

## WEBERIAN SOCIOLOGY AND PORTRAIT OF CONTEMPORARY SUFISM STUDIES

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### **Abstract:**

*There is always a sense of desperation and pride when one speaks of Weberians sociology in the study of Islam. This paper is composed of that feeling dominating all along. Weber has been the major architect in modern sociology. But in his major works, Islam and only Islam among major world religions, has been left out. If he did pay attention to it, he did so with a sense of pessimism and apathy. But his little interest in Islam has nonetheless stimulated a lot of interest and sparked long debate. His so-called intellectual heirs continued his project and did a great deal of research in Islam. Unbalanced and unsympathetic this study might be, they have nonetheless contributed to the sociological study of Islam and certainly of Sufism. On the other side of the coin, his critiques are no less enthusiastic in their refutation of his major theses and their defense of the more objective study of Islam and Sufism. Hence, the academic debate between the Weberians and their opponents on the nature of Sufism is not yet ceasing and is even developing. This paper is aimed at looking at that debate. It is a kind of contribution to the Weberians sociological study of Sufism. It tries to display the richness of the sociological study in the spiritual dimension of Islam both by the Weberians and their adversaries.*

**Keywords:** *Weberian Sociology; Sufism; Euro-centrism; Counter-sociology*

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### **A. Introduction**

**W**eberian sociology has become a school. It is a fact that must be accepted. Although Ibn Khaldun<sup>1</sup> was the father of sociology, Max Weber was more dominant in this science. His contribution of thought includes not only the economic and social sciences but also religious sciences and mysticism. His theoretical richness made his sociology very promising. Many scholars then study Weber's

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Khaldun who was born in Tunis, Tunisia, is one of the most prominent figures in the history of Muslim civilization. His theory on social science is about *Asabiyah* (social solidarity) and the rise and fall of the state elaborated in his monumental work *Muqaddimah*. Ibn Khaldun has outstandingly developed his theory before modern sociology was then expanded in the West by Max Weber and others. Mehmet Soyer, "Examining the Origins of Sociology: Continuities and Divergences Between Ibn Khaldun, Giambattista Vico, August Comte, Ludwig Gumplowicz, and Emile Durkheim" (University of North Texas, 2010).

sociology and hope to find something precious from it. In the study of the sociology of religion, he has made many contributions both through his work and through other scholars who follow him. Islamic sociology owes him so much. If Weber had never been born, we might never have heard the term *Islamic sociology*. Yet, the debate about Weber and the sociology that he developed is continuing. The impact of the debate is even felt in other domains including Islamic sociology. Weber's bias view of Islam is one of the reasons why he is so controversial. However, the idea that he promoted is flourishing.

On the other hand, Islamic sociology is still immature. Yet, the intensity of studies in this field is increasing day by day. The discourse offered is also more diverse. Even though the term "sociology of Islam" seems peculiar as it is considered imitating Weberian sociology, it is not only Muslim scholars that involve in the development of this science, but also Western scholars. The most recent one is Armando Salvatore, who published a book entitled *The Sociology of Islam* in 2016. This work is regarded as ground-breaking considering the lack of academic works in this field. Many argued, such as Bryan S. Turner, that Islamic sociology is developing slowly.<sup>2</sup> However, it does not mean that studies in the field of religion along with its various dimensions are suspended or restricted. Sufism<sup>3</sup> is one of the dimensions of Islam that has triggered great attention from sociologists. Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, they have competed to interpret mystical phenomena sociologically. The Weberian paradigm is very helpful in this regard. And as expected, many have "learned" from Weber to look for provisions in their academic adventure to understand Sufism.

Here is the importance of tracing contemporary Sufism studies in the context of Weberian sociology. Such an effort will help us understand how Sufism is interpreted sociologically. In the era of rapid scientific development, the use of the sociological approach to Sufism must be welcomed. Moreover, it would have a positive impact on the development of new and fresh discourses in this science. This study is divided into three parts, i.e. a) An overview of Weber's sociology of religion, b) the Weberian interpretation of Sufism, and c) the Current rejection of Weber's thesis on religion and Sufism. Although Weber is not sympathetic to Islam, this study will try to be as objective as possible in studying his sociological thoughts and ideas.

## **B. Max Weber and His Complicated Legacy**

Exactly one hundred years after the death of Max Weber (d. 1920), the sociology he initiated still becomes the object of discussion and debate. Controversy and

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<sup>2</sup> Bryan S. Turner, "Revisiting Weber and Islam," *The British Journal of Sociology* 61, no. 1 (January 14, 2010): 161–66, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-4446.2009.01285.x>.

<sup>3</sup> Sufism in this regard refers to Islamic mysticism, that is a belief and practices that would bring the Muslims to be close to Allah. In Islam, it is called *tasawwuf*. Shahida Bilqies, "Understanding the Concept of Islamic Sufism," *Journal of Education & Social Policy* 1, no. 1 (2014): 55–72, <http://jespnet.com/journal/index/2130>.

contribution are common in his sociological ideas. However, some reject it but many also accept it. His ideas have now become an established school. The Weberian school can be an offer that must be considered when talking about the sociology of religion today. But, the legacy of his thoughts is quite different now because it continues to be criticized. The society that Weber studied at that time was not the society that we see today. Fundamental changes in the aspects of structure, tradition, mindset, relationship patterns, and the various dynamics determine the framework of this science. European society then and now is not similar. Likewise, the Asian society that became his object of study is also growing. The social conditions surrounding religions are also changed and different.

Yet, studying Weber's ideas is still interesting and important to Western and Muslim scholars. Brian S. Turner (1992) said that he is an "essentially contested author", a writer who is continuously and essentially being debated. In terms of ideas, it is clear that Weber's thinking has no comparison. He is one of the scholars and thinkers whose theories have colored the development of contemporary social sciences in almost all over the world in the last hundred years. Without him, we may never know a science called sociology. Even if there was, it would not necessarily be as mature as now. So, reading his works will amaze us even though at the same time we would be disappointed because of their complexity.

