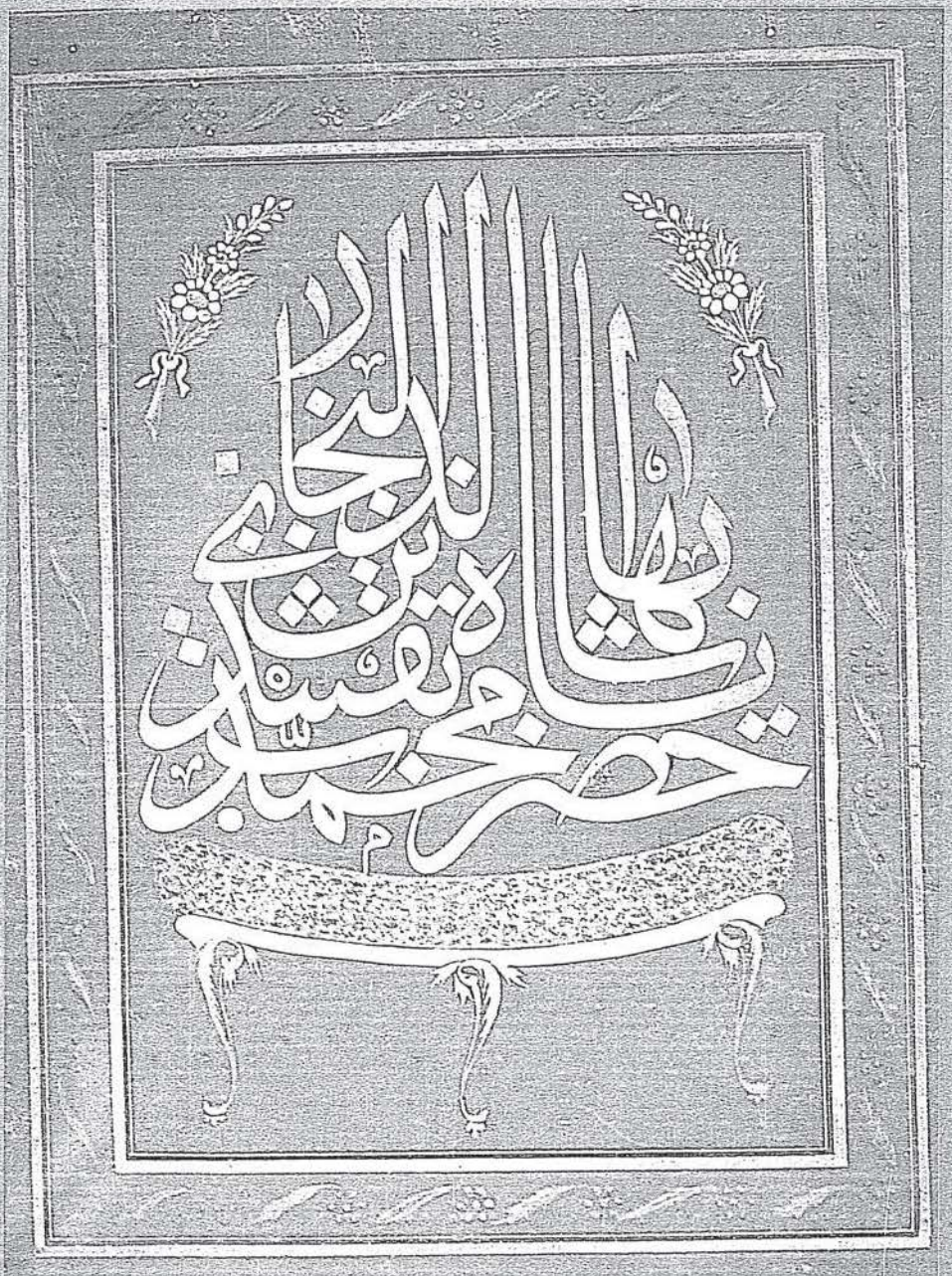
NAQSHBANDIS

IN WESTERN AND CENTRAL ASIA



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NAQSHBANDIS IN WESTERN AND CENTRAL ASIA

CHANGE AND CONTINUITY

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The Matrix of Modern Turkish Islamic Movements: the Naqshbandī Sufi Order

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During the radical Republican reforms of Atatürk, the Naqshbandī Sufi order became an important target. The order was banned, and major lodges handed over to the Ministry of Culture. What the reformist Turkish state perceived as out-of-date institutions became a "womb" for fostering flexible and adaptive informal institutions and discourses. These networks have been the main intellectual and philosophical sources of the contemporary Islamic movements in Turkey.

The institutional setting of an order, *tarīqa*, is in many cases more important than the religious doctrines to which it subscribes. In the course of this study the the following functional aspects of the Naqshbandī order will be focused on: (1) a pattern for inner cultivation and religious salvation; (2) tool for upward mobility; (3) network for social and political services; and (4) a model for a community.

The Naqshbandī order, in its many different manifestations, has been a part of Turkish social and political life for several centuries. The Naqshbandī order, like other Sufi orders, has undergone an internal transformation and revival in recent decades despite state-imposed secularization and repression. Not surprisingly, this revival has developed paralel to the Turkish state's gradual liberalization and integration into the global market. The Naqshbandī religious, social, and cultural networks have become closely integrated into other political and economic associations. In response to repression, most of these orders gradually transformed from strictly religious associations into competing educational and cultural informal associations with religious underpinnings. They gathered support from sections of traditional society, which regarded the Kemalist variant of secularization as too radical and destructive for Turkey's social fabric.

To understand why the Naqshbandī order has become such a significant force in Turkish political culture, this chapter will address the following questions: What is the role of informal Sufi networks in the construction of an Islamic political identity and in the adaptation to market forces and political liberalism? Why is the Naqshbandī order significant for the study of Islamic political identity in Turkey? The most important reason for focusing on the Naqshbandīs is that the post-Republican elite, which shaped the opinion and identity of the leading Muslim movements, evolved among local Naqshbandī groups in Istanbul and Anatolia.

The Naqshbandīs operated as a repository of cultural and religious traditions and served as a bridge between the Ottoman period and the current Islamic political movements in Turkey. They offer a high degree of social mobility in terms of the horizontal (society-centric) and vertical (state-centric) Islamic movements. Finally, the Turkish Muslim understanding of Islam is very much filtered through Naqshbandī concepts and institutions. For example, both the *Refah Partisi* (Welfare Party) and the powerful *Nurcu* groups are nurtured by the Naqshbandiyya. How do

the Naqshbandīs draw their internal and external boundaries? Do they primarily define themselves in opposition to other Islamist groups such as the *Süleymancı*, *Işıkcı*, *Erenköy*, and *Nurcu Cemaatleri*, communities, or mainly in opposition to the Kemalist secular tradition?

Naqshbandī social activism is both a cause and effect of change in the interplay between market, politics, and community. The Naqshbandī order also forms a social network in which the exchange of ideas and information plays a fundamental role in the reproduction of Islamic identity and in its reification within a living, evolving community. A full understanding of the Naqshbandī order can be achieved only if it is situated in its political, historical, and social context.[1] It is the main argument of this study that much of the recent change in Turkey's socio-political terrain can be rendered more intelligible to the outside analyst by examining the Nakqshibandī order as an agent of social and political change.

The Transformation of the Naqshbandī Tradition

The Naqshbandī order is a carrier of the Sufi tradition of Islam. This tradition focuses on disciplining the self, *nefs*, by educating the believer about the nature and function of the different faculties of the personality, from the sensual to the spiritual.[2] The struggle to control the *nefs* is carried out in the realm of the heart, *kalp*. Sufis are distinguished from other Muslims, among other things, by their interpretation of the Qur'ān. In order to find the true meaning of the book, Sufis "read the Qur'ān with the 'eye of the heart,' not with the eyes of one's head."[3] By the phrase "eye of the heart," Sufis refer to the ability to grasp the inner nature and meaning of the text. Sufis seek to create a balance between the inner and outer dimensions of the believer. The esoteric life is usually regulated by Sufi teachings. The exoteric life is represented by the ritual obligations of prayer and acting in accordance with Islamic norms.

