan monarchical *display*.

As with ritual, we pose these questions not to deny the political importance of mass-mediated kingship and politics of Sufism in Morocco, but to emphasize that an explanation of mass media's re-invention requires extensive theoretical consideration, well beyond the scope of this article.[23] Indeed, while the changing monarchy's neoliberal authoritarian turn is tied to the changing media terrain (social media in particular), analyzing Sufism's place in Moroccan political culture requires this analysis power our focus on Sufism, addressed elsewhere, here we suggest that the whether emphasizing historical culture or the colonial state, influential readings of Sufism in Moroccan political culture – even those most attuned to the embodied subject – rely on the powers of performance and audienceship specific to the modern mass media age. Yet more crucial, while Hammoudi is most explicit in equating Sufism with domination and submission, they all situate power in

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21. Hammoudi, *Master and Disciple*, 3.

22. Ibid., 12, 16.

23. Spadola, *The Calls of Islam*; Emilio Spadola, "Mass Media in North Africa: From Print to Digital," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History*, March 28, (2018), https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.013.343.

the hands of those doing the staging: the master and the medium. What, if anything, has changed in the twenty-first century?

## II. Twenty-First Century Sufism and Neoliberal Developmentalism

While we dispute Burke's presumption of historical stasis from colonialism to the present, we nonetheless wholly agree that discourses of distinctly "Moroccan piety" [*at-tadayyun al-maghribi*] (though *not* "Moroccan Islam") persist. Much evidence points to Sufism's importance to Islam in Morocco as to Moroccan political culture more broadly: under Mohammed VI (r. 1999-), the state explicitly identifies Sufism as a "pillar" of "Moroccan piety," and much international press coverage of Morocco reiterates the well-worn trope of Sufi tolerance.[24]  Indeed, a recent wave of scholarship emphasizes the role of Sufism and Sufis in Mohammed VI's broad twenty-first century project of institutional and doctrinal religious reform. Our reading of this scholarship, however, along with our own field observations and interviews, suggests that older explanations of Sufism as discursive domination or symbolic performance, indeed, as local cultural specificity harnessed by the state, no longer suffice. Most important, in our view, Sufism's role in Moroccan religious and political culture reflects global links between Islam and new forms of state governance often characterized as neoliberal.

### Morocco's "New Concept of Authority"

Mohammed VI acceded to the throne with promises of social and political reform, including accelerated steps toward democratization and decentralization, as well as a slate of judicial reforms and "good governance" measures to boost Morocco's global economic competitiveness.  Rather than merely institutional reforms, however, Mohammed VI's early discourses called for changing Morocco's political culture itself. Given the scholarly identification of Moroccan politics with domination and submission, it is perhaps not surprising that Mohammed VI's used one of his earliest royal discourses  to call for a "a new concept of authority" [*mafhūmun jadīdun li-sulṭa*].[25] Speaking to the political leaders of regions and municipalities, the king hardly needed to detail the current but now outmoded logic of

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24. The volume of articles is far larger than can be cited here. For examples of articles characterizing "Moroccan Islam" as largely Sufi, see Mohamed Chtatou, "'Moroccan Islam' Is Couched in Sufism," *The Arab Weekly*, January 4, (2016), https://thearabweekly.com/moroccan-islam-couched-sufism.; Saad Guerraoui, "Sufism in Morocco 'a Powerful Weapon' against Extremism," *The Arab Weekly*, January 4, (2016), https://thearabweekly.com/sufism-morocco-powerful-weapon-against-extremism.; Mokhtar Ghambou, "Sufism in Morocco: Music, Mysticism, and Moderation," *Huffington Post*, March 18, 2010, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/sufism-in-morocco-music-m_n_327358.

25. King Mohammed VI, "Royal Address to Regional Governors, Administrators and Civic Leaders," October 12, 1999.

authority. Instead he urged the leaders to bear authority as a "responsibility" [*mas'ūliyyat as-sulṭa*] to ordinary citizens in their jurisdiction, "taking care of public interests and local affairs."[26] And this, Mohammed VI added, could not be enacted from an inaccessible office, but only in the field, by "managing local concerns" and "maintaining social peace" and social "cohesion" in close collaboration with local communities. The king also, importantly, explained the aims of these efforts, namely, "sustainable growth," "economic and social development." Like Morocco's recent "series of economic, monetary, tax, and legal reforms," the new conception of authority was intended "to stimulate the economy and encourage private investment."[27]