Weber is a productive figure who has inspired many people both positively and negatively. He wrote many works. Most of which, he wrote in German. He wrote *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. The German edition of this book was first published in 1920 and published in English in 1978. Its first launching was greeted festively by sociologists such as Arthur Stinchcombe, Reinhard Bendix, Guenther Roth, and many others. In their eyes, this work is "the greatest sociological text of this century". His other important work in the context of our discussion is *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. This is a collection of Weber's writings scattered in many places and compiled and translated into English by H.H. Gerth and Wright Mills. Brian S. Turner, one of Weber's greatest successors, also gives a new preface in this book. Various issues such as sciences and politics, power, and social structure are part of the process of change in history. Religion also gets a special attention in this work. In his view, religion has a position in the course of history and has contributed to color it. Weber elaborates his views on what he calls "typology of asceticism and mysticism". In general, asceticism, according to Weber, is active while mysticism is passive. The former is valuable in the context of creating a spirit of capitalism, while the latter is the opposite.

Another work that should not be forgotten when talking about Weber is *The Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism*. In the minds of the scholars, it is viewed as a "moral code" which emphasizes the principles of hard work, life discipline, and organizing human life in order to serve religion and God. In this book, Weber made a firm statement about his religious affiliation. This statement is important for the

European context at that time, given that the school of thought that developed rapidly there in general and in Germany in particular was one that led to atheism, or a notion that rejected the concept of the existence of God, as represented by Karl Marx with his Marxism. Weber himself rejected Marxism, especially the concept of *dialectical materialism*.<sup>4</sup> Weber disagreed with this idea. He is more inclined to a moral approach. For him, goodness, precisely the Protestant ethics, is the best way to progress and change. The essence of this ethic is the ethos of hard work at the physical level. Intellectually, this ethic rejects the pre-destination notion that the fate of human being has been determined by God since his birth. Meanwhile, "spiritually" contains teachings on how to overcome anxiety to reach salvation through good deeds. These three things are the main factor of the birth of a capitalistic economy, industrialism, and even modernity.

According to Parsons (1958), Weber's main contribution to *Protestant Ethics* lies in his success in explaining how religious and cultural values influence individual and people behavior and vice versa. It means that Weber's sociological ideas are dialogical and a rejection of Marx's thesis on dialectics. In Weber's view, religion is tantamount to culture because both are human products of the environmental conditions they are facing. Religion is often considered a product of culture itself. The aspects of revelation and sacredness are missing in this context. The role of God is insignificant and disappeared. There is no "moral code" in the real sense. What exists is a moral order as a process that is constantly developing. Morality is temporary and loses its element of universality.

The scope of Weber's sociology is very broad. His views on one issue, religion, for instance, are also inconsistent. Therefore, the most important challenge in studying Weber is how to place it in "one box" which enables us to read it in a more focused and directed way. In this regard, the box is called Sufism (*Tasawwuf*). However, it would take extra attention to study Weber's idea on Sufism. How this study can be carried out is a complex challenge because there are variables that seem to be different and difficult to reconcile. To overcome this problem, the most possible strategy is to examine Weber's ideas on the sociology of religion and then narrow it to the sociology of Islam. From here, we view the debates that occur around it in the context of a study of Sufism in the contemporary era.

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<sup>4</sup> Through this theory, Marx wanted to emphasize that change can only occur through the process of "struggle of opposites". It means, in a society, there must be several forces competing with each other for power and domination. Dialectics, not dialogue, would inevitably happen. Dialectics necessitates collision or contention. While dialogue leads to alliance. To achieve a change, according to Marx, it requires a clash. Or in a more moderate way, a clash is undeniable path to change.

### C. Religion in Weber's Sociology

Weber viewed religion as a belief in supernatural powers.<sup>5</sup> It is a substantive definition i.e. something can be called a religion or not depending on the presence or absence of that belief. Functionalism offers a different definition. Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons, for example, understand religion from the aspect of its social and psychological functions. In this sense, religion is believed to have certain functions in society such as bringing unity, harmony, common awareness, and the like. Meanwhile, structuralisms<sup>6</sup> hold the view that religion depends on the process, i.e. on what and who has the authority to determine that a certain belief or faith can be called a religion. Compared to the both views, Weber's definition looks more convincing. Yet, his definition is too broad. The word "belief" makes a difference. When viewed from this definition, Weber's understanding of religion contains a normative sense that should be present in religion. But on the other hand, as a prominent sociologist, his understanding of religion does not have a sociological nuance as he easily forgot the "social aspect" of religion in this definition?.

The fact is that he went so far in the social realm when talking about religion. Several of his works show this. He wrote at least four books to explain his views on religion, including a) *The Protestant Ethics* that has been discussed a little above, b) *Religion of China: Confucianism and Taoism*, c) *The Religion of India: The Sociology of Hinduism and Buddhism*, and d) *Ancient Judaism*. So, he never wrote a specific book on Islam. In these works, Weber examined the problem of social action and attempted to understand (*Verstehen*) the drive behind the action. What he meant by social action are not facts found on the ground but the phenomenon of the relationship between one action and another. In other words, the sociology of religion that he built intended to reveal historical narratives and how individuals or communities act as an expression of their religiousness. In Peter Berger's opinion, Weber's most attention is the problem of "elective affinities" (*Wahlverwandtschaft*), a moment in which ideas and social processes seek each other.<sup>7</sup> It is what is meant by interpretive sociology (*Verstehende Sociology*), sociology that relies on the reader's ability to interpret reality. Then, in Weber's sociology, religion is regarded as a social process, not an idea. The idea comes from the interpreter. The interpreter is the subject while the social process is the object. Here is the problem. As an object, religion is ultimately a construct of the subject. Thus,

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<sup>5</sup> W. G. Runciman, "The Sociological Explanation of 'Religious' Beliefs," *European Journal of Sociology* 10, no. 2 (November 28, 1969): 149–91, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975600001806>.

<sup>6</sup> *Functionalism* believe that a society is like a biological organism that grows, and as a consequence, its parts can be examined with respect to how they operate (or function) to maintain the viability of the body social as it grows and develops. Meanwhile, *Structuralism* is the school of thought that human behavior must be understood in the context of the social system or structure in which they exist. Encyclopedia.com, "'Functionalism and Structuralism' Encyclopedia of Sociology," February 7, 2021, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/functionalism-and-structuralism>.