Qur'ānic exegesis is dominated by explanation, *tefsir*, and interpretation, *ta'wil*. Explanation stresses the exoteric elements of the text—philology, history, grammar, and dogma. Interpretation, *ta'wil*, emphasizes the search for hidden meanings, or the esoteric dimension of the text. The Sufis focus on the *ta'wil* tradition in their efforts to reveal the inner dimensions of spiritual life and challenge the more formal, rigid orthodox interpretations of Islam.

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1 Hamid Algar has developed the framework of the Naqshbandī studies in the following works: "Some Notes on the Naqshbandī tarīqat in Bosnia," *Welt de Islams*, 13 (1971), 168-203; idem., "The Naqshbandi Order: A Preliminary Survey of its History and Significance," *Studia Islamica*, 44 (1976), 123-152; idem., "Shaykh Zaynullah Rasulev: The Last Great Naqshbandī Shaykh of the Volga-Ural Region," in Jo-Ann Gross (ed.), *Muslims in Central Asia: Expressions of Identity and Change*, University of Duke Press, Durham, 1992, pp. 112-133; idem., "Bibliographic Notes on the Naqshbandi Tarīqat," in G. F. Hourani (ed.), *Essays on Islamic Philosophy and Science* Albany, The State University of New York Press, 1975, pp. 254-259; "The Naqshbandi Order in Republican Turkey," *Islamic World Report*, 1/3 (1996), 51-67. See also Martin van Bruinessen "The Origins of the Naqshbandi Order in Indonesia," *Der Islam*, 67/1 (1990), 150-179; idem., "The Origins and Development of Sufi Orders (Tarekat) in Southeast Asia," *Studika Islamika*, 1/1 (April-June 1994), 1-23; idem., *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structure of Kurdistan*, Zed Books, London, 1992, on Naqshbandīyya order, see pp. 222-265.

2 Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, N.C., 1975; J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1971.

3 Yaşar Nuri Öztürk, *The Eye of the Heart: An Introduction to Sufism and the Tariqats of Anatolia and the Balkans*, Redhouse, Istanbul, 1988, p. 1.

Sufism is a discipline that aims to teach one how to live without confining oneself to the materialistic dimension of life. It argues that there is one true experience in existence and it is the encounter with the sacred, the numinous, which is beyond human reasoning and is grounded in a supra-conceptual instinct that immediately calls a believer's attention to his or her finiteness in the face of God. This sacred presence penetrates the deepest psyche of the believer and additionally provides a map of conceptual meaning. This complex map of meaning is marked by the cluster of concepts of *sabır* (patience), *tevekkül* (trust in God), *fedakarlık* (sacrifice), and *edep ve haya* (ethics and morals).[4] While morality tends to organize relations between individuals, religion defines the relationship between God and the individual. Sufism organizes mental dispositions in respect both to human virtue and ritual activity. Sufism seeks to instill higher moral values, *ihsan*, through the disciplining of the passions.[5] Sufism can be viewed as being a constant search for new inner discoveries and a struggle for human perfection. The sacred cannot be perceived rationally. It is rather experienced as a "feeling tone." In the face of the mystery and tremendous nature of God man is both awed and speechless, yet imbued with a commitment to struggle against a world order determined by one-dimensional life-worldliness.

Strangely, modern Sufism proved to be a dominant spiritual vehicle in urban areas of modern Turkey. This is contrary to the traditional image of the Sufi ascetic life. It has attached itself to the cities because it offers individuals a comprehensive source of normative principles by which to deal with the conditions of modern urban life. However, Sufism should not be mistaken for true numenal experience; instead it is an abridgement which allows the individual to chart new discoveries of inner life, thus transcending the one-dimensionality of material existence.

Nineteenth Century Ottoman Experience

Today's Naqshbandīs in Turkey have to a large extent grown out of the Khālidī-Naqshbandī branch.[6] Since Mawlānā Khālid devoted himself to promoting the moral and spiritual rebirth of the Muslim community gathered around the Ottoman caliphate, thereby strengthening its resistance against outside attacks, he pursued a careful and deliberate policy to penetrate the state by recruiting ulema and some high ranking bureaucrats.[7] However, since Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1837) was suspicious of charismatic popular leaders and competing loyalties within the state, he banned the Naqshbandiyya-Khālidiyya order in Istanbul and exiled the sheikh. Under Sultan Abdülmecid (1839-1861), the expulsion and persecution ceased, and some Naqshbandiyya disciples were appointed to higher positions. During the reigns of Abdülmecid, Abdülaziz, and Abdülhamid II, the Naqshbandī order expanded its influence and became one of the most important forces between ruled and ruler. According to Albert Hourani:

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4 Mehmet Ali Aynı, *Tasavvuf Tarihi*, Kitabevi Yayınları, Istanbul, 1992; Mahir İz, *Tasavvuf*, Kitabevi Yayınları, Istanbul, 1990, 5th ed., p. 73; Mustafa Kara, *Tasavvuf ve Tarikatler*, Dergah Yayınları, Istanbul, 1985; Erol Güngör, *İslam Tasavvufunun Meseleleri*, Ötüken Yayınları, Istanbul 1992.

5 E. Abdülhakim Arvasi, *Tasavvuf Bahçeleri*, Büyük Doğu Yayınları, Istanbul, 1983, pp. 16-17.

6 Kasım Kufralı, *Nakşibendiliğin Kurulması*, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, İstanbul Üniversitesi Türkiyat Enstitüsü, 1949, pp. 102-112.

7 Hamid Algar, "Devotional Practices," p. 210.

> Throughout the nineteenth century most educated Muslims who took their religion seriously and interpreted it within the framework created by the great Naqshbandī masters of spiritual life.[8]

The factors which facilitated the expansion of the Naqshbandiyya-Khālidiyya orders included: close alliance between the state and the order; worsening economic conditions of the nineteenth century; and external political pressures and military defeats. Each of these factors requires close attention. The Naqshbandī order increasingly treated the state as a necessary instrument for the realization of Islamic ideals. According to the Khālidī tradition, implementation of Islamic law at the state and societal level is the *sine qua non* for a just society. The state-centrism of the Naqshbandī was promoted by Sheikh Khālid. He asked his followers to "pray for the survival of the exalted Ottoman state upon which depends Islam and for its victory over the enemies of religion."[9]

With respect to Ottoman political and cultural life the nineteenth century has been called the "century of the Naqshbandī."[10] During the nineteenth century, important societal forces comprising state bureaucrats, intellectuals and notables were exploring ways in which to revitalize Muslim society. They sought to carry out the mission of societal transformation through traditional institutions such as the Naqshbandī order. To fulfil this mission they brought the life of the Prophet into focus. Muhammad was one of the most successful social engineers who transformed an ignorance, *cehalet*, into a new civilized, *medeni*, society based on law. The Naqshbandī examined the Prophet Muhammad's conduct and political leadership with a view to revitalize their contemporary society. The direct engagement with politics and social life was stressed by Mawlana Khalid and handed over to his successor Ahmed Gümüşhanevi.[11]

Sheikh Khālid, like Imam Rabbani, was worried about the effects of modernization which they perceived as bad innovation, *bid'at*, and the disintegration of the Ottoman-Muslim community. Khalid felt that the Muslim community was on the wrong path and tried to emphasize the significance of the *sunna* for social life, and that "if the *umma* had gone astray, it was because of its rulers." Thus, following Sirhindi, Sheikh Khalid seems to have thought that the most important duty of Naqshbandī-Mujaddidi sheikhs was to seek to influence rulers and bring them to follow *sharī'*a rules.[12] One of the major reasons why the Khalidi branch managed to penetrate the Ottoman state was the religiously orthodox and politically activist doctrine of the order. Both the state and the Naqshbandīs were critical of heterodoxy in society. The ulema of Istanbul favored the order, too, in their fight against the heterodox Bektashis.[13]

The social basis of Naqshbandī activism was located among the merchants. the literati, bureaucrats, and urban notables. The European "other" was brought into the cities and towns through the commercialization of agriculture and the penetration of

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8 Albert Hourani, "Sufism and Modern Islam: Mavlana Khalid and the Naqshbandi Order," *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East*, Macmillan, Oxford, 1981, p. 76.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 15.

10 Martin van Bruinessen, "The Origins and Development of the Naqshbandi Order in Indonesia," *Der Islam*, 67 (1990), 151; idem., "The Origins and Development of Sufi Orders (Tarekat) in Southeast Asia," *Studika Islamika*, 1/1 (1994), 15, 16.