In subsequent decades, the themes of "reform," "authority," "development," and "social peace," as well as "responsibility" and "private investment" would be repeatedly linked to Morocco's economic performance in ways reflective of the state's intensified neoliberal approach, adopted more than a decade before with the World Bank and IMF-ordered Structural Adjustment Program. During this same period, reformist references to "democratization" would wane and, increasingly after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, and May 16, 2003, the theme of "security" would come to dominate. In what sense did rising economic and security discourses and declining democratization discourses signal neoliberalism's ascent? While the term is notoriously vague and overused, we follow Michel Foucault's influential characterization of neoliberalism as a form of governance that aims at the management of citizens' "conduct" ("the conduct of conduct") to instill the competitive spirit of enterprise – an ethos of entrepreneurial self-development.[28] Neoliberal governance, he argues, wholly differs from laissez-faire liberalism, which seeks to free exchange from state interference (and from state socialism, which controls the means of production so as to provide for citizens); rather, imposed by states or transnational non-state bodies, neoliberalism takes economic competition and enterprise as models for all social and political life, and indeed, as benchmarks of successful governance. For many scholars, neoliberalism thus appears less as a coherent object than as "assemblages" or constellations of tactics and ends deployed to "responsibilize" and "autonomize" citizens as bearers of "human capital," and always within conditions set and enforced by powerful security measures.[29] One result of this, as Wendy Brown writes in her helpful

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26. King Mohammed VI, "Royal Address to Regional Governors."

27. Ibid.

28. Michel Foucault and Michel Senellart, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-1978* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

29. Nikolas S. Rose, *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self* (London: Free Association Books, 2005 [1990]). See also, Tania Li's excellent reading of Rose in Indonesia's neoliberal reforms. Tania Li, *The Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development, and the Practice of Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007).

summary of Foucault, is to conceive of every human "as entrepreneurial, no matter how small, impoverished, or without resources, and every aspect of human existence (…) as an entrepreneurial one."[30]

Scholars of Moroccan economic policy point to diverse changes corresponding with neoliberalism in this sense, from urban development to the "National Initiative for Human Development." To show how Sufism has likewise crossed with or influenced Moroccan political culture, we emphasize the ubiquitous themes of "self-development" linking spiritual and economic logics. While Sufi discourses are not wholly subsumed by economic discourses or indicators in Morocco, neither are they wholly detached from these. Rather, converging with the reformist "Market Islam" [l'Islam de marché] Patrick Haenni describes as infusing "the values of performance optimization and competitiveness through the Muslim Umma," Sufism is increasingly reframed as a *means* of self-development and thus as a *means* to socio-economic development.[31] It is in this light that Mohammed VI's far-reaching religious reforms, as well as the broader place of Sufism in Moroccan political culture, should be understood.

### "Spiritual Security"

Often characterized as a counter-radicalization effort in response to the May 16, 2003 attacks in Casablanca, religious reforms were in fact inaugurated at least a year earlier, with Mohammed VI's oft-noted appointment of Sufi practitioner and reform-minded educator Dr. Ahmed Toufiq  as head of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, in place of Salafi-oriented Abdelkebir Alaoui M'daghiri.[32] To be sure, May 16th did mark a turning point, as late in the same year, the Ministry announced a broad slate of institutional reforms and educational initiatives under the banner or quasi-doctrine of "spiritual security."[33] Nevertheless, while the attacks provided a clear impetus for

30. Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (New York: Zone Books, 2015), 64.

31. Patrick Haenni, "La consommation n'a pas d'odeur … Quelques réflexions sur le religieux en culture de masse," *Social Compass* 58, 3 (2011): 316-22, 317.

32. Alaoui Mdaghri served as Minister from 1984-2002, during which time he remained open both to Wahhabi/Salafi thought and to Sufism, as signaled by his lecture, *Salafi Sufism Sufism* [*Al-Taṣawwuf al-Salafī*].  Abdelkebir Alaoui M'daghiri, *Salafi Sufism* [*Al-Taṣawwuf al-Salafī*] (Rabat: Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, 2001).

