



## Peculiarities of the Spread of Sufi Orders in Europe

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### Abstract:

The article provides information on the history of the spread and development of Sufi orders in Europe, as well as their current status. The article also analyzes the activity characteristics and development trends of orders with Sunni and Shiite views following the interest in Sufism among the European population.

**Keywords:** European Muslims, sufism, sufi orders, Haqqaniyyah, Naqshbandiyyah, Nematullahiyya, Qadariyah, Tijaniya, Muridiya, Ahmadiyya-Idrisiya, Shaziliya.

### Introduction

It is known that Islam reached Southern Europe at the end of the first century. Islam gained a strong foothold in the Iberian Peninsula in the Middle Ages, and in the Balkan Peninsula during the Ottoman Empire. Today, the position of Islam in this continent is reflected in the fact that Muslims form the majority of the population in the countries of South-Eastern Europe, especially in Albania and Bosnia.

The Muslim population in the rest of Europe has been growing rapidly for the past decade. This process is related to the increase in labor migration from Muslim countries. In the former imperial countries, including France and Great Britain, the Muslim population is a certain minority. At this point, it should be remembered that the origin of Muslims in Britain was South Asia, the origin of Muslims in France was North Africa, especially Algeria, and the homeland of Muslims in Germany goes back to Turkey. As a result of the change in the direction of Muslim migration to Central, Western and Northern Europe over the past fifty years, the countries of this continent are now the motherland (birth) of most European Muslims. In this way, the influence of the second and third generation of European Muslims is gaining importance in the spread of Islam throughout this part of the world.

### Material and methods.

The methods of comparative-historical, typological, hermeneutic and complex analysis of the literature were used to study the spread of Islam and the formation of Sufi orders in Europe.

**Citation:** Ernazarov O. (2024). Peculiarities of the Spread of Sufi Orders in Europe. American Journal of Social and Humanitarian Research, 5(6), 22–36. Retrieved from <https://globalresearchnetwork.us/index.php/ajshr/article/view/2795>

Received: 21 April 2024

Revised: 29 April 2024

Accepted: 20 May 2024

Published: 10 Jun 2024



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### Results.

The conversion of many Europeans to Islam, and the fact that most of them have high intellectual potential and are well aware of universal moral norms, has a special place in the spread of Islam across the continent. A small number of studies devoted to the study of the socio-cultural activities of Muslims in modern Europe show that Europeans are highly interested in Sufism, which is considered a branch of Islamic sciences. This indicates that Sufism has a very strong position in Europe than in the rest of the world. In this regard, European Muslims pay great attention to the preservation of the traditional role of Sufism in the Islamic world.

It is known that Sufism has always been evaluated as a multifaceted phenomenon. The reasons for this are related to the regular development of the communities in it and their high adaptability to new environment, at the same time, the teaching of Sufism places great emphasis on correcting both the inner and outer world of a person. Summarizing these features, the teaching of Sufism spread throughout the European continent. In addition, this part of the world is serving as a place for the emergence of new Sufi orders. Today, France and Great Britain are mentioned as European countries with the largest number of Sufi orders.

Sufi orders in Europe are undergoing functional changes. Because, in many Muslim countries, Sufi orders and their leaders play an important role from the political, economic and social side, but in the conditions of adaptation to the European society, some of their powers are reduced. For example, in Muslim-majority societies, the financial power of Sufi orders in the health and education systems has given them political power. However, in the European society, the authority to manage the above areas is decided between the state and the people. However, it should be noted that despite the reduction of some of the social functions of Sufi orders in the continent, their importance in secular matters remains. For example, the healing activities of order's pirs (sheikhs) are considered complementary to the medical services provided in hospitals or clinics. Such an approach is considered the main sign of the Islamic changes taking place in the European environment, where the influence of secular principles is high.

### Discussion.

One of the Sufi orders that spread widely in Europe and has many followers is Naqshbandiyyah. The order was founded in Central Asia in the 14th century by Bahauddin Naqshband and has a large audience in Europe, consisting of Asian immigrants and European Muslims. In particular, the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order, associated with the name of the Cypriot Muhammad Nazim Haqqani, is popular among European Muslims, and since the 70s of the 20th century, a large number of new converts to Islam have expressed their loyalty to it. In fact, while Muhammad Nazim is considered the mufti of Cyprus, Turkish, Cypriot and other Muslim immigrants living in Europe see him as their teacher. The financial needs of this order are provided by one of Nazim's disciples, the Sultan of Brunei. Haqqaniyyah is distinguished from other traditional branches of Naqshbandiyyah by the silent movement of zikr, which is sung to the accompaniment.