11 Butros Abu-Manneh, "Shaykh Ahmed Ziyauddin el-Gumushanevi and the Ziya'i Khalid suborder," in Frederick de Jong (ed.), *Shi'a Islam, Sects and Sufism: Historical Dimensions, Religious Practice and Methodological Considerations*, M.Th. Houtsma Stichting, Utrect, pp. 105-117.

12 Butros Abu-Manneh, "The Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya in the Ottoman Lands in the Early 19th Century," *Die Welt des Islams*, 22 (1982-84), 14.

13 Albert Hourani, "Sufism and Modern Islam: Rashid Rida," in *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East*, Macmillan, Oxford, 1981, p. 80.

capitalism; the position of the middle class was thereby severely undermined by Western imperialist penetration. The middle class expressed its reaction to European penetration by seeking to redefine society in terms of Islamic concepts. For those concerned with the economic and political weakness of the Muslim population the Naqshbandīs offered leadership and an organizational vehicle for political independence and the economic revival of a Muslim community. The Naqshbandiyya has managed to confront the penetration of capitalism and modern ideas by establishing its own competing network system. The Naqshbandī constantly protested against the Westernizing policies of Ali Pasha and Fuad Pasha. They even instigated the Kuleli Incident of 1859, an anti-reform protest which demanded the full restoration of Islamic law.[14]

The Naqshbandī order remained very critical of the Tanzimat Reform policies of the Ottoman bureaucrats and saw them as an attempt to disconnect Islam from the state.[15] At the same time, the Naqshbandī order has also undergone change, thereby playing a key role in the formation of a society based on constitutionalism and human rights. In contrast to many of those engaged in the theoretical debates that surrounded the new idioms in Ottoman society, the Naqshbandī order, in interpreting the new idioms through the prism of the *sharī*'a and the *sunna*, was a grassroots and activist movement. Although tribal in origin, it should be noted that the Nakqshbandiyya has been more influential in cities than in rural areas. The Khālidī branch of the Nakqshbandiyya has clear elitist qualities, finding its greatest adherents in learned individuals, merchants, bureaucrats, and notables.

The transformation of the Ottoman state in the nineteenth century took place as a result of the penetration of Western capitalism which brought along the introduction of the railroad, universal education, and the rise of a public opinion. Capitalist penetration made small business groups, artisans, and farmers vulnerable to external pressures. In order to protect their interests, these groups resorted to Islamic symbols and rhetoric which, in turn, politicized Islamic identity. Studying the life of the Prophet Muhammad helped to make abstract precepts more concrete and created a shared moral understanding among Muslims.

The 1878 Russo-Ottoman War was a catalyst in the transformation of the order's strategies.[16] Gümüşhanevi's direct involvement in the war as well as in *hadith* study, e.g., *Ramuz*, very important indicators for the formation of this new social and political Islam which stressed activism. The Naqshbandī order quickly adopted modern concepts such as the rise of nation, *vatan*, and freedom and moved to regulate and respond to the modern needs of the Muslim community. The order could be mobilized by systemic changes, but it, as a political agent, now sought to restructure social and political life in terms of Islamic principles. For example, Gümüshanevi asked his disciples to participate in the 1878 war to protect the nation, *vatan*, religion, *din*, and the state, *devlet*.[17] The destructive defeat of the Ottomans and loss of large territories forced the order to engage in social, cultural, and political activities. One result of the war was a mass exodus from the Balkans and the Caucasus and the destruction of historic Muslim villages and towns, which became a heavy trauma for the whole nation. One effect of this confrontation was that Islam was treated as an ideology of re-

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14 Naqshbandī participation in the Kuleli Incident, see Uluğ İğdemir, *Kuleli Vak'aşı Hakkında Bir Araştırma*, TTK, Ankara, 1937, pp. 30, 60-64.

15 A. Hourani, "Sufism," p. 95.

16 The rabita was also used by political authorities to develop close connections between the sultan and the population. In other words, the concept of *rabita* might have been the reason why the Ottomans remained very tolerant towards this branch.

17 H. Algar, "The Naqshbandī Order: A Preliminary," p. 149.

sistance and restructuring. To conclude, the Naqshbandiyya of the nineteenth century became a vehicle for the preservation of Islam and a motivating force for mass mobilization against the penetration of capitalism and modern institutions that unsettled traditional society. The Naqshbandiyya, as a protest movement based on religious solidarity, became an instrument for articulating the interests of urban small business groups and farmers. Thus, in the last decades of the Ottoman Empire, the Naqshbandiyya constituted most influential *tarīqa*. In Istanbul alone, they had over 60 lodges, more than any other order.[18]

In the Ottoman Empire, the Naqshbandiyya was an institution that helped establish a sense of community among different Muslim groups.[19] The Naqshbandīs were reactivated by the expansion of capitalism along with new technologies of communication and transportation that came with European penetration. In this context the order stressed Islamic principles and Ahmed Gümüşhanevi trained over 20 caliphs or deputies and asked them to initiate their own *tekkes*. The Naqshbandiyya of the nineteenth century became a vehicle for the preservation of Islamic teaching, and an institutional frame for mass mobilization against Western colonialism.

More recent trends of revivalism among the Naqshbandiyya is a search for an "authentic" identity and the control of resources on a broader basis. Whereas nineteenth century revivalism focused on political transformations, the Islamist movements of more recent decades primarily seek social and economic power which indirectly can be extended to shape the policies of the state. For example, during the War of Liberation, Naqshbandiyya played a critical role in the mobilization of the populace. The *Özbekler tekkesi* in Üsküdar, for instance, provided a shelter for high ranking officials against the occupying allied forces. İsmet İnönü, the deputy of Mustafa Kemal, stayed in this lodge, which offered logistical support to many other nationalist figures.[20] Some other prominent Naqshbandī leaders took active part in the War of Liberation. For example, Hasan Feyzi Efendi of Erzincan led the mobilization against occupation troops in Erzincan and Bayburt.[21] In the examination of the history of the Naqshbandī order, we encounter several breaks and renewals, which have taken place during major socio-political upheavals. This ability to adjust to new situations and to develop new arguments neutralizes the hostile propaganda of opponents who seek to identify the movement as fundamentalist or an "enemy" of modernity. For example, the Naqshbandīs fully supported the Turkish War of Independence but protested against the radical and authoritarian secular transformation of the system by Mustafa Kemal.[22]

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18 H. Algar, "Naqshbandi Order in Republican Turkey," *Islamic World Report*, 3 (1996), 54.

19 Şerif Mardin, *Din ve İdeoloji*, İletişim Yayınları, Istanbul, 1983, 2nd ed., p. 70; idem., "The Nakshbendi Order of Turkey," in *Fundementalism*, Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1990, p. 206.

20 Kadir Mısırlıoğlu, *Kurtuluş Savaşında Sarıklı Mücahitler*, Mizan, Istanbul, 1969, pp. 263-273.

21 *Ibid.*, pp. 263-273; Cevat Dursunoğlu, *Milli Mücadele'de Erzurum*, T.C. Ziraat Bankası, Ankara, 1946.

22 The Kemalist historians presented the Nakshbandīs "backward" and as an obstacle to change. See for example, İlhan Selçuk who argues that "The Naqshi Dervish Vahdeti was the hero of the incident of 31 March, which aimed at the Second Declaration of Meşrutiyet of 1909. Dervish was hanged by the "progressive" forces of the state. After the abolition of the Caliphate, Sheikh Said, a Naqshbandiyya leader, instigated a rebellion against the reforms of Mustafa Kemal in 1924. In the Menemen Rebellion against Atatürk's Reforms, the Naqshi leader Dervish Mehmet cut off the head of the officer Kubilay. Dervish Mehmet was later hanged by the state. Said Nursi took the Naqshi flag and carried it to Islamicize the country. Mehmed Zahid Kotku became the leader of the Naqshbandī in 1952. The Kotku's order developed under the protection of the state in the İskenderpaşa Mosque, which functioned as a garrison for the Naqshbandī activities. Kotku patronized and gave birth to Erbakan and the Özal brothers (Turgut and Korkut)." "Son Yüzyılda Nakşilerin Kilometre Taşları," *Cumhuriyet*, 3 August 1994.