33. Ahmed Toufiq, cited in *Al-Sharq al-Awṣat*, 9144, December 11, 2003. In April 2004, King Mohammed VI would reiterate the call for "spiritual security" in a Royal Address to Moroccan ulama. The Ministry publicized this as a call for "restructuring of the religious field [*iʿādat haykalat al-ḥaql al-dīnī*]." See King Mohammed VI, "Royal Discourse to the High Counsel of ʿUlama and Local Counsels of ʿUlama," April 30, 2004, Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs. Mohammed El-Katiri notes that "Moroccan authorities coined the new term 'Spiritual Security,'" and while it "has been frequently used in political discourse," there have been limited "attempts to refine the term and academically discuss it."

reformist discourses and acts, the aim of these reforms – nearly continuous from 2004 to 2019 – has not been counter-radicalization in a narrow sense, but rather, paraphrasing Foucault, to "conduct the religious conduct" of citizens in ways amenable to Morocco's broader socio-economic development, that is, to its global brand.[34] As these religious reforms have been extensively detailed elsewhere, our aim is to highlight points in which Sufism has been incorporated into the "spiritual security" reforms as discourse and practice of self-development for social and economic development.[35]

In his annual Ramadan Ḥassaniyya lectures as Minister of Awqaf, Ahmed Toufiq has repeatedly emphasized "conduct-oriented" [*al-manḥā al-sulūki*] Sufi ethics (always firmly linked to sharifian lineage) as a valuable Moroccan resource both for domestic socio-economic reform and global export. In his first lecture, which established the tone, Toufiq stated that Sufism's "ethical moral functions" should be incorporated into Morocco's educational system, to the future benefit of the nation-state's "administration, politics, and economy" all of which, he said, "stand in need of Sufi ethics."[36] In closing his lecture, Toufiq proposed that Morocco's Sufi ethics could strengthen Morocco's "contribution" to the "global community" and recommended "setting up a 'stock-exchange' [*bursa*] of moral-ethical values, to boost them the way the stock-exchange boosts financial and political value."[37] Indeed, he said, Islam "opens the door" to this approach, encouraging people to "*compete* in doing good rather than *compete* in evil and tyranny."[38]

In subsequent Ḥassaniyya lectures, Toufiq has repeatedly emphasized the close ties between Sufi "conduct" (*al-sulūk*) and successful economic conduct, and explicitly framed both as object of state management. Toufiq 's

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Mohammed El-Katiri, "TheInstitutionalisation of Religious Affairs: Religious Reform in Morocco," *The Journal of North African Studies* 18, 1 (2013): 53-69, 66. See also the excellent analysis offered by Salim Hmimnat: "'Spiritual Security' as a (Meta-)Political Strategy to Compete over Regional Leadership: Formation of Morocco's Transnational Religious Policy towards Africa," *The Journal of North African Studies* 25, 2 (2020): 1-39.

34. As El-Katiri notes, the participation of Moroccans in terrorist attacks in multiple states has been "perceived as threatening the image of the country" as a "popular European tourist destination," El-Katiri, "Institutionalisation," 66.

35. The breadth of the institutional reforms can be gathered by the simple fact that the Ministry's official religious institutions, comprising no more than six in 2003 now number sixteen, and those established prior to 2003 underwent significant restructuring ['*i'adat al-tanḍīm*] and operate under extensively revised mandates. These are accessible online at "mu'asasat" [institutions], http://www.habous.gov.ma/index.php.

36. Ahmed Toufiq, "Sharifian Lineage and the Sufi [Chain of] Authority in Moroccan History" (Hassaniyya Lecture) (Rabat: Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, 2002).

37. Toufiq, "Sharifian Lineage."

38. Ibid.

2014 lecture cites Michel Foucault's concept of *dispositif* – an encompassing apparatus for the formation of personal conduct – as the ideal state form, and offered Sufism as an example.[39] His 2018 lecture, titled, "The Rights of the Self in Islam and its Economic Dimensions," goes still further.[40] Drawing on a range of sources from the Qur'an and the Prophet, and Aristotle to the founder of the World Economic Forum, Klaus Schwab, Toufiq states that the human being is truly "homo oeconomicus" – a self-bound to the collective by the market and consumption, that is, by *appetites*. Thus, he argues, a truly just economic distribution must rest not on merely an economic ideology like liberalism or socialism, but on a rigorous practice of regulating desire, exemplified for Toufiq by the Sufi practice of self-purification and self-development, or *tazkiyat al-nafs*. Speaking to Mohammed VI (who, as is customary in the Ramadan lectures, forms his primary audience), Toufiq closes by calling upon His Majesty to situate "reform in accordance with the spirit of self-development": to "re-think our current development model" and to see that "ʿulama carry their responsibility to spread the ethics of self-development, knowing that self-development is not mere self-adornment [with righteous qualities, i.e., *al-taḥliyya*] but a major lever of development."[41]