<sup>7</sup> Peter L. Berger, "Charisma and Religious Innovation: The Social Location of Israelite Prophecy," *American Sociological Review* 28, no. 6 (December 1963): 950, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2090313>.

religion is a human creation. Therefore, Weber rejects the concept of prophethood as it is part of the past, not the present.<sup>8</sup>

It means that Weber considered religion as an outsider. Hence, there is a distance between him and religion. It is not surprising that his observations on religion are always filled with sentiment. In his theory of modern economics, he viewed a religion merely as a tool and economic prosperity was the goal. He understood that there was a natural relationship between religion and economics. He stated that the modern economy is a rational process, ordered, effective in terms of financing, taking care of labor, and taking advantage of the free market. All these processes are carried out by those who are work-oriented and disciplined with a high work ethic. He then concluded that only a dynamic religion could provide the foundation for the development of a modern economy. And the religion in this regard is Protestant, especially the sect of Calvinism. In a political context, there is no difference. He said that religion is not much different from politics. The state as a political symbol has a monopoly of power, while religious leader as a religious symbol has a monopoly on truth. Both often work together to achieve their mission. The state uses religion to seek legitimacy for its power, while religion seeks help from the state to fund and protect it. Their oppression would be very terrible because when they work together, their power seems sacred. As a result, opposing them is wrong and sinful.

In the debate about the concept of theodicy, especially regarding the issue of God's justice and human freedom, Weber seems to be excited to discuss it. The concept of theodicy revolves around the question of why there are misery and happiness in the world. In Islam, it is an old question that has been widely discussed since the second century of Hijri, especially among Mu'tazilah. Starting from his efforts to answer the problem of theodicy, Weber argued that Protestant ethics has social and even economic relevance. One of which is a revolution, considering that Protestantism is not identical with worldly affairs. The argument is that this religion offers the concept of salvation; a concept that becomes the foundation of why humans should have hope and motivation in life. Then, humans are competing to achieve the best, including creating a developed social and economic order. Capitalism and even industrialism and modernity were born from this process.

However, Weber's theory was not always welcomed enthusiastically by some scholars. Many consider it unrealistic and difficult to materialize. Weber never considered other religions, especially Islam, to have the same capacity to bring progress. It is the most obvious denial of historical fact. A civilization is not only the product of one religion but the masterpiece of the entire human race collectively which was built continuously from one era to another. Weber's historical logic doesn't work here. He forgot that other nations have the same contribution to the progress of mankind. In Brian S. Turner's view, "Weber's ideas about Asian religions are a form of Western

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<sup>8</sup> Max Weber, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. Hans Heinrich Gerth and Charles Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 152.

Orientalism".<sup>9</sup> Weberian orientalism is not much different from others, which tends to "oppress objects", to borrow Edward Said's term. Objects are both target and victim, with no voice or act. It is how he treated Islam. He saw Islam as a religion of slavery, polygamy, and warfare.<sup>10</sup>

According to Weber, the basic nature of Islam is patrimonial and feudal. Islamic patrimonialism comes from the concept of *jihad* that requires Muslims to become warriors. Therefore, they like to fight and take the treasure of their defeated opponents. The idea of salvation that originally exists in Islam diminished or even disappeared. In fact, this idea, according to Weber, became the origin of the spirit of capitalism. The institutions that promote the growth of capitalist pre-conditions, such as rational law, free markets, autonomous cities, and the bourgeoisie, are never found in Islam. In other words, Weber saw Islam as a worldly religion with a strong political component. He wrote, "the emphasis on holy war and the promise that soldiers will get to heaven if they die on the battlefield has made Islam ignored the concept of ethical salvation".<sup>11</sup>

Meanwhile, Islamic feudalism was born due to the strong influence of mysticism. This passive manner, in contrast to dynamic asceticism, triggers the birth of passive mentality and then surrender to reality. Sometimes, Weber views Islamic feudalism as the direct impact of the prophet's charismatic authority on his followers. It is a little confusing, considering that in the general framework of his thought, Weber views charisma as a positive force to bring about social change in society. Brian S. Turner who tries to explain this contradiction explains that charisma is ideal for traditional societies. But in a rational society such as the modern West, where modernity can be achieved, charismatic inspiration could be replaced by science and bureaucratic organization. Charisma, moreover the mystery contained in mysticism, is useless for realizing modernity.<sup>12</sup>

However, Turner relates Weber's authoritarianism with the Muslim revivalists such as al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, and Rashid Rida<sup>13</sup> who were eager to return to the basic teachings of religion and created an ethical system free from mystical elements. Also, he thinks that Weber's theory of *Protestant Ethics* fits with the agenda of Islamic reform because "Islam accepts the Western view of how to realize capitalism" by "following the way of Protestant reform".<sup>14</sup> The nickname "Luther of Islam" addressed to al-Afghani, according to Turner, is proof of how Protestant ethical teachings have entered the heart of the Islamic reform movement.<sup>15</sup> However, Turner

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<sup>9</sup> Turner, "Revisiting Weber and Islam."

<sup>10</sup> Turner.

<sup>11</sup> Stephen Sharot, *A Comparative Sociology of World Religions: Virtuosos, Priests, and Popular Religion* (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 38.

<sup>12</sup> Bryan S. Turner, *For Weber: Essays on the Sociology of Fate* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), 294.

<sup>13</sup> Bryan S. Turner, *Max Weber: From History to Modernity* (London: Routledge, 1992), 54–55.

<sup>14</sup> Turner, 55.

<sup>15</sup> Turner, *Max Weber: From History to Modernity*.

continues, "the Islamic version of Protestant ethics promoted by the reformers is nothing but junk or to have plagiarized from the West."<sup>16</sup> So, like Weber, Turner also believes that Islam does not have capacity to develop. If it is, then that ability arises because of "the influence of the European culture that colonized them".<sup>17</sup> Weber's greatest intellectual disciple and successor, Wolfgang Schluchter (a German sociologist), inherited Weber's orientalism and developed it in a more piercing way. The thesis that he proposed is no longer "Islam is incapable of developing" but turns into "Islam as a barrier" to modernity. This thesis is quite provocative and dangerous as it would lead an opinion towards a clash of civilizations between Islam and the West.