The Naqshbandī leaders led a popular movement against the adoption of the new ideology of Westernization in 1925 and 1930. This resistance has in official historiography been merely treated as reactionary without examining the socio-political motives behind.[23] This was also the case with the 1909 demonstrations against the Young Turks, and also, the two anti-reform rebellions, namely the one of 1925 led by Sheikh Said and the one in 1930 in Menemen.[24] As a result of these two rebellions, the Parliament passed a series of draconian laws to implement their reforms, and suppress organized religious activity.

Kemalist Persecution

One of the most significant consequences of the birth of the Turkish Republic under Mustafa Kemal was a sustained campaign against traditional Islamic institutions, with Sufi orders being one of the chief targets. The Sufi orders were banned on 4 March 1924 under Legal Code 587, Halkevleri, or "People's Houses" were opened to promote officially recognized culture and strengthen popular forms of art and literature. Despite the state purges against religious figures and institutions, the Naqshbandī order managed to influence many rebellions against the reforms. According to Resat Halli, there were eighteen rebellions between 1924 to 1938 against the policies of the state, and most were led by Naqshbandī groups.[25] The most important ones were: the Sheikh Said Rebellion (1925), the Menemen Rebellion (1930), the Bursa Rebellion over the abolition of the Arabic call to prayer, *ezan* (1933), and the Iskilip Rebellion (1936). These incidents, and in particular the one in Menemen, are examined and presented by the official histogrioaphy as a clash between the forces of Darkness and Enlightenment. On 23 December 1930, a group of local Naqshbandī organized disturbances which were actually orchestrated by the state as a pretext to kill the most prominent sheikh Mehmet Esad (1847-1930). Even though there was no link between the incident and Mehmet Esad, the state arrested Esad and his elder son M. Ali Efendi. The latter was executed by hanging and, Esad while in jail, died or was poisoned to death on 4 March, 1931.[26]

Under severe persecution by the state, the Sufi orders started to whither away. The policies of arrest, persecution, and execution continued, and the Naqshbandī order were identified as "a snake we have been unable to crush."[27] Despite these purges, the Khālidī Naqshbandīs were not as severdy hit as other Sufi orders which were more dependent on the leadership of the sheikh and his lodge. Moreover, Mawlānā Khālid's particular interpretation of *dhikr* and *rabita* did not require any outward manifestation of religious rituals. Their recourse to inner spirituality made it easier to survive under the pressure from the secular authorities. The Naqshbandiyya-Khālidiyya was thus better suited than other *tarīqas* to emerge as a

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23 *Menemen İrtica Hadisesi*, Hariciye Vekaleti Matbuat Umumi Müdürlüğü, Ankara, 1931.

24 Mustafa Kara, *Din, Hayat, Sanat Açısından Tekkeler ve Zaviyeler*, Dergah Yayınları, Istanbul, 1980, pp. 327-335.

25 Reşat Halli, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Ayaklanmalar* (1924-1938), Genel Kurmay Yayınları, Ankara, 1972.

26 Sadık Albayrak, *Şeriat Yolunda Yürüyenler ve Sürünenler*, Medrese Yayınevi, Istanbul, 1979, pp. 231-234; Mete Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti*, pp. 293-295. Mehmet Esad left a number of works: *Mektubat* (his letters to his followers which are regularly republished in monthly magazine *Altınoluk*); *Risale-i Nakşibendiye* (precepts and principles of Naqshbandī order); and *Kenzü'l-İrfan* (a collection of hadith with Turkish commentary). I would like to thank Ahmet Taşgetiren, the editor of *Altınoluk*, for bringing these works to my attention.

27 Mahmut Goloğlu, *Devrimler ve Tepkiler*, Goloğlu Yayınları, Ankara, 1972, p. 132.

matrix for the revival of organized Islamic movements in the more relaxed period of the 1950s.

The Naqshbandī tradition constituted the intellectual and historical groundwork for a new urban-Islamic discourse, led by figures such as Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, Nurettin Topcu, and Sezai Karakoç. The formation of a new discourse indicates that Islamic acculturation goes hand-in-hand with accommodating different Islamist views and practices within conventional institutions. Kısakürek, Topcu, and Karakoç shaped the second generation of Islamist intellectuals active today, which includes Ali Bulaç, İsmet Özel, İsmail Kara, Mustafa Kutlu, Rasim Özdenören, Erdem Beyazıt, and Ersin Gürdoğan. Most of these intellectuals, like the first generation, have close Naqshbandī connections. In a way, the long tradition of the Naqshbandī order has been transmitted to the new urban culture through these Islamist intellectuals. The fact of having been nourished and formed within a Sufi tradition distinguishes the Turkish Islamist intellectuals from Muslim intellectuals in other countries. Muhammed Abdu and Seyyid Qutub (1906-1966) of Egypt, for instance, treated Sufism as retrograde and suspect. Abu'l Ala Mawdudi (1903-1979) of Pakistan called on his followers to denounce Sufism as a violation of the pristine Islam of the Prophet Muhammed. The Turkish Islamists appreciate the role of history and tradition and argue that the understanding of Islam is conditional upon a person's own experience. They are more liberal, open, and ready to reconcile differences within a democratic environment, rejecting slogans such as "Islamic revolution" and or "Islamic state."

In addition to being an incubator of the post-war generation of prominent Islamist intellectuals, the Naqshbandīs also helped to form the pro-Islamic National Order Party and the National Salvation Party of Necmettin Erbakan. Mehmed Zahid Kotku, a sheikh of the Gümüshanevi Naqshbandī order, mobilized his disciples, Necmettin Erbakan, Fehim Adak, Korkut Özal, Hasan Aksay, and Lütfü Doğan to form the Republics first pro-Islamic party with the aim of healing the sharp rupture between traditional society and the Kemalist establishment. Kotku was to remain the spiritual guide of both parties while he was alive.[28]

During the years of the NSP, Kotku favored an incremental approach to the political participation and "warned against premature attempts to establish an Islamic state in Turkey and stated a preference for the moral and cultural reorientation of Turkish society as a goal."[29] Furthermore, according Halit İlhan, Kotku "was in favor of technology and did not hesitate to make use of any machine. He always encouraged people to establish firms and corporations, and stressed the significance of economic independence. His life was immersed in politics."[30]

The Naqshbandīs, along with their complex web of institutions and practices, seek to expand their influence and create new social, cultural, and economic space outside of state control. The Sufi orders have turned out to be the major institutions for the aggregation of economic and political interests.

Identity Formation: The *Iskenderpaşa Dergahı*

The case of the *Iskenderpaşa Dergahı*, convent, indicates that many of those who are involved in contemporary Turkish Islamic social movements are not "deprived" people who suffer from anomie but are rather "enabled" people of Turkish society

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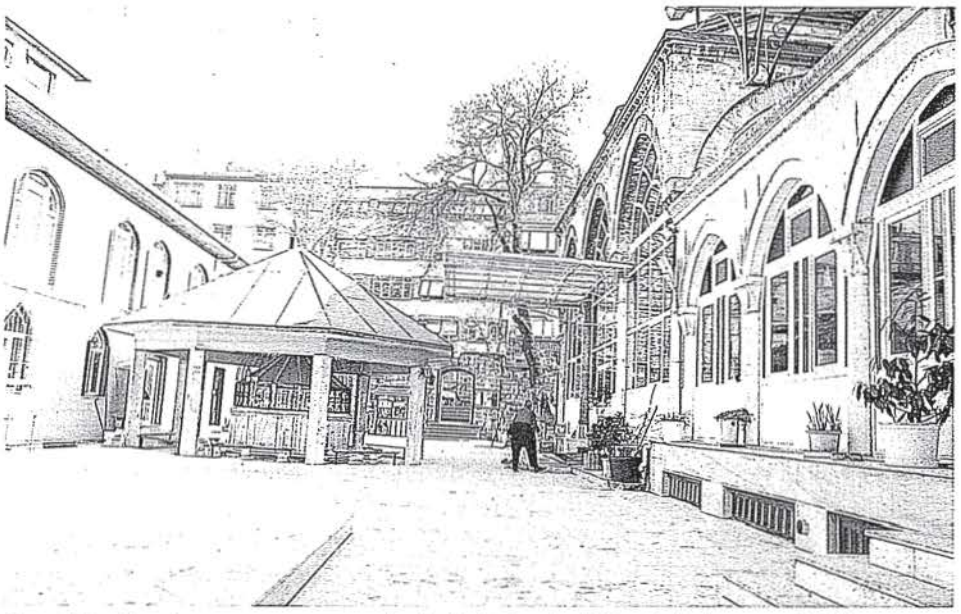
28 Esad Coşan, "Thoughts on the Elections," *İslam*, (October 1991); Mehmet Sayoğlu, "Vefatının 15. Yılında Mehmet Zahid Kotku," *Yeni Şafak*, 12 November 1995.