As Toufiq makes clear, the state reforms which he has undertaken as the Minister of Awqaf are steeped in Sufism, specifically in Sufi practices and Sufi ethics of self-development. As announced in his inaugural 2002 lecture, the purpose of state re-*form* is *formation* of ethical selves, the conduct of citizens' conduct drawing on Morocco's deep Sufi traditions. But this ethical formation has a purpose and end – national development. Further, despite Moroccans' naturally "moderate" Sufi disposition, state reform requires intervention (as Foucault notes of neoliberalism more broadly) to create conditions that reward competitive enterprise. For Toufiq it means "setting up" a market to instigate *competition* – a metaphorical spiritual "stock-exchange" to compete in ethical conduct. Further, the goal of this competitive conduct would be to enhance Morocco's international "contribution" – its global *brand*.[42]

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39. Ahmed Toufiq, "Protection of the Community and the Religion," (Ḥassaniyya Lecture) (Rabat: Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, 2014).

40. Ahmed Toufiq, "The Rights of the Self in Islam and its Economic Dimensions," (Ḥassaniyya Lecture) (Rabat: Ministry of Awqāf and Islamic Affairs, 2018).

41. Ibid.

42. The stock-exchange comment is of course an important metaphor, but just as significant is the need to "set up" this spiritual stock-exchange: as Foucault argues, neoliberalism requires not merely freeing markets, but *creating* them, and honing social relations to reorient them toward market success. Michel Foucault, Michel Senellart, and Collège de France, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-79* (Basingstoke England; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

Toufiq of course enjoys a larger platform than other Sufi authorities in Morocco, but that is not our concern; to the contrary, in the press and online he is often the subject of Moroccans' vitriolic critique. It is not a matter of performance or charisma, but rather that he articulates the same conceptual binding of spiritual and economic development that dominates in Morocco – *as across the Muslim world*. Indeed, while his reformulation of Sufism as economic conduct is more explicit than others', the virtues of entrepreneurial self-development and the reality of global competition, for individuals and the state alike, form the ubiquitous pretext of much Sufi reformist discourse.[43] It should not surprise us, for example, that Morocco's "spiritual diplomacy" efforts in West Africa, currying favor with the Tijaniyya and other Sufi orders, is intimately tied to Morocco's broader African investment initiatives. Or that Mohammed VI's diplomatic visits in the region include meetings with Sufi leaders, investment and bilateral trade talks, performing the Friday Prayer and, as in Dakar in November 2016 – launching an "entrepreneurship training center."[44]

### Sufism and the Virtue of Self-Development

A number of recent studies of Morocco emphasize Sufism's renewed importance. Most observe, as we do, that the state now explicitly defines the "sober" or "Sunni Sufism" of Junayd (d. 9th century, Baghdad), and *not* the popular Sufism of saint veneration, as one of four cornerstones or "pillars of Moroccan piety."[45] Most emphasize that state and non-state actors alike attribute Moroccan moderation and tolerance in part to Sufism's long history of quasi-liberal "openness to the other" [*al-infitāḥ ʿalā al-'ākhar*]. Yet they differ as to the historical specificity of contemporary Sufism and politics alike.[46]  In their well-

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43. Daromir Rudnyckyj, in his reading of an Indonesian self-help movement, refers to contemporary a shift in Muslim revivalist logics from "faith in development to the development of faith." Daromir Rudnyckyj, *Spiritual Economies: Islam, Globalization, and the Afterlife of Development* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010). On Islamic spiritual movements that both draw on and exceed recognizably Sufi discourses and practices, see James Bourk Hoesterey, *Rebranding Islam: Piety, Prosperity, and a Self-Help Guru* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016).

44. HM the King, "Senegalese Pres. Launch in Dakar Project to Set Up Entrepreneurship Training Center," *MAP (Agence Marocaine de Presse)*, November 8, (2016). http://www.mapnews.ma/en/activites-royales/hm-king-senegalese-pres-launch-dakar-project-set-entrepreneurship-training-center.