Kevin Moore calls Schluchter as "Weber's most important contemporary European interpreter".<sup>18</sup> Celebrating the greatness of his predecessors in sociology, Schluchter wrote an article entitled "Hindrances to Modernity", which was featured in an anthology entitled *Max Weber and Islam* which he edited and initiated with Toby E. Huff.<sup>19</sup> This work is a kind of celebration of Weber's success with his *Protestant Ethics* and the failure of Islam with its many depravities. In this work, they once again affirm the Weberian premise of the patrimonial and feudal nature of Islam. Perhaps, because of his pessimistic view of Islam and inadequate literature, Schluchter did not discuss this religion in his important work entitled *Rationalism, Religion, and Domination: A Weberian Perspective* even though he discussed all world religions including Confucianism, Taoism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Christianity. But the real reason behind it can be seen in the preface that he wrote in this book. He said, "The sociology of religion intends to compare and explain various views of the world that have been practiced by mankind, and the lifestyle associated with that views". From this statement, he then made a conclusion by saying:

For this reason, the sociology of religion can be regarded as a large and comprehensive endeavor to understand modern Western culture, its ideas, and lifestyle. And in this way, the unique Western civilization which is a product of Judaism and Christianity can be brought to the surface and then compare with other civilizations that are more or less created by other religions".<sup>20</sup>

#### **D. Sufism in the Eyes of the Weberians**

Among Weber's students and successors, Bryan S. Turner has a special position, especially in the context of the study of Islamic sociology. This figure was the first to reread Weber's thoughts and arranged them in such a way in his work, *Weber and Islam*. In the Indonesian edition, this work was published under the title *Sosiologi*

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<sup>16</sup> Turner.

<sup>17</sup> Turner.

<sup>18</sup> K. Moore, "Paradoxes of Modernity: Culture and Conduct in the Theory of Max Weber. By Wolfgang Schluchter. Stanford University Press, 1996. 389 Pp. \$45.00," *Social Forces* 75, no. 4 (June 1, 1997): 1495, <https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/75.4.1495>.

<sup>19</sup> See Wolfgang Schluchter and Toby E. Huff, *Max Weber and Islam* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999).

<sup>20</sup> Schluchter and Huff, xv.



*Islam: Suatu Telaah Analitis Atas Tesa Sosiologi Weber* (Sociology of Islam: An Analytical Analysis of Weber's Sociological Thesis). But Turner's position on Weber on the one hand and Islamic thought on the other is unpredictable. Sometimes, he explained Weber's views that Weber never said before such as the view of the Prophet Muhammad as a prophet (even though Weber rejected it), Sharia as holy law (even though Weber did not say so), and the concept of Ahl al-Sunnah as a distortion of the concept of prophethood. However, there is Turner's finding that deserves to be a reference regarding Weber's view of Sufism. According to Turner, Weber's sociology of religion is essentially a discussion of personal piety.<sup>21</sup>

Personal piety, in particular, is a manifestation of one's mystical experience and not simply the result of one's religious affiliation. In studying Islam, Weber viewed that the religious commitment of a Muslim gives birth to patrimonialism which is a militant attitude to fight, while the mystical attitude gives birth to piety. On one occasion, Weber argued that religion can develop in two ways, i.e. rational cognition and control over nature on the one hand, and mystical experience on the other.<sup>22</sup> Hence, elements of religion can be divided into three parts, i.e. a) Rational cognition, b) Mystical experience, and c) Religious practice. Rational cognition is necessary as a prerequisite for religion to develop. These elements are the characteristic of the advanced religion which Weber identifies as the religion of the Europeans. Mystical experience is needed, but in the case of Islam, this element has been replaced by worldly attitudes or patrimonialism. The latest is the most prominent characteristic of Islam in the form of the practice of Sharia or Islamic law. The problem is, according to Weber, that Islamic law is irrational. So, it becomes the most serious obstacle to the development of a social and economic order.

This general framework, along with a series of theories on religion, is used by Western sociologists who admire him as a reference and basis for conducting research on Islam and Sufism. Weber did not pay enough attention to Islam and Sufism. However, his broad ideas are considered more than sufficient as a theoretical foundation for studying not only Islam but also other religions in the world. What can be understood from Weber about Islam has been explained by Turner in *Weber and Islam*. This book is adequate to help in understanding Weber's views on Islam. What has never been done is to explore his views on Sufism. It would be difficult with clear reason as Weber never talks about the spiritual dimension of Islam except in a few paragraphs. However, many experts have explored Sufism with its various dimensions using Weber's theoretical framework. But, the group of Western scholars of sociology referred to as "Weberians" mostly has the same viewpoint; they are Euro-centric.

Euro-centric view necessitates that only Western civilization would survive in the era of modernity. Like Weber, the Weberians believe that except the West, any

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<sup>21</sup> Turner, "Revisiting Weber and Islam."

<sup>22</sup> Max Weber, *Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. Hans Heinrich Gerth (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 282.

civilization would be vanished because of the changing era. The term used by Weber is disenchantment, which can be translated into disengagement of religion from human life. This pessimistic view is shown by, for example, J. Spencer Trimmingham who, in 1971, published *The Sufi Orders in Islam* and stated that Sufism would soon disappear. Two forces that would eliminate it are the current modernization (external forces) and the Salafi/Wahabi movement (internal forces).<sup>23</sup> In Martin van Bruinessen's opinion, Trimmingham argued that Sufism will disappear as a) It could not interest young people, and b) The strong influence of the ideology of secularism and Islamism.<sup>24</sup>

AJ Arberry shares a view that is slightly the same but with a different emphasis. If Trimmingham adopted the thesis of "the loss of Sufism", then Arberry initiated the "decline of Sufism". Arberry, inspired by Weber, distinguished between what he called "mystical Sufism" and "popular Sufism".<sup>25</sup> As a mystical path, Sufism is a model and ideal path taken by Sufis to seek or find closeness to God. Slowly but surely, this mystical model turns into popular Sufism as more and more people claim to be *wali* (Muslim saint) and demand loyalty and special treatment from their followers. Not a few of the "wali" create their own "worship" to realize their aspirations to become objects of worship. Arberry then notes that "because of this shift and because Sufism has declined due to this change, it is then not attractive anymore".<sup>26</sup>

Another figure who inherits Weber's theory and bears similar ideas to Trimmingham and Arberry is Michael Gilsenan. Like Trimmingham, Gilsenan also focuses his studies on Sufism in Africa, especially in Egypt. In 1973, he published his famous work entitled *Saint and Sufi in Modern Egypt*. In this work, he used a Weberian framework when looking at the Muslim community in Egypt in a dualistic way, divided into scripturalists and Sufis. The scripturalists were represented by ulama (Muslim scholars). They are referred to as the formal and systematic version, while the Sufis are not formal and have charismatic manifestations.<sup>27</sup> Following Trimmingham and Arberry, Gilsenan agreed that Sufism weakened. He uses the term "decline of the social function of Sufism" to describe this phenomenon. Even not only Sufism, Gilsenan also emphasizes that the Egyptian Muslim community, in general, whether represented by ulama or Sufis, experienced the same thing. In his view, the decline in social function

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<sup>23</sup> Ron Geaves and Theodore Gabriel, *Sufism in Britain* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 56.