29 Algar notes from his private conversation with Kotku in 1970 see "Political Aspects," p. 143.

30 Halit İlhan, "Bağımsızlığa Teşvik Etmiştir," *İslam*, (November 1992), 43.



Part of the İskenderpaşa mosque complex in Fatih, Istanbul (Cengiz Kahraman, 1999).

who want to bring about change rather than passively react to socio-economic forces.[31] In short, theories of relative deprivation, which treat social movements as growing out of membership in a group[32] a disadvantaged position, relative to some other group do not apply in this case having. The revival of the Sufi orders is part of a broader process, since Islamic groups have become more involved through the general privatization of economic, educational and health services

In Istanbul there are four main Naqshbandī branches: the economically wealthiest and most influential one is the *Iskenderpaşa*, led by Professor Esad Coşan; the second most powerful branch is the *Erenköy Cemaati*,[33] with Musa Topbaş, a rich businessmen, as leader; the third, more conservative group is the *Ismail Ağa Cemaati*, led by Mahmut Ustaosmanoğlu; and the largest fourth and one is the *Menzil Cemaati* of Adıyaman.[34] However, in this study I will focus only on the *Iskenderpaşa Dergahı* or *Cemaati*.

The Naqshbandī order is, and has been, an association of individuals who seek to reinforce and re-introduce the primacy of religion both in politics and ethnics. The *Iskenderpaşa Cemaati* had attempted to accomplish this by establishing their own economic, educational, and communicative networks. The individuals comprising the this *cemaat* are typically businessmen, ranging from wealthy executives in large national corporations to small merchants. The group is like a mixture of the Christian Coalition in the United States, with its political and religious agenda and strong media connections, on the one hand, and a large trade association, which seeks to protect its members from adverse political forces and economic instability, on the other.

Since the 1980 military coup, the Turkish state has receded from its heavy-hand-

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31 Mary E. Hegland, "Introduction," in Richard T. Antoun and Mary E. Hegland (eds.), *Religious Resurgence: Contemporary Cases in Islam, Christianity, and Judaism*, Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, 1987, pp. 2-3.

32 J. N. Gurney and K. J. Tierney, "Relative Deprivation and Social Movements: A Critical Look at Twenty Years of Theory and Research," *Sociological Quarterly*, 23 (1982), 34.

33 Sadık Dana, *Mahmud Sami Ramazanoğlu*, Erkam Yayınları, Istanbul, 1991.

34 A. Selahattin Kınacı, *Şeyh Seyyid Muhammed Raşit Erol (K.S.A.)'nın Hayatı*, Menzil Yayınevi, Adıyaman, 1996.

ed social engineering and involvement in the subtelety of daily life. Although never having abdicated entirely their role in Turkish life, the Naqshbandīs, have now become much more overt and active in their goals and have filled the vacuum left by the state. For example, the Iskenderpaşa branch now utilizes and controls some national media outlets; its role in developing hospitals and other health care facilities is widespread; and its sponsorship of primary and secondary high schools has given many Turks the opportunity to turn away from state-sponsored institutions. Indeed, Turkey's late president, Turgut Özal, made public his connection with the İskenderpaşa branch of Naqshbandiyya.

The Iskenderpaşa offers both a case-study of a society-oriented Islamic movement and a model of horizontal Islamic identity building. Specifically, I argue that Iskenderpaşa's engagement in socio-economic segments of society that are not overtly religious in nature - such as the mass media, education, business- while continuing nonetheless with the primary religious purpose of promoting individual piety, constitutes an important model for Islam's future and peaceful co-existence with Western culture. The leader of the Iskenderpaşa order, Esad Coşan, argues that, unlike European culture, which, by its rationalistic overtones is in the process of destroying its moral fabric by marginalizing religion, Islam offers a more reliable path for the future. In terms of the order's relationship to the modern Turkish state and politics it emphasizes a gradualist and accomodationist program and concentrates its efforts on civil society. With an expanding private economy, the Naqshbandiyya has changed from being a state-oriented Islamic movement to become a society-oriented one.

However, I argue that the order's remarkable adaptive powers and pragmatism may lead to its decline, not so much because of state suppression or rivalry from other orders, but because of its smooth adaptation to capitalism and its integral involvement in Turkish politics, both of which may undermine the spiritual and cultural aspects of the order. The order may come to be characterized as a vacuous commercial enterprise rather than as a Sufi fraternity. Such a transformation, like that of Catholic orders in many Western states, may result in fragmentation of Islamic identity with different groups vying with each other for pre-eminence.

The Market Economy: Corporate Islamic Political Identity

In recent decades, the Naqshbandī order has been internally mobilized by more worldly needs. The order has, to a certain extent, become secularized, and in turn, religion has been modified by profane concerns. By focusing on the Iskenderpaşa, I will illustrate this transformation. The study of the Iskenderpaşa order is ultimately vital for four reasons: (i) the politically active character of the order constitutes a microcosm of the many changes taking place in Turkey at large; (ii) the Naqshbandīs are by far the most politically active of the existing *tarīqas*; (iii) the order is also the most useful avenue for understanding the social interactions between politics and religion; (iv) it provides a substantial depository of documentary sources describing its development. In contrast to the Süleymancı, Ismail Ağa and Menzil communities, the Iskenderpaşa branch of Naqshbandiyya has adapted to the changing circumstances of Turkish politics in this century by assimilating the modern tools, something which other Islamic groups have been slow or skeptical to adopt.

The case of Iskenderpaşa illustrates that Islamic social movements do not function as a reaction to fundamental social and political disruption or massive deprivation. Instead, by opening private high schools, hospitals, radio stations, local TV

stations, commercial companies, printing houses, summer camps, and forming a reliable network among Naqshbandī businessmen, the order satisfies many needs of its followers. It also provides jobs in its own companies.[35] The Iskenderpaşa, like other Khālidī-Naqshbandī groups, is both cause and effect of the social transformations shaping state-society relations. The modern Islamic social movements in Turkey therefore are responsive to local as well as global aspects of social change.

Strategies chosen depend on the political context. For example, there is a close link between the degree of the state's autonomy and the cohesiveness of the order. If the political context is oppressive, the ties between followers are intensified and solidarity becomes a source of consensus. When the democratic environment flourishes, however, followers are inclined to emphasize other loyalties: club, union, or business association. Therefore as Turkey has been increasingly democratizing, the Iskenderpaşa has developed new means of communication such as periodicals and radio stations to keep its followers informed of current events. They have also opened new professional associations in medicine and law. All these activities compete with other loyalties by transforming Naqshbandī loyalty into a framework or a ground for accommodating professional loyalties. In this case, solidarity among the followers of the Iskenderpaşa order is built through creating a consensus on social and political issues.

One of the salient characteristics of the Iskenderpaşa order is that it is internally dynamic and externally defensive. By proclaiming superiority over other groups, such as, the Erenköy and Ismail Ağa Naqshbandī orders, the Nurcu, the Iskenderpaşa order is defining itself in relation to other Islamic groups. The internal borders are defined in relation to other Sufi orders. The internal borders are more important than the external ones which are automatically formed vis-à-vis the secular state.