45. See for example, the web portal for the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, "al-Islam fi-l-maghreb," (Islam in Morocco) <https://bit.ly/2p1TY8u>. It should be strongly noted that this moderation and tolerance is just as often attributed to rule by the Commander of the Faithful, i.e., the institution of *imārat al-muʾminīn*.

46. Ann Marie Wainscott's recent study of Morocco's bureaucratic "social engineering" of Islam characterizes Sufism as "passive" and "apolitical," with little direct relevance. The king's appointment of Ahmed Toufiq simply aims, in her view, to enhance the public's perceptions of Sufism, apparently thus encouraging political quiescence. While "social engineering" speaks to our definition of neoliberalism, here it is merely an act of direct control; there is no possibility for Wainscott that Sufism might put

regarded study of new Moroccan spiritual trends, Patrick Haenni and Rafael Voix describe a "conversion to Sufism" among urban bourgeoisie, among them elite members of the Budshishiyya Sufi order (including Ahmed Toufiq) who view Sufism as a means to "self-realization, internal equilibrium and spiritual peace," and a "'path for personal accomplishment.'"[47] For Haenni and Voix this movement represents a shift away from Sufism in its "traditional, strongly hierarchical" forms; indeed Sufis now seeking a spirituality of "contemporary individualism [and] compatible with egalitarian ideals" specifically reject the "master-disciple relationship, which they consider to be fundamentally unequal." While Haenni and Voix leave new Sufism's larger political ramifications implicit, Isabelle Werenfels explicitly points to new Sufism in asking whether contemporary Sufis are independent actors or merely instruments of "authoritarian upgrading." Citing Haenni's point that "modern" Sufis "advocate individual development, self-responsibility, obedience, and in general, civic and entrepreneurial values such as transparency and accountability," she pointedly contrasts this to Hammoudi's reading of Sufism as a structure of domination and submission: such values, she concludes, "run counter to authoritarian regime practices and have a subversive potential" – depending on the extent of their spread and whether eventually these ideas "affect values and translate into political practice."[48]

Given that Toufiq articulates and indeed shapes the authoritarian state's discourse, we must ask whether Sufism's enmeshing with neoliberal themes of "individual development," "self-responsibility," and entrepreneurial "transparency and accountability" does in fact reject authoritarianism. In our view, it does not. Numerous studies, including Koenraad Bogaert's powerful critique of contemporary Moroccan urbanism, offer powerful evidence of a contemporary "globalized authoritarianism" built precisely on this neoliberal conjuncture of socio-economic development and entrepreneurial self-development, as well as novel techniques and discourses of security.[49]

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spiritual *self-empowerment* in the service of state rule. Ann Marie Wainscott, *Bureaucratizing Islam: Morocco and the War on Terror* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

47. Patrick Haenni and Rafael Voix, "God by all Means…: Eclectic Faith and Sufi Resurgence among the Moroccan Bourgeoisie," in *Sufism and the "Modern" in Islam,* eds. Martin Van Bruinessen and Julia Day Howell (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 241-56.

48. Werenfels, *Beyoning Authoritarian Upgrading,* 290.

49. Koenraad Bogaert, *Globalized Authoritarianism: Megaprojects, Slums, and Class Relations in Urban Morocco* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018).

See also Malika Zeghal's argument that under Morocco's twenty-first century "liberal facade," the "spheres of competition and equality (…) are exactly what allow authoritarianism to continue to function." In contrast to our argument, Zeghal views this as the removal of authoritarianism from a spiritual schema to an economic. In our view, the economic now pervades the spiritual. Malika Zeghal, "On the Politics of Sainthood: Resistance and Mimicry in Postcolonial Morocco," *Critical Inquiry* 35, 3 (2009): 597.

That is to say, while a dominant Sufism of Morocco's "spiritual security" age differs from Hammoudi's and others' Sufism of domination and submission, it does not oppose Moroccan authoritarianism so much as resonate with and make a virtue of its neoliberal form. Or, like Max Weber's reading of Lutheranism and Capitalism, Sufism and Neoliberalism enjoy an "elective affinity."