Another Sufi order spread across the European continent and having a great reputation among Muslims is the Nematullahiya sect founded by Shah Nematullah Wali in the 14th century. Shah Nematullah Wali was born in Aleppo, Syria, and lived in Iran for many years. For this reason, the Nematullahiyya order is recognized as belonging to the Shia order and still has a strong position in Iran. However, its adherents can also be found in the rest of the world. Most of its representatives in Europe are, of course, people who immigrated from Iran. The order is distinguished by having famous poets and writers among other orders. Nematullahiyya pirs and followers pay great attention to meditation (tafakkur).

After the declaration of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979, the leader of the order at that time, Javad Nurbakhsh, a well-known psychiatrist who trained at Tehran and Sarbonna universities, and a number of sheikhs were persecuted. In 1983, Nurbakhsh moved to London, and until now, the England's capital is the center of Nematullahiya team in Europe.

At the expense of immigrants from different parts of Africa, the Sufi orders that appeared on the black continent, such as Qadariyah, Tijaniya, Muridiya, Ahmadiyya-Idrisiya and Shaziliya, also spread throughout Europe. Among the above, Shaziliya is one of the orders that gathered many followers and contributed to the development of Sufism in the Euro area to a certain extent. The name of this order was related to Sheikh Abu Hasan Shazili from North Africa who lived in the 13th century. The Shaziliya order usually focused on natural and jurisprudential subjects and thus attracted the intelligentsia. The teachings of the order developed to a certain extent, especially as a result of the views of the Andalusian sage and theologian Ibn Arabi, who gained fame in the Middle Ages. In the development of Sufism among Muslims in Europe, the Darqawiya order, founded by Ahmed Darqawi as a branch of the Shaziliya order, gained great importance. Also, another Sufi order that took a special place in this development is the Shaziliya-Darqawiyya-Alawiya or Alawiya, associated with the name of Abu Abbas Alavi (d. 1934). Since 1920, supporters of Alawiya have been prominent in France and England.

Bektoshiya and Halvatiya-Jarrohiya orders spread through the Turks can also be counted among Sufi communities in Europe. At the same time, Mawlatiya, another order with its own community in the green continent, has gained fame not only among Muslims, but also among non-Muslims with its performance called "Ring of Dervish". In addition, among the Sufi groups active in Europe, Chistiya (Mu'iniddin Chisti (d. 1236) and Rifaiya are also mentioned. The first group is known for paying great attention to music and dance, while the second group is called "sad dervishes" because of their melancholy chanting. Also, one of the Sufi communities associated with the name of the 13th-century Egyptian Ibrahim Dasuqi, which has Asian immigrant followers in Europe, is the Burhaniya or Dasuqiya community.

The popularization of Sufism in Europe was also greatly influenced by the fact that various levels of research in this field were carried out by local European researchers. Because, in order to correctly describe the current role of Sufism in Europe, it is necessary to study the history of the Middle Ages. As has become known in recent decades, Islamic culture had a unique influence on medieval Christendom. For example, the narrations about Rabia al-Adavi, who lived in Iraq in the 9th century and was an example to people with her high character and modest way of life, reached the Saint Louis Temple in France at that time, or the details related to the Miraj event that happened in the life of the Prophet Muhammad were written by the Italian artist Dante in the work "Divine Comedy" is a confirmation of the above opinion. In addition, it is possible to witness the adoption of several elements from Andalusian Sufism in the Christian moral standards that spread in Spain in the 16th century. Later, the conquest of the Muslim world by the colonial policies of the leading European powers provided an opportunity for some European "truth seekers" to come face to face with Sufism. At that time, these individuals rejected the positivist ideology of Europe. According to them, the materialistic civilization of Europe in this form was based on the secularization of the Christian religion, which had lost its mysterious (sacred) essence. In such a situation of alienation from the reality of life, the European enlighteners encountered the Eastern method of spiritual purification in the form of Sufism.

#### **Conclusion.**

In short, most Europeans who follow or are interested in Euro-Sufism at this time do not follow Islam seriously. More specifically, their interest in Sufism was sparked by books written by Sufi leaders in Europe and other regions, or by their natural interest in poetry, dance, and music. Also, the Internet, which has become a means of quick, easy and cheap transmission of information and ideas, can be cited as a reason for the growth of interest in Sufism. In addition, the organization of music and dance tours (safars) by famous Sufism orders in the Muslim world (especially the Mawlawiya community) became important for the spread of Sufism poetry in Europe. At the same time, choirs performed by Sufi groups were recorded on CDs and audio tapes and sold in the West. For example, Qawwali music representing the Chistian tradition became popular in the West. Even Sufi dance took place in churches and public places not associated with Islam.

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