<sup>24</sup> Martin van Bruinessen, "Sufism, Popular Islam and the Encounter with Modernity," in *Islam and Modernity: Key Issues and Debates*, ed. Muhammad Khalid Mas'ud, Armando Salvatore, and Martin van Bruinessen (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 125–57.

<sup>25</sup> Nile Green, *Sufism: A Global History* (UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 1.

<sup>26</sup> Green, *Sufism: A Global History*.

<sup>27</sup> Ovamir Anjum, "Putting Islam Back into Equation: Islam as a Discursive World-System," in *Islam and the Orientalist World-System*, ed. Khaldoun Samman and Mazhar Al-Zo'by (USA: Routledge, 2008).

occurred because of "the strengthening of the function of the state in all aspects of life".<sup>28</sup> It means that in front of political forces, Islam is powerless.

The Weberian discourse on Islam and Sufism in Great Britain and its surroundings is now being inherited and continued by Mark Sedgwick, a figure who is quite aggressive in his thinking. Like other Weberians, especially Gilsean, he agreed that the role of Sufis and ulama is diminishing due to the strengthening of the political role of the state.<sup>29</sup> But on the other hand, he considered that Sufism epistemologically is possible to dissolve into modern society. And it is shown by "the change of Sufism from just a traditional spiritualism to a New Age Spirituality as practiced by Inayat Khan and Idris Shah".<sup>30</sup> This conclusion is clearly unreasonable, considering that Sufism and New Age Spirituality are two different things theologically and epistemologically. One carries a clear concept of God, while the other does not. But from the very beginning, Sedgwick carried a different concept regarding Sufism. He even thought that Sufism does not only come from Islam but from, a) the thought of ancient Greek philosophy, especially the Neo-platonic school of emanation, b) from Judaism, and c) from Western thought during the Renaissance through Spinoza, Helena Blavatsky, and Dorris Lessing.<sup>31</sup> With this assumption, it means that Sufism is a universal phenomenon. Also, it means that Sedgwick's discourse leads to the thesis of "fusion of Sufism" into modern spirituality. In this process of fusion, Sufism lost its finger as a religious spirituality and turned into aesthetic spirituality. It is no longer a home for seekers of God, but a community for seekers of peace of mind, far from religion. This view is in line with Weber's sociological orientalism. Except four names above, there are some other Weber's followers who adopt the thesis of "decline and even death of Sufism" such as Ira M. Lapidus, Arthur F. Buehler, Albrecht Hofheinz, Dale Eickelman, Cinvent Crapanzano, Clifford Geertz, and Ernest Gellner to name a few.

Lapidus saw that "Islam cannot develop into an institutionalized organization and capable of doing collective action" due to the factor of Sufism trapped in the cult of the individual that is a *wali*. Buehler's view is more or less the same as Lapidus. Meanwhile, Hofheinz viewed that Sufism can only develop among illiterate people, as the results of his research on Muslim communities in Sudan in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>32</sup> Eickelman took a more moderate position by asserting that Sufism is difficult to make changes because of the deep gulf between the idealism that is built and social reality.<sup>33</sup> Meanwhile, Cinvent Crapanzano follows Freud's theory when studying the Hamadsha

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<sup>28</sup> Mark Sedgwick, "Sufi Religious Leaders and Sufi Orders in the Contemporary Middle East," *Sociology of Islam* 6, no. 2 (June 6, 2018): 212–32, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22131418-00602007>.

<sup>29</sup> Sedgwick.

<sup>30</sup> Mark Sedgwick, *Western Sufism: From the Abbasids to the New Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 1.

<sup>31</sup> Sedgwick, 5.

<sup>32</sup> See Dale F. Eickelman, "Muslim Publics," in *Public Islam and the Common Good*, ed. Armando Salvatore and Dale F. Eickelman (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 11.

<sup>33</sup> Anjum, "Putting Islam Back into Equation: Islam as a Discursive World-System," 10.

Sufi Order (tariqa) in Morocco. He saw Islam as "an expression of the innate feud between those who desire power". He viewed mainstream ulama as representing high traditions that deliberately institutionalize these feuds in their interests. Sufis on the other hand are victims of the oppression of mainstream ulama so that they can never improve although methodologically Freudian, Crapanzano is Weberian in terms of his tendency to view Islamic society as "an entity that is constantly hostile to power".

Compared to others, Geertz and Gellner are the most militant and fanatical figures. At least that is Vincent Cornell's opinion regarding Geertz, and Rudiger Seesemann, and Sami Zubaidah regarding Gellner.<sup>34</sup> Geertz conducted a research in Indonesia and Morocco, while Gellner did it in Morocco. Similar to Wolfgang Schluchter, Geertz and Gellner turn the thesis of "Sufism is difficult to develop" to "Sufism as an obstacle to modernity". Geertz warned that the *wali* who are the leaders of Sufism are "the most accomplished con men who are good at moving the masses".<sup>35</sup> Meanwhile, Gellner was famous for his saying that "Sufism is the opium of society".<sup>36</sup>

### E. Counter Sociology

In the context of the study of Islamic sociology and Sufism, Weber is one of the counter-productive figures. Weber's thesis regarding the "exclusion of religion from society" was unfounded. On the contrary, religion, especially Islam, with its various dimensions including Sufism has gained momentum and continues to grow. Martin van Bruinessen unequivocally rejected the "decline of Sufism" in the 20<sup>th</sup> century proposed by the Weberians.<sup>37</sup> He showed that Sufism has flourished since the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, long before Weber was born, with the emergence of various reform movements in West Africa led by Sufis such as Shaikh Usman and Fodio, and in Indonesia through the Sammaniyah and the Qadiriyyah wa Naqshabandiyah Tariqa.<sup>38</sup>

The awakening of Sufism did not occur in these two areas alone. In North Africa, the same phenomenon was also found. This area was the stage of the fiercest battle. Here, the successors of Weber such as Geertz, Gellner, and Gilseman took part. This region was important because it was the center of birth and development of the most dynamic Sufism. Like the saying "where there is sugar there are ants", scholars found what they were looking for in this place. Vincent Cornell was one of the "ants" who liked to find "sugar" here, especially in Morocco. And he found something astonishing. He found Weber's most basic thesis on the charismatic authority did not fit here. The most fundamental of Cornell's research is the discussion of the concept of guardianship.