**Sufism by Other Names: "Beautiful Conduct" and "Self-Purification" on the Reform Agenda**

Nevertheless, it is fair to ask whether a trend among the cosmopolitan elite tells us much about Sufism among Moroccan middle- and under-classes. Although a consideration of Sufism across classes exceeds the scope of this article, we close this article with evidence of Sufism's broader presence in the "spiritual security" state's institutional and educational reforms comprising the "restructuring of the religious field." While all state institutions recognize "Sunni Sufism" as a pillar of Moroccan piety, Sufism's practical inclusion differs noticeably between elite and popular institutional programs. In the scholarly *al-Rābiṭa al-Moḥammadiyya li-l-'Ulamā* [The Mohammadi League of Ulama] research program and the prestigious Dar al-Hadith al-Hassaniyya [DHH] university curriculum, *al-ṣūfiyya* or *al-taṣawwuf* (Sufism or, literally, "becoming Sufi") is categorized as a field of knowledge or "science" [*'ilm*] within the broader "Islamic sciences" [*al-'ulūm al-islāmiyya*].[50] In contrast, public Islamic educational forums, including courses taught by men and women guides as part of the state's public outreach and reform effort, include discussions of Sufi conduct – but *avoid* the term *Sufism.*

In state curricula for training women "guides" [*murshidāt*] and men "guide-Imams" [*murshidīn*], as in the courses these guides teach, Sufism appears in purposely indirect forms, meant not to evoke public conceptions of Morocco's historically pervasive Sufi Orders [*al-ṭuruq al-ṣūfiyya*]. In our interviews with trainers and successful trainees, *murshidāt* and *murshidīn,* teaching in the Rabat-Salé region, the public audiences whom they address hold Sufism in low regard – a result in part of both twentieth-century modernist and contemporary Wahhabi and Salafi critiques. Thus, avoiding direct reference, they include Sufism through discussions of the highest "spiritual behavior" [*al-iḥsān*], proper ethical "conduct" [*al-sulūk*], and self-development or self-improvement through "self-purification" [*tazkiyat al-nafs*]. Among these, the Sufi discourse of *tazkiya* has the strongest resonance; indeed, due to Salafi

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50. The Rābita's multiple research centers now include the "Imām al-Junayd Center for Specialized Sufi Studies and Research." See http://www.arrabita.ma/aljounaid/.

thinkers' long-standing appropriation of the term, many students consider this antithetical to Sufism.

While *murshidāt* and *murshidīn* consider these topics and practices of self-development to help counter extremism, like the Ministry's broad aim of reform, they more directly apply their lessons to students' everyday behavior.  In two classes dedicated to improving neighborhood relations, for example, the *murshida* addressed both rights of neighbors (privacy, respect) and spiritual conduct, emphasizing that the "true believer looks to change her behavior for the better." Indeed, she said, the students should aim to go above and beyond the consideration of "rights," to practice what is *spiritually* best, which is also most pleasing to God. In her lesson to students, this meant controlling one's "base desires for revenge" and cultivating one's capacity for forgiveness in the face of conflict.[51]

Viewing *tazkiyat al-nafs* as distinct from Sufism may of course reflect other realtities. On the one hand, it reflects the Moroccan trainees and public's relatively minimal knowledge of Islam's highly specialized sciences, whether of *al-aqīda* (doctrine), *al-fiqh* (jurisprudence) or Sufism. On the other hand, it is highly significant, given the courses' prominent focus on precisely those domains of Islam to which Sufism as a daily practice has historically laid claim: cultivating proper morals – the "perfecting" of one's religion in daily conduct. Moreover, according to guides and by our observations these discussions were the most popular aspects of the courses. It serves as a conceptual link between the official discourses of "tolerance" and "moderation," "openness" to non-Muslim others, to participants' most intimate relationships with kin.

More importantly, this separation of *tazkiyat al-nafs* from Sufism reflects the broader shift in understandings of Sufism tied to the hierarchical orders – precisely the source of Hammoudi's master-disciple schema. It reflects cosmopolitan elite "new age" Sufis' rejection of hierarchy for egalitarianism or individualist virtue, but normative Moroccan scholars of Islam also argue the same. As a member of the local Rabat Ulama Council [*al-majlis al-'ilmi al-maḥalī*], explained it, the state's interpretation of Sufism emphasizes "self-development" [*tazkiyat al-nafs*] as *opposed* to historically local Moroccan forms represented by Sufi turuq. These past forms were not merely irrelevant to "Sunni Sufism," but *antithetical* to it: "Being more about politics and power than religion," he explained, they promoted precisely those forms of *bida'* that reformists have long sought to eliminate. In contrast, he said, the "spiritual

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51. Alice Catanzaro, Observations and Interviews with *murshidāt* and attendants of *murshidāt*-run class in Temara, Morocco, October 18 and 25, 2018.

security" state's twenty-first century model of Sufism promotes Muslims' capacities to "deal with the world" and its challenges.[52] This Sufism may not be wholly overtaken by economic logics; and yet, because such challenges result in no small part from the state's neoliberalism, which reshapes social relations as economic, it cannot be wholly separated from its logics either.