Mehmed Zahid Kotku

The sheikh plays an important role in the transformation of the Sufi orders because it is around him that the order is structured. Mehmed Zahid Kotku, son of a Caucasian immigrant family, was born in Bursa in 1897. His father, Ibrahim Efendi, came from Daghestan when he was 16 years old and studied in Hamzabey Medresesi in Bursa. Ibrahim (Kotku) Efendi worked as imam and died in 1929 in the village of Izvat near Bursa. He studied in Oruçbey Ibtidaisi, and subsequently at Maksem I'dadisi. After his graduation, he went to Bursa Sanayi-i Nefisa school for technical training. During World War One, he was drafted into the army. While he was in Istanbul, the Empire was in the process of fragmentation, and he participated in public and private meetings to discuss the problems of the Empire and met with some Naqshbandī leaders.[36] He established a spiritual tie, *intisap*, to the Daghestanī sheikh Ömer Ziya al-Dīn when he was 21 years old.[37]

Kotku became the leader of the order after the death of Abdülaziz Bekkine of Kazan in 1952. He worked as an official imam in different mosques. In 1958, he was appointed to work as an imam at the Iskenderpaşa mosque and worked there the rest of his life. He was never arrested by the police or questioned about his socio-re-

35 K. Yurteri, "Nakşiler Holdingleşiyor," *Cumhuriyet*, 25 April 1994.

36 Mehmet Sayoğlu, "Mehmet Zahid Kotku: Kafkasya'dan Bursa'ya," *Yeni Şafak*, 12-14 November 1995.

37 Serdar Ömeroğlu, "Mehmet Zahid Kotku," *Milli Gazete*, 13-18 Kasım, 1988.

ligious activities. After one of his pilgrimages to Mecca in 1980, he became sick and died a week later. He was buried next to the other sheikh of the Naqshbandī order in the garden of Süleymaniye Mosque in Istanbul. The Turkish cabinet passed a special order for the burial of Kotku next to the Süleymaniye Mosque. The decision was taken by the Süleyman Demirel government before 1980 and implemented during the 1980 military intervention. This clearly demonstrates the power exercised by the order in government circles, leading the military commanders to implement this decision to demonstrate their partially different approach to religion and religious matters.

Many Sufi orders in modern Turkey, including different branches of the Naqshbandī order, claim Mehmed Zahid Kotku as the *qutb*, i.e., "pole" or "spiritual axis" of the 1960s and 1970s, in whom the perfect human being became fully manifest. One of the main reason why Kotku became the most powerful Sufi leader had to do with the quality of people around him: Turgut and Korkut Özal, Cevat Ayhan, Temel Karamolloğlu, Teoman Riza Güner, Hilmi Güler, Nazif Gürdoğan, and many other public personalities. Many of Kotku's followers became ministers (Korkut Özal, Lütfü Doğan, Fehim Adak), held office as prime minister (Turgut Özal and Necmettin Erbakan), and president (Turgut Özal).[38]

Kotku transformed the structure of the mosque-based community into a semi-political movement. The mosque, primarily the Iskenderpaşa, was no longer a place for elders to sit and pray. It became a center for shaping young people who later on came to occupy critical positions in the higher echelons of the bureaucracy[39] and in due course established the National Salvation Party. Kotku did not, however, see politics as the sole avenue to shape Turkey in accordance with his ideals. İnstead he stressed economic progress and industrialization as a better means to develop society.[40] Kotku's agenda modified the old Sufi saying: "*bir lokma, bir hırka*" (one piece of bread; one wollen cloak) and added "one Mazda." By "one Mazda" Kotku meant an economically powerful Turkey.[41] This meant a synthesis of tradition and modernity. In other words, he wanted his disciples to involve themselves in economic activity, not only in order to survive, but also to accumulate wealth and establish large firms. Kotku stressed both religious and worldly liberation. He wanted Muslims to control technology so that they could master their circumstances. His disciples were encouraged to become involved in trade and not in the civil service, since trade, for Kotku, freed individuals from pressures and created an economically and culturally powerful Turkey. He also emphasized education and human development as the engine of transformation. Kotku was a man of deep knowledge and was aware of the constraints of society. He treated the lack of ethics and concern for the inner self as the main impediment for the full realization of freedom.

Kotku wrote thirty books most of which have been published in third or fourth

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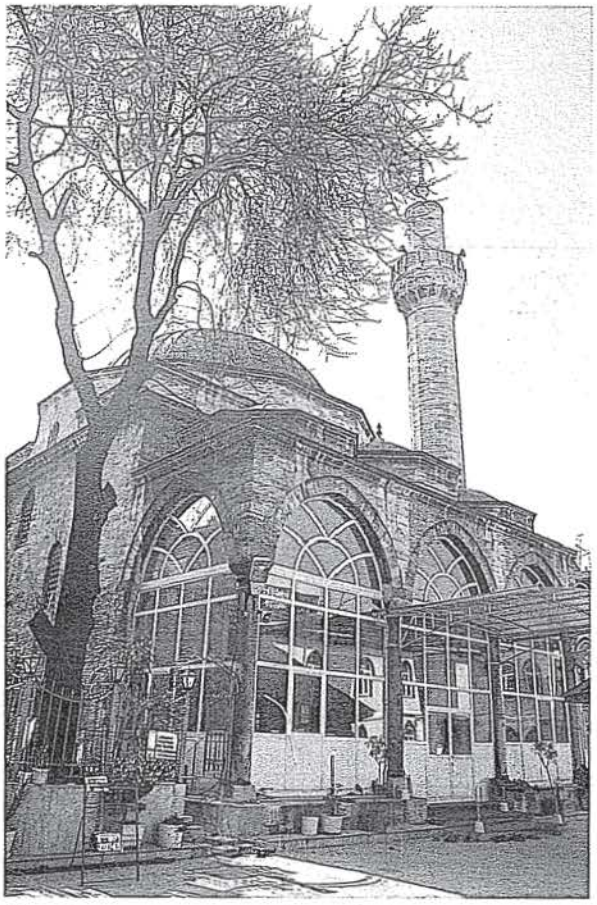
38 For his Naqshbandiyya connection see his interview with Ruşen Çakır, *Cumhuriyet*, 27 Aralık 1991. Korkut Özal was born in 1929 and graduated from the Istanbul Technical University in 1951. In 1973, he entered the Parliament as a MP of the National Salvation Party from Erzurum. He became a Minister of Food and Agriculture and Minister of Interior. After the 1980 military coup, he worked in the private companies in Turkey and Saudi Arabia.

39 "Mehmet Zahid Kotku Hocaefendi Rahmetle Anıldı," *Zaman*, 30 Kasım 1994.

40 Coşkun Yılmaz, "Mehmet Zahid Efendi (K.S.) ve İktisadi Hayat," *İslam*, (Kasım 1994), p. 26.

41 In response to a question Lütfü Doğan, MP of the pro-Islamic Prosperity Party, at his office in the Grand National Assembly said "by 'one Mazda' they mean an economically up-to-date Turkey since Mazda was the best car in the market in the 1980s. Moreover, you should note that "Mazda" is a Japanese car and there is admiration of Japan for what they have achieved without giving up their tradition."

editions.[42] Since 1865, each sheikh has been writing his own books as a guide to deal with contemporary problems and in which the sheikh re-interprets *hadiths* to respond to challenges of his own period. An in-depth examination of Kotku's books reveals that the goal was to help Muslims to find their inner self through cultivating Islamic consciousness. By this method of digging within the self, Kotku sought to preserve the moral aspect of Islam by developing a code of conduct. Kotku's *Müminlere Vaazlar* (Sermons to the Faithful), seeks to consolidate Muslim faith through moral allegories from the period of the Prophet Muhammad. In the corpus of his writings, a struggle emerges over the question of how to close the gap between daily human issues and practices and Islamic morality.[43] In his writings, Kotku brings diverse social, political, economic and other spheres of human life into an integrated Sufi ethic.



İskenderpaşa mosque in Fatih, Istanbul (Cengiz Kahraman 1999).

Islam, for Kotku, is a depository of moral arguments and the shared language of a community to mold the unformed future. One might sum up the writings of Kotku in the following way: peaceful community cannot exist without a shared language of Islam; communal justice and tranquility can only be realized by the internalization of Islamic mores; this internalization requires Sufi orders to cultivate the inner self of each believer. Kotku sought to articulate and consolidate shared mores to highlight questions of the sources of the self, community, social justice and the legitimacy of the state. Kotku's focal point was disciplining the soul and investing a cognitive map within each believer to form a well-ordered society. After Kotku's struggle to redefine the role of Islam in the community and economic spheres, Esad Coşan reinvented the Iskenderpaşa as a model for political associations and economic corporations. In this process, the image of God has been redefined and Coşan's presentation of the market implies that Muslims think about the "hidden hand" in the market as reflection of the hand of God.