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<sup>34</sup> Vincent J. Cornell, *Realm of the Saint: Power and Authority in Moroccan Sufism* (Texas: University of Texas Press, 1998), 28.

<sup>35</sup> Cornell, *Realm of the Saint: Power and Authority in Moroccan Sufism*.

<sup>36</sup> Rudiger Seesemann, *The Divine Flood: Ibrahim Niasse and the Roots of a Twentieth-Century Sufi Revival* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 10.

<sup>37</sup> Bruinessen, "Sufism, Popular Islam and the Encounter with Modernity," 125–57.

<sup>38</sup> Bruinessen, 129.

Weberians generally equate charisma with *barakat* (blessing) when talking about this concept. But for Cornell, it is wrong. The authority of a guardian is not only charismatic but also ethical, doctrinal, social, legal, cultural, and political dimensions.<sup>39</sup> Charisma theory only emphasizes aspects of a leader's personality that become a magnet for his followers.

Cornell's study of the relationship between guardianship and power in Morocco, especially in the pre-modern era, further showed the dynamic nature of Sufism. In this aspect, he focused on the doctrinal problems. One of his missions was to refute Alfred Bel's idea, who became a reference for Weberians in Islamic studies in Morocco. Bel argued that Islam in North Africa, including Morocco, was established from the religious teachings of the Barbarians who first occupied the region. Their teaching was good and evil are two forces that continually battle for power.<sup>40</sup> According to Bel, these teachings by Islam were adopted and resulted in what he called "the Arab ethos of Islam". Within the framework of this ethos, God is described as a cruel figure. He doesn't care about His servants. This, according to the Bel, was the background of the birth of the Sufism doctrines that are intolerant, fatalistic, primitive, and backward.<sup>41</sup> Cornell's criticism upon Bell is quite long. He wanted to prove that Sufism has succeeded in transforming the Barbarian doctrine of "power" into an egalitarian one. The relationship between *wali* and the rulers, which is always dynamic, proved it. What Bel did, according to Cornell, was part of the colonialist political agenda to perpetuate colonialism and humiliate the Moroccan people.

Bel's idea was continued by Gellner. Therefore, Cornell's criticism of him was inevitable. Cornell found it odd about Gellner. Why, because he lived in the era of information abundance but failed to keep up with developments. Like Bel, Gellner was a "foreign agent." He did not have the basic ability to understand other people's cultures. Bel's historical theory and Weber's interpretive sociology that he used led him astray. It was very inappropriate, according to Cornell, to equate the condition of Morocco with its Islamic culture with medieval Europe with its Protestant religion.<sup>42</sup> Cornell wanted to emphasize that Gellner's theory was outdated and incompatible with historical facts on the ground. It was really unfortunate. There was an opinion that he just joined in. Some even say that while in Morocco, Gellner was never serious about doing research. He just walked and satisfied his hobbies of climbing mountains and through the forest. So, where did he get the idea? It may be from the rejected newspaper reading in the library.

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<sup>39</sup> Cornell, *Realm of the Saint: Power and Authority in Moroccan Sufism*, 117. See also Rebecca Skreslet Hernandez, *The Legal Thought of Jalāl Al-Dīn Al-Suyūṭī: Authority and Legacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 11.

<sup>40</sup> Cornell, *Realm of the Saint: Power and Authority in Moroccan Sufism*, 13.

<sup>41</sup> Cornell, 14.

<sup>42</sup> Cornell, 16.

Apart from Morocco, in the North African region, there is Egypt which is also the stage for the discourses contestation. There is something interesting in this area. The thesis of "the decline of sufism" was rejected by itself, even by Weber's follower, Michael Gilsean. We have discussed this figure above. He proposed a thesis that in Egypt, Sufism in particular, and Islam in general, have lost their influence. Their social functions were taken over by the state through educational, political, and economic institutions. Surprisingly, in his study of the Hamidiyah Shaziliyah Tariqa, he found that this tariqa can survive and flourish amid the challenges that confront it. The reason is "because it can transform into a modern formal organization".<sup>43</sup>

Besides, the facts show the ability of Sufism and tariqa to adapt. *First*, Evans Pritchard's study of the Sanusiyah Order in the Baduwi Cyrenaica tribe showed the success of this tariqa in bringing peace to hostile societies. And also, in Libya, the tariqa succeeded in leading the people to fight against the Italian occupation (1911-1943). After gaining independence, the first king to rule this country was a Murshid from the Sanusiyah Order named Shaikh Idris. *Secondly*, the struggle of the Naqshabandi Sufis Order in the Caucasus and North Kurdistan against Russian occupation until the killing of their last leader named Shamil in 1859. *Thirdly*, in Turkey, precisely in the Anatolian city, there was a phenomenon where the economy developed fast and dynamic in areas that have a strong religious and spiritual tendency. There, the term "Anatolian Tiger" appeared to describe the success phenomenon of young religious entrepreneurs in this region. They were also referred to as "Islamic Calvinists" because of their closeness to Sufism.<sup>44</sup> *Fourthly*, a study conducted in Ireland shows that Turkish and Muslim managers have the highest score in terms of work ethic compared to the British and Protestant, or Irish and Catholic.<sup>45</sup>

No less important is the development of Sufism in the country. In the quotation above, Bruinessen's research results revealed the involvement of the Sammaniyah and the Qadiriyyah wa Naqshabandiyah Tariqa in seizing independence from the colonialists. This happened, according to Bruinessen, at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Formerly, the Sufis were also directly involved in the struggle for independence, for instance, the Khalwatiyah Tariqa with its leader named Yusuf al-Makassari. This figure was much respected. He received the title of a hero from President Soeharto in 1995 and the same title from South African President, Thabo Mbeki, in 2009. His struggle against colonialism was legendary. He led the Sufi struggled for decades before finally passing away in Cape Town, where he was exiled in 1699. Meanwhile, Naguib Alatas found that the colonials care about the work of the Sufis in particular and the Muslim society

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<sup>43</sup> Bruinessen, "Sufism, Popular Islam and the Encounter with Modernity."

<sup>44</sup> Ömer Demir, Mustafa Acar, and Metin Toprak, "Anatolian Tigers or Islamic Capital: Prospects and Challenges," *Middle Eastern Studies* 40, no. 6 (November 8, 2004): 166–88, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0026320042000282937>.