### Conclusions

In considering Sufism's influence upon, intersection with, and inflection of Moroccan political culture, we have emphasized historical shifts from the twentieth to the twenty-first century. Curiously, despite both Burke's and Hammoudi's insistence on historical rupture in the colonial era, both scholars view postcolonial politics as historically continuous with that era. At the same time, their explanation Sufism's specifically *mass* political, *national* relevance (rather than micro-political, dyadic person-to-person influence) finally relies on earlier anthropological themes of symbolic performance and Moroccan audienceship – the politics and power of mass-mediated theatricality. In offering an updated view, we have been struck by the confluence of Sufi themes of "self-development" and "beautiful" conduct with neoliberalism's now dominant language of responsibility and entrepreneurial self-development. In our view three points in particular must be emphasized:

First, while Sufi discourses and practices of self-discipline have a long history, Sufism is widely understood today to *invert* the master-disciple logic identified by Hammoudi. That is, whereas Hammoudi attributed authoritarianism in Morocco (and the Arab world) to Sufi hierarchical norms of domination and submission, now many Moroccans interpret Sufi *self*-governance as modern, egalitarian, and individualistic. For Werenfels, this kind of Sufism is anti-authoritarian and thus has subversive political potential. In our view, however, the contrary is true: rather than a reversal, Sufi self-governance signals both Sufism's changing place in Moroccan political culture, and the historical transformation of authoritarianism itself. While "influence," may be too strong a claim, Sufism lends virtue to – or *spiritualizes* – forms of socio-economic self-development marking the era of neoliberal reform inaugurated by Hassan II, and accelerated by Mohammed VI. In short: Sufism *countenances* neoliberal authoritarianism.

Second, while this intersection of Sufism and economic reform is most clearly manifested in elite discourses – in speeches by Ahmed Toufiq,

52. Alice Catanzaro, Observations and Interviews in Rabat, Morocco. April 4 and 17, 2018. It should be noted that the Local Ulama Councils [*al-majālis al-ʿilmiya al-maḥaliyya*] do not practice the iftāʾ as the High Council does, but rather focus on local training for guides.

Mohammed VI's Sufi Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, and among cosmopolitan Moroccans – it also influences the reformed approaches of educational institutions in the "spiritual security" age. In our view, the state's euphemistic inclusion of Sufism in discussions of "ethical conduct" and Salafi-inflected *tazkiyat al-nafs*, is crucial and deserves further analysis. At a time when Sufism appears least appealing among a broad swath of Moroccans, it remains *more* influential – thanks in no small part to the reframing of self-development as a neoliberal virtue.

Finally, understanding Sufism's influence in Morocco requires tracing new global spiritual and socio-economic forces. While Burke's and Hammoudi's analyses foregrounded exterior colonial influences in the conceptual and material construction of *Moroccan* Islam, they also argued that colonial powers worked with established local cultural forms and symbols. And while Sufism has always traveled, its itinerary from Morocco through Europe and the US and back, as well as its part in Morocco's economic investment in Africa demonstrate the new ways in which it intersects with systems of power that exceed the exclusively domestic political sphere. Most importantly, then, rather than view contemporary Sufism in Morocco as confirming some sort of national exception, we emphasize that our reading Moroccan politics can help analyze new globally circulated forms of Islamic statecraft.