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42 Some of Mehmed Zahid Kotku's major works are: *Tasavvufi Ahlak*, 5 vols. *Nefsin Terbiyesi*; *Ana Baba Hakları*; *Cennet Yolları*; *Ehl-i Sünnet*; *Müminlere Vaazlar*, 2 vols.; *Hadislerle Nasihatler*, 2 vols.; *Alim*; *İlim*; *Müminlerin Vasıfları*; *Cihad*; *Namaz*; *Zikrullah'ın Faydaları*; *Tevhid*; *Tevbe*; *İman*; *Sabır*; *En Güzel Ameller*; *Oruç*; *Zekat*; *Hac*; *Cömertlik*; *Yemek Adabı*; *Zulüm*; *Faiz*; *Korku ve Ümit*; *İçki*; *Ölüm*; *Özel Sohbetler*.

43 Seyfi Say, "Mehmed Zahid Kotku'yu Anarken," *İslam*, (November 1991), 40-47.

Corporate Structure

According to some disciples, Mehmed Zahid Kotku, openly indicated his desire to see his son-in-law, Esad Coşan, leader of the *dergah*.[44] The Iskenderpaşa branch has two main centers in Istanbul. One of them is located around the Iskenderpaşa Mosque in Fatih in the European part of Istanbul. The Iskenderpaşa Mosque has a large open place where people meet before and after praying. The garden is surrounded by several small rooms. One of the rooms is used to prepare coffee and sandwiches. Outside the walls of the mosque there are many small shops and people also use these shops as a place to socialize. The mosque and the small shops around it, constitute a public space in which individuals meet and exchange ideas. Since the Iskenderpasa Mosque is open to all Muslims, non-Naqshbandīs also attend the mosque and interact with Naqshbandīs. This interaction makes possible the comparison between different interpretations of the faith carried by individuals from different backgrounds.

The other location, which has been constructed by Coşan, is centered around the Mehmed Zahid Kotku Mosque in Küçükçamlıca, an exclusive area on the Asia Minor side of the city. This has become the center of publishing and radio broadcasting. Professor Esad Coşan himself lives near the Kotku mosque in Küçükçamlıca, within an exclusive complex. The furniture in his house is very modern and the room in which he receives his guests includes several works of original art on the walls and gifts from all over the world. (He also has a house in the village Ahmetce in Çanakkale province.) In comparison to Kotku's house and life style, Coşan represents a new mind-set and a determination to modernize the institutional aspects of the order. Moreover, in modern Turkey authority and respect has gradually become associated with consumption patterns, and Coşan's case indicates the degree of acculturation, that has taken place in this regard.

Most of the meetings and lectures take place in the Iskenderpaşa Mosque. But Coşan, unlike Kotku, does not live next to the mosque. By not doing this, he separates the public from the private.

Professor Coşan publicly discusses the course of international and domestic events in order to interpret them for his community. One can learn Coşan's opinions on numerous topics from his regular editorials published in Nakqshibandīyya magazines like *Islam, Panzehir, Kadin ve Aile,* and *Ilim ve Sanat*. The editor of one of his magazines explains the process through which Esad Coşan keeps in touch with the media. One of his students summarizes the news and faxes it on to Professor Coşan. If Coşan requires more information, the whole newspaper is provided. I also learned that he follows the international media through the official Digest of Foreign News.[45] Moreover, followers outside Turkey send him news about Turkey and Muslim countries. In the office of the magazine, I saw the Digest of Foreign News which was marked by Professor Esad Coşan himself. The news items marked included those on the Cyprus question, the elections in South Africa, war in Bosnia, and economic growth in Malaysia. Coşan asked the people at the magazine to collect all the articles on Samuel Huntington's essay "The Clash of Civilizations." Huntington's controversial article is looked upon as being very authoritative in the West and along with the Bosnian genocide for Cosan served to form the contention that "the West" is ready to annihilate Muslims. Since 1993, Cosan has written several essays on this issue and argues:

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44 Professor Esad Coşan was born in 1938 in Çanakkale and grew up in Istanbul. His grandfather and father were both Naqshbandī. He graduated from Vefa High School and studied Arabic-Persian Philology in Istanbul University. After his graduation in 1960, he was appointed as a teaching assistant to Ilahiyat Faculty of the Ankara University and he became a professor at the same University. He retired in 1987. Coşan has three children: two girls who have studied in Turkey and a son who has studied business in the United States.

45 This is printed by the Basın Yayın Genel Müdürlüğü.

"[the] present super powers see Islam as an enemy or target to be destroyed. This is very important and every Muslim must pay attention to this argument because Turkey is part of this target. The terror in the East and Southeast, clashes between Alevi and Sunni, conflict between secular and religious, veiled and unveiled, corruption, and moral degradation . . . are all manifestations of this treacherous plan to destroy us."[46]

All these indicate that Coşan is not isolated or merely involved in religious issues, but very much engaged in a struggle to shape and interpret social and political events. The *Iskenderpaşa Dergahı*, has become a major interpreter of Muslim understanding of modernity.

Stretching the Borders of Modernity

If modernity is defined as not only rationalism and socio-economic development, but also as the creation of a new idiom of pluralist ethics involving the defense of social and civil rights and opposition to oppression, then modernity can be considered an indispensable part of contemporary Islamic movements.

The Iskenderpaşa is not only dealing with essentially spiritual issues. It is also a web for identity formation, creating informal organizations for mass mobilization against social dislocation and corruption. One of the major characteristics of the order is that it seeks to restructure society and the polity in terms of Islamic moral values. Whenever Turkish society perceives a threat to its unity and stability, one witnesses a revitalization of Islamic practices by the Naqshbandī order. The order uses its institutional and conceptual dynamics for the mobilization of an Islamic consciousness in Turkey. The confrontation with different cultures and close interaction with the symbols of the "other" have transformed the Naqshbandī order. This interaction has served gradually to bring some of its lofty goals down to earth. The order's transformation has led to a well-anchored "project" of mobilizing Muslims against perceived social decadence by using media, education, economic institutions (such as banking and trade) to bring about change.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the Sufi orders often provided particular channels of upward mobility for individuals of lower socio-economic status, and thus created their own fragments of political power."[47] For example, in response to rapid economic growth in Turkey during the 1980s, Naqshbandī connections became useful in establishing businesses, obtaining credit and scholarships from Islamic banking sectors, and holding on to certain political positions. The reason why many politicians sought to make public their ties with the Iskenderpaşa has to do with the very real political and economic benefits which accrued from such a connection.

The Iskenderpaşa also promoted the circulation of ideas and the development of new intellectuals in society by publishing them through its magazines and radio stations and, by doing so, marketed its own intellectuals and representatives. Coşan calls upon his disciples to study foreign languages, use computers, establish connections with the outside world and to visit foreign countries.[48]

Coşan views trade and commerce as a way of shaping society and the collective consciousness. He argues that you must take foreign trade seriously because "one road to success is success in trade."[49] In his later writings, trade and economic enter-

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46 Esad Coşan, "Daha Ne Duruyor, Neyi Bekliyoruz," *İslam*, (Nisan 1995), 5.

47 F. Birtek and B. Toprak, "The Conflictual Agendas of Neoliberal Reconstruction and the Rise of Islamic Politics in Turkey: The Hazard of Rewriting Modernity," *Praxis International*, 13/2 (1993), 199.

48 Esad Coşan, *Yeni Dönemde Yeni Görevlerimiz*, SEHA, Istanbul, 1993, pp. 118-120.

49 *Ibid.*, p. 119.

Prof. Dr. Esad Coşan.

prising are emphasized more than politics. Indeed, some of his speeches and articles are very similar to the speeches of presidents of corporations informing shareholders about the economic condition of a company. Worship for God, for a follower of Coşan, can be realized in the market place. Coşan says:

> "trade is real and permanent in an individual's life. Other activities are utopic, hypothetical, imaginary; whereas, trade is the most realistic. As far as I am concerned, those who do not have trade experience do not turn out to be good humans. The most pragmatic and realistic people are businessmen and merchants. If a businessman is also a Muslim, he is the most in tune with his religious station in life."[50]

What took place in the second half of the 1980s was a struggle by the Iskenderpaşa to reconstitute the social and economic structure of Turkey in terms of a shared language of fundamental symbols. This was also the beginning of the "business orders," *tarīqa ticariyyah*, which led to the rationalization of Islamic precepts. In other words, Qur'ānic verses were turned into slogans as a project in social engineering. During this period, the mystical and heterodox features of Islam and of Sufism were significantly reduced. This was a process of de-localizing Islam and recreating a new, abstract, highly centralized and economically conscious Islam, which was embraced by the modern urban population.