<sup>45</sup> M. Arslan, "The Work Ethic Values of Protestant British, Catholic Irish and Muslim Turkish Managers," *Journal of Business Ethics* 31 (2001): 321–39, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1010787528465>.

in general in the economic field. As stated by Alatas, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, D.M.G Kock wrote a report to the Dutch East Indies government regarding the religious and economic conditions in Java. He said the Sarekat Islam organization, which is the first political party in Indonesia with large followers, was very strong in the economic field. Kock compared the emergence of a capitalist class in this organization with the same phenomenon in Europe in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. The change in economic behavior from traditional to semi-modern was reflected in the emergence of small industries in Java. Kock then said, "This is in line with the teachings of modern economics by Luther and Calvin".<sup>46</sup>

The recent development of Sufis in the country, especially from a political viewpoint, has also attracted the attention of historians and anthropologists. Recently, a book titled *Sufism, Pluralism, and Democracy* was published. This book shows the involvement of the Sufis in the world of practical politics in several Islamic countries including Indonesia, Egypt, Bangladesh, Turkey, and others. The basic premise is that the Sufis have a major contribution to raise the democratic culture where they are living.<sup>47</sup> As an anti-thesis of radicalism, Sufism has the power to stop violent politics and authoritarian ruler as well.<sup>48</sup> The study of Sufism in Indonesia was carried out by Milad Milani, a lecturer at Western Sydney University. As the majority of writers in this book believe, Milani agreed that Sufism is not a local phenomenon. It has become a trans-national movement long before the emergence of the concept of the nation-state. Surprisingly, Sufism can counter the global standardization of religion.<sup>49</sup> It is Sufism that neutralizes the concept of religious violence echoed by global powers. Sufism and tariqa are no longer regarded as movements of the villagers. Several cases in some developed countries showed that modern society is enthusiastic with it. It is not because of the spiritual drought experienced by modern men but because of the ability of Sufism to adapt itself.

What is quite surprising is that Sufism can develop in a region where it should have been isolated, Europe. Here, the first thesis of the "decline of Sufism" emerged. And this is also where the wave of mainstreaming the discourse of modernity rejecting religion began. Now the opposite is happening. Religion, especially Islam, with its spiritual dimension has slowly but surely become a mainstream force. Scholars have flocked to study Islam and Sufism and got surprised how Weber's thesis is never appropriate to the European and American regions. Recently, a book edited by Jamal Malik and Saeed Zarrabi-Zade entitled *Sufism East and West* was published. This book

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<sup>46</sup> Syed Farid Alatas, "The Weber Thesis and South East Asia," *Archives de Sciences Sociales Des Religions* 15, no. 1 (1963): 21–34, <https://doi.org/10.3406/assr.1963.1719>.

<sup>47</sup> Clinton Bennett and Sarwar Alam, *Sufism, Pluralism and Democracy* (England: Equinox, 2017).

<sup>48</sup> Bennett and Alam, 9.

<sup>49</sup> Milad Milani, Adam Possamai, and Firdaus Wajdi, "Branding of Spiritual Authenticity and Nationalism in Transnational Sufism," in *Religions, Nations, and Transnationalism in Multiple Modernities*, ed. Patrick Michel, Adam Possamai, and Bryan S. Turner (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 197.

adopts the premise that Sufism is directly involved in the process of "cultural exchange" between Islam and the modern Western world. What is even more interesting is that the involvement of Sufism occurred two and a half centuries ago.<sup>50</sup> That is when the conception of "modernity" was just initiated. Thus, Sufism preceded modernity in terms of developing a "cultural exchange" discourse. More specifically, Sufism is more modern than modernity itself.

In 2017, Alexander Knysh published his very important work entitled *Sufism: A New History of Islamic Mysticism*. Although this book does not contain the "new history" referred to in the title, it is still important because it presents interesting findings. Knysh was not too sure about the title of the book. He said, "Whether the title of this book matches its content, I leave it to the reader to judge it".<sup>51</sup> He was not confident as there is something wrong with the title of this book". This work is the result of 25 years of study. The relentless endeavors seemed to produce only short phrases that may be of no value to those who did not live them out. According to Knysh, Tasawuf is "the silent rebellion of the Sufis".<sup>52</sup> It is the "rebellion" against anything and anyone who is considered counter-productive against the prevailing moral order and social values. For Knysh, the dynamic nature of Sufism made it always move "to create history". History is made for people, by offering values and systems. That Sufism can keep moving with the system and its norms is proof of its dynamic ability. Those who view Sufism as a "spoiled dish" would be disappointed. Knysh found that "Sufism is not the past but the present."<sup>53</sup>

Knysh's tendency as the scholar who refused Weber's thesis is understandable. In the first line of his introduction, he has already criticized Weber. He disagreed with the separation between the concepts of mysticism and asceticism.<sup>54</sup> This separation made our understanding of Sufism very doubtful and misleading. Methodologically, this separation would mischief our understanding of Sufism as a movement to withdraw from the world, outdated, and passive. Weber himself viewed Sufism as old-fashioned behavior such as refusing to work, being lazy, expecting help from others on the grounds of blessing, prioritizing poverty over wealth, staying away from society, and the like. Several years before Knysh, precisely in 2016, a scholar named Armando Salvatore published his work on Islamic sociology. Salvatore's contribution is very important. He tried to prove Weber's mistake by placing him as part of Western

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<sup>50</sup> Jamal Malik and Saeed Zarrabi-Zadeh, "Introduction," in *Sufism East and West* (Leiden: BRILL, 2019), 1, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004393929\\_002](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004393929_002).

<sup>51</sup> Alexander Knysh, *Sufism: A New History of Islamic Mysticism* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2017), 10.

<sup>52</sup> Knysh, *Sufism: A New History of Islamic Mysticism*.

<sup>53</sup> Knysh, 2.

<sup>54</sup> Knysh, 1.



Orientalism who believed that "only Western society is rational and could be modern",<sup>55</sup> though Sufism has proven capable of being modern.