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## الصوفية والثقافة السياسية المغربية: من الإخراج المسرحي للهيمنة إلى التطور النيوليبرالي

**ملخص:** من الفترة الاستعمارية إلى ما بعد الاستقلال وحتى الوقت الحاضر، تعاملت خطابات العلماء والدولة مع الصوفية كعنصر محدد في الثقافة السياسية المغربية. ومع ذلك، في حين أن خطابات الدولة أكدت باستمرار على الأسس التاريخية العميقة للثقافة الصوفية المغربية، فإن المؤرخين الاجتماعيين وعلماء الإثنوغرافيا يجادلون الآن في الأصل الحديث الواضح للثقافة الصوفية المغربية، أي إعادة تشكيلها الأساسي كوجهة من جوانب الهوية الوطنية الحديثة والاقتدارا على الحكم والكفاءة السياسية لإدارة شؤون الدولة. وفي هذه المقالة نعيد تقييم الأعمال الرئيسية باعتماد هذه المقاربة النقدية في ضوء التوجه المذهبي الذي تبناه محمد السادس والمتمثل في ما بات معروفا بعبارة "الأمن الروحي." وتأكيدًا على النهج التاريخي للمقاربة الدراسية والبحثية المشار إليها، نجادل مع ذلك بأن البدائل النظرية لثنائية الشيخ والمريد والهيمنة الأدائية ضرورية لشرح الدور المميز للصوفية في ظل التدبير النيوليبرالي المعاصر للمغرب. وبشكل أكثر تحديدًا، بالاعتماد على بحثنا الإثنوغرافي والتحليل النصي لتوجهات الدولة العقائدية والمذهبية، نقترح أن التأطير الحالي للصوفية كتنمية ذاتية روحية يتوافق تمامًا مع مقتضيات التنمية الاجتماعية والاقتصادية الوطنية ورهاناتها. وأن تأثيرها السياسي، يعكس في واقع الأمر، وحتى في أوساط المسلمين أنفسهم، مدى إعادة تصور المسلمين الأوسع للإسلام، سواء في المغرب، أو في بقية ربوع العالم، وذلك وفقًا للأخلاق النيوليبرالية وقواعدها. وباختصار، يتمثل دور الصوفية في الثقافة السياسية المغربية المعاصرة في العمل على تحويل الاكتفاء الذاتي الاقتصادي وسلوك المقاولات إلى فضيلة روحية. ونؤكد في الوقت ذاته، أنه إذا كانت الصوفية المغربية تعكس أخلاقيات عمل كالڤينية (نسبة إلى كالڤان) ذات أبعاد عالمية أكثر من اقتراحها لنموذج الشيخ والمريد، فإنها تؤدي بالقدر نفسه إلى الاستبداد في أشكاله النيوليبرالية الجديدة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الصوفية، السياسة المغربية، الأمن الروحي، الملكية، التنمية النيوليبرالية، الهيمنة.

**Soufisme et culture politique marocaine: De la théâtralité de la domination au développement néolibéral**

**Résumé**: De la période coloniale à la période post-indépendance en passant par le présent, les discours savants et étatiques ont traité le soufisme comme un élément déterminant de la culture politique marocaine. Pourtant, alors que les discours d'État ont constamment mis l'accent sur les fondements historiques profonds de la culture soufie marocaine, les historiens sociaux et les ethnographes plaident désormais pour la provenance distinctement moderne de la culture soufie marocaine, c'est-à-dire sa reconstitution fondamentale en tant que facette de l'identité nationale moderne et de l'habileté politique. Dans cet article, nous réévaluons les travaux clés de cette approche critique à la lumière de la doctrine intitulée "sécurité spirituelle" instaurée par Mohammed VI. Affirmant l'approche historiciste de ce sujet, nous soutenons néanmoins que des alternatives théoriques à la notion du maître et de disciple et à la domination performative sont nécessaires pour expliquer le rôle distinctif du soufisme sous le régime néolibéral contemporain du Maroc. Plus spécifiquement, en nous inspirant de nos recherches ethnographiques et de notre analyse textuelle de la doctrine de l'État, nous proposons que le cadre actuel du soufisme en tant qu'autodéveloppement spirituel soit totalement conforme au développement socio-économique national, et en fait, que son influence politique (même parmi les Musulmans) reflète la réimagination plus large de l'Islam par les musulmans, au Maroc et dans le monde, conformément à l'éthique néolibérale. En bref, le rôle du soufisme dans la culture politique marocaine contemporaine est de faire de l'autosuffisance économique et de la conduite entrepreneuriale une vertu spirituelle. En même temps, nous soutenons que si le soufisme marocain reflète plus une éthique de travail calviniste globale qu'un paradigme maître-disciple, il est également propice à l'autoritarisme dans ses nouvelles formes néolibérales.

**Mots-clés**: Soufisme, politique marocaine, sécurité spirituelle, monarchie, développement néolibéral, domination.