The Iskenderpaşa helped foster the creation of a new code of conduct by examining the life of the Prophet Muhammad in terms of modern challenges. The Naqshbandī order stressed the role of the Prophet Muhammad over that of an abstract God, so as to provide a more concrete model for the public, which is characterized and identified with the period of the "*Tarikah Muhammadiyyah*" in which Muslims were called on to build their own economies and communities to meet modern challenges.[51]

This confrontation forced the Iskenderpaşa to use print as a "discursive space" to criticize what, from its perspective, were negative developments. The magnitude of the challenges presented by these external forces encouraged the order to stress the need for modern communications to mobilize the masses.

The Iskenderpaşa order has been very successful in changing the internal dynamics of cultural norms through redefining the role of culture and development. They do not differentiate culture from technology but rather treat culture as a base for economic development. The order has been through the social dynamics of this century: the fact that war-like competition is waged in the economic and technological fields.

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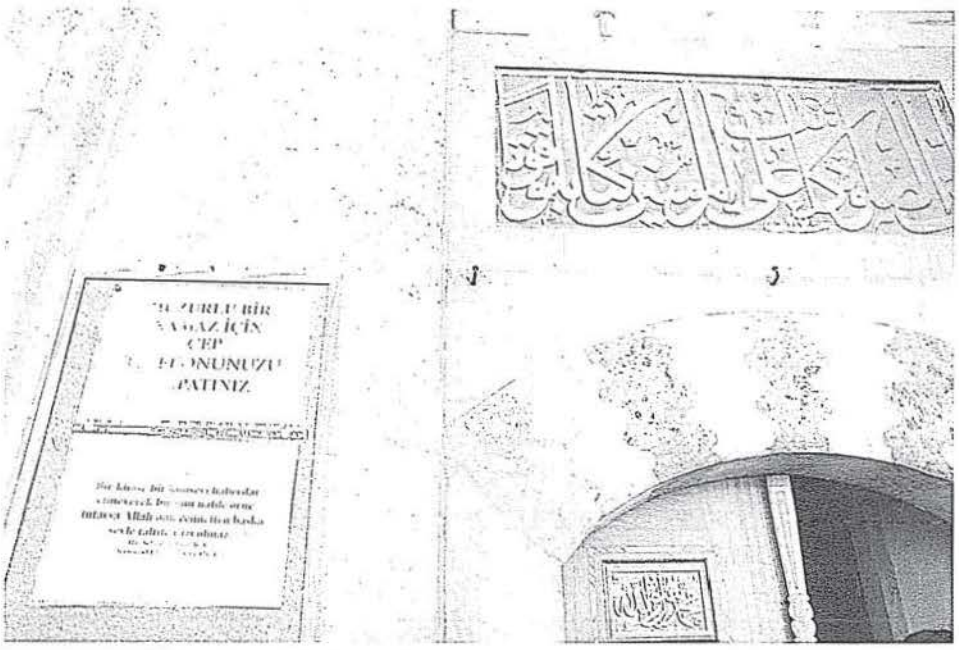
50 *Ibid.*, p. 163.

51 John Voll, "Hadith Scholars and Tariqah: An Ulema Group in the 18th century Haramayn and Their Impact in the Islamic World," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* , 15/3-4 (1980), 270; Anne Marie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, Chapel Hill, 1975, p. 277; idem, *Muhammad is His Messenger*, Chapel Hill, 1985, p. 226.



Adapting to modern times: The sign at the entrance door to the İskenderpaşa mosque in Fatih says: "For a peaceful prayer, *namaz*, please keep your celluar telephones closed." (Cengiz Kahraman 1999).

This is clearly articulated by Gürdoğan when he states that the survival of Islam would be problematic without an economic base.[52] After the liberalization of the economy and its own disengagement from the Welfare Party, the Iskenderpaşa discovered new spheres within which to pursue their vision of a coherent society, and to generate financial resources for its social and educational activities. To this end, it has established several firms and companies. With its own publication houses and radio stations, the Iskenderpaşa sees the accommodation of modernity as an inherent part of its tradition. In 1994, the order's companies had more than 1,500 employees; the Iskenderpaşa's Health Foundation has four hospitals:[53] Aksa Kliniği, Güneşli Aksa Kliniği, Sadiye Hatun Kliniği, and Sağlık Bilimleri Enstitüsü and Hospital; it owns SEHA Publishing and Printing and Trade Company (Matbaacılık Nesriyat ve Ticaret A.Ş), VEFA Publishing (Yayıncılık), AKRA Ak Radio and TV Co., DEHA Printing Graphic and Reproduction Co. The order has one labour confederation, HAKYOL, and one cultural foundation, ILKSAV. Some scholars treat this participation in economic and social life as the "protestantation of Islam," an expression that does not provide a full or accurate picture. The Sufi orders are involved in overt economic activity, but this has not fully been articulated as an "idiom of individuality."[54]

The Iskenderpaşa order argues that pressing social and economic problems cannot be solved by political means, but rather through the formation of a new consciousness or engaging in experience engendered by the latter. In this transformation, Islam can and should play a formative role by offering new alternatives and stressing the human factor. Gürdoğan argues that persons should affect their society in terms

52 Nazif Gürdoğan, "Tüketim Ekonomisine Başkaldırmanın En Etkin Yolu Tasavvuf," *Mavera*, 8/92-95 (1984), 108-115.

53 *İslam*, (Aralık 1993), 7.

54 *İslam* has always encouraged Muslims to involve themselves in trade. While the desert was the birthplace of Islam, it was in cities that Islamic institutions and high culture developed. Moreover, the mosque was traditionally circled by a marketplace and this has been the case in many Anatolian towns. The *pazar* (market) is a defining characteristic of Ottoman city.

of their "spirit". The existence of the sacred is expressed by human action and norms. This also converts worldliness into sacredness. After a believer discovers this universal awareness of God's scheme, Gürdoğan states that such a person seeks to objectify this subjectivity through the personality of the Sufi leader. Moreover, this universal consciousness is also articulated in terms of a community. Through this objectification, God and religious norms enter practice in social life. Here one sees the externalization of belief, i.e., ideas are made concrete in terms of communal practices. Moreover, the main Naqshbandī goal is to restructure society, rather than the state. This shift in focus from the state to society is a new development, and it assists in the democratization of Turkey by increasing the range of social groups participating actively in the increasingly pluralistic socio-political environment.

Conclusion

The analytical study of the Naqshbandī order is very important in understanding that the Sufi orders' ability to adapt to new socio-political conditions also elucidates their power to shape society. Through the Naqshbandī order, it becomes apparent that Islam (as cultural and social signifier) should not be understood as a self-contained reality, but rather as a historically evolving belief system. Islam, as in the case of the *Iskenderpaşa Dergahı*, is an on-going discovery of the revealed knowledge in which different branches of the Naqshbandī order compete to assert their own hegemonic interpretation.

At the frontiers of the interplay between state and society, the Iskenderpaşa has several features of great importance. The order articulates rapid social and economic changes in terms of shared Islamic idioms, thus building a common cognitive map to situate social changes. The Naqshbandiyya in the Turkish context has managed to reconceptualize the processes of modernity by reimagining Islam. The Naqshbandī accommodated themselves to these social, economic, and political changes. Expanding trade created a new middle class which became the basis of Islamic activism during the tenure of Turgut Özal. The Islamic movements of the 1980s had a strong middle class dimension, and the revival of the Naqshbandī order was a response to the ideological and political needs of the middle class.

The Iskenderpaşa order has served as the matrix for the emergence of major post-war Islamic movements. It has also been subject to a far reaching transformation in religious discourse and associational life as a result of the economic development of the country. This has changed its character from being a *tekke*-based, small-sized community, to a "community" based on textual and therefore more anonymous relationships.