Salvatore is one of scholars who have been impressed by the development of Sufism. In England, the negative stigma is addressed to Islam and causes the disappearance of Sufism. Even, when other religions fade away, Islam with its Sufism is arising. The phenomenon of "the rise of Sufism amid the decline of religions other than Islam" is very surprising. It seems to happen suddenly and unpredictably. This thesis was first revealed by Ron Geaves and Theodore Gabriel in 2014. According to Geaves, the signs of the emergence of Sufism as an alternative social force arose since the middle of the last century. He said that Sufism has been able to play its role well as "counter-culture spirituality" since the 1960s".<sup>56</sup> Then three decades after that, or in the 1990s, Sufism was able to prepare a scheme to appear as a "global movement that transcends the boundaries of locality and ethnicity".<sup>57</sup>

In 2000, the first comprehensive work on Sufism in English was published under the title *Sufis of Britain* written by Geaves himself. In this period, he still found that Sufism was synonymous with, and could only develop among, certain ethnic groups, especially immigrants from South Asia, especially India and Pakistan.<sup>58</sup> The factor was because Sufism could help them maintain their traditions. But in 2009, in his following work, when he co-authored with Markuss Dressler and Gritt Klinkhammer, things were different. This time, he found that Sufism has become a "world-class spiritual capital with a global network". The negative stigma attached to Sufism and continuing in the Blue Continent for almost a century was immediately refuted. Weber's assumption that Sufism is conservative and represents "collective fanaticism" or FAG Tholuck's idea that Sufism is a "primitive spirituality that has no purpose"<sup>59</sup> is rejected in itself. Far from being conservative, fanatical, and primitive, Geaves found Sufism to be very dynamic. He wrote:

Sufism is not affected by changes caused by modernity or urban lifestyles. Sufism serves as a mechanism to promote mysticism not only for the internal Muslims but also for European nations who are looking for spirituality. Also, it is a mechanism for transmitting religious culture into a new context in Europe.<sup>60</sup>

Lots of studies conducted by scholars in the field of history and anthropology support Geaves' findings. At least two studies need to be discussed here. *First*, the study of Catharina Raudvere and Leif Stenberg in 2009 in England, Canada, the United

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<sup>55</sup> Armando Salvatore, *The Sociology of Islam: Knowledge, Power and Civility* (USA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016), 2.

<sup>56</sup> Geaves and Gabriel, *Sufism in Britain*, 2.

<sup>57</sup> Geaves and Gabriel, 5.

<sup>58</sup> Geaves and Gabriel, 3.

<sup>59</sup> Markus Dressler, Ron Geaves, and Gritt Klinkhammer, "Introduction," in *Sufis in Western Society: Global Networking and Locality* (USA: Routledge, 2009), 1.

<sup>60</sup> Geaves and Gabriel, *Sufism in Britain*, 3.

States, Brazil, and several Islamic countries. They found that Sufism has become the object of serious debate and study there. Networks, political agendas, the development of new rituals and organizations are of particular interest. Their study looked at Sufism not only from the context of the contemporary Muslim community but also from the point of view of international boundaries. The themes they studied include: the politics of Sufism, the rearrangement of Sufism in Turkey, cultural creativity among Syrian Sufis, globalization of the Sufism network, the transplantation of Sufism in the United States, Sufism in England and Sweden. They found that Sufism is very attractive to young people, especially women because it can help find the right framework to dialogue spirituality with modernity. They concluded that "Sufism, theology, and its traditions have undergone adaptations in the latter half of the modern century".<sup>61</sup>

Secondly, Pnina Werbner's study, published in 2003 with the title *Pilgrims of Love: The Anthropology of a Global Sufi Cult*. Through this study, Werbner found that the Naqshabandiyah was able to evolve and transform well in different conditions. This tariqa was founded by Zindabir in an isolated valley located in a remote village in Pakistan, far from civilization. However, as time goes by, this tariqa developed rapidly in the Middle East and South Africa, and then triumphed in Europe and Britain. So, this is a success story from zero to hero. Without a doubt, Werbner refers to Sufism as a) a late-capitalist, post-colonial, and spiritual movement, b) a transnational religious movement, and c) a movement for the globalization of religion.<sup>62</sup>

## F. Conclusion

Weber's sociology has helped many scholars to understand better the phenomenon of religion from various sides. The issues of modernity and secularization that recently have been discussed are also never separated from the Weberian discourse. Some even say that the essence of Weber's sociology is the idea of modernity. However, like many orientalist thinkers, Weber underestimated Islam. The effect is the limited theory of Islamic sociology on the one hand, and the delay, even the fallacy, of Western scholars in understanding Islam on the other. The sociology of Islam, especially the sociology of Sufism, is a rare study. The dependence of Muslim scholars on Western discourses in developing Islamic sociology has made the progress of this science unfocused, especially since the theory developed is very different from the conditions of Muslim society. Islamic sociology then faces two major problems that must be addressed immediately. If not, the development of this science, along with the Sociology of Sufism, will cease. These two problems are the issues of authority and identity.

Unlike Western sociology, which has Weber and later Peter Berger as authoritative references, sociology of Islam has no figure. And this, in turn, would affect

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<sup>61</sup> Catharina Raudvere and Leif Stenberg, *Sufism Today: Heritage and Tradition in the Global Community* (London: IB Tauris, 2009).

<sup>62</sup> Pnina Werbner, *Pilgrims of Love: The Anthropology of a Global Sufi Cult* (London: Hurst and Company, 2003), 1.

the identity of this science. It must be admitted that the sociology of Islam and the sociology of Sufism are still very much dependent on the framework established by Western scholars. Still, it could be the first step. Sociology of Islam and Sufism is still developing and is still at the level of responding to crises and anomalies, to borrow Thomas Kuhn's term. Sometime, like the development of science in general, it may develop into "normal science" and ultimately "paradigm". Weber's thesis as well as the synthesis and anti-thesis developed by scholars have become important assets in developing Islamic sociology and Sufism. Since the beginning, this study does not intend to decline Weber's thought. The improvement of Weber's thesis carried out by the Weberians, and the repeated criticism by his opponents is useful for capturing Sufism sociologically. Everything is complimentary.

How Sufism is portrayed sociologically is the right of every scholar to study and answer it. Undeniably, if it is positioned as a social phenomenon, Sufism has an incomparable treasure to be interpreted. Sociology is an attempt to find meaning, and Sufism has abundant meaning to reveal. The important role of the scholars of sociology lies here. They are an elite group equipped with the ability to read hidden meanings. On this basis, sociology is very important to Sufism. How do Sufis act in the public sphere is a very interesting question to be explored. In this very fast and dynamic changing era, Sufism has never lost its identity. Borrowing the term from Pnina Werbner, in the hands of Sufism, "space is deterritorialized and reterritorialized". It means that "Sufism can restore space and then restore it to normal". When Sufism enters an area, it will enrich or replace a new identity and subjectivity but then quickly blend into the old identity. And in that process, Sufism never loses its religious character, not secularized, and able to become a cross-border movement, transnational, and unifying.

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