Sufi Music and the Issue of Identity in Post 2011 Tunisia

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Abstract:

The paper examines the meanings of the new configuration of Sufi music through "Al Ziaara" performances and the intense youth interest in this musical genre, through crosscutting with the issue of cultural belonging and shaping the salient features of identity given the intertwine of the Sufi chanting and its related practices with popular culture. Based on a qualitative approach, in which were applied half-directed interviews technique and focus groups with 20 young men and women from different states of the Republic of Tunisia, the study pointed out as one of its results the role of Sufi music in dissolving the dichotomy between tradition and modernity. This tendency is manifested through the restoration of cultural elements inherent in the cultural heritage at the spiritual and social level alike, but through the cultural adaptation and renewal of old forms, as well as through the embrace of the ancient and the modern at the technical level. The study revealed the relationship between the resonance that Sufi music senses when represented in “Al Ziaara” performances, and the need and desire to belonging despite the different symbolic value of this musical kind and its purposes in terms of its individual (social escalation) and collective (new social links) functions.

Keywords: Sufi music, civilization, Al Ziaara, identity, popular culture, Tunisian youth, belonging.

Introduction:

This paper examines the new challenges posed to Sufi music, whose popularity has witnessed an ebb and flow pattern, as well as the cultural transformations they uncover. In the past, this genre has been regarded as pertaining to folklore, which reduced it to its performance and ritualistic aspects devoid of any essence. This fact made some people turn away from it and relegated it to the margins of musical genres. After 2011, the hierarchical classification of musical genres witnessed a reconfiguration, with rap music and « Salam » at the forefront, as well as Sufi music in an edulcorated form. In 2013, the various performances of the show « Al-Ziyara » have made it stand out as an altogether new genre that represents an extension of « Al-Hadhra ». It should be noted that this musical genre has been the object of an acute interest on the part of young people in particular, providing a large group of them with an opportunity to connect with a side of their identity and past by being the purveyor of a frame of reference that is most reminiscent of shrines. This in addition to the choice of singers, in a manner that brings to mind the venerable elders in their imagination, and the mention of the righteous saints and devotional chants within the framework of an interactive sensory-laden performance dominated by a mixed rhythm (both traditional and modern) as well as the loss of control over one’s body and its movements within what is known as ‘takhmira’ or a trance-like state. It also brings together the attendees of these performances and the performing artists to form closely-knit social and personal relationships that have come to establish what is known to young people as « Al-Ziyara Family », to emphasize the integral nature of this type of music.

How does the question of identity emerge in artistic trends and tastes by preserving and/or renewing Sufi music? What explains the high youth’s turnout and does this have to do with religious and sectarian affiliations?

To answer these problematic questions, we may assume that the interest in Sufi music is increasing and that this genre is particularly popular among young people, considering its new framework, which adopts a mix of ancient
produced in 2013, has to do with the issue of belonging and cultural roots.

In this study, I had recourse to the technique of half-directed interviews and focus groups with a sample of 20 young Tunisians of both sexes aged 18 to 35. I based my research on this sample and the snowball sample by tracking the network of the interviewees’ connections to compile their claims and then subjecting them to qualitative analysis, in accordance with to the axes of the questions, to confirm, refute or modify the research hypotheses. Although my study revolves around Sufi music, it seemed necessary to begin this paper with a historical overview of Sufi orders and their roots in Tunisian society as well as their evolution in accordance with the socio-political context.

From Doctrinal Mysticism to Sufi Art: Blending and Disconnection

While any artistic phenomenon is regarded as taboo from a religious perspective according to some fundamentalist religious texts, Islamic mysticism has adopted a different stance vis-à-vis art in light of the idea that « there are as many ways that lead to God as there are people », and that art is as worthy as any other forms of worship. Indeed, the mystical space, which has historically morphed from being a movement based on individual asceticism into groups known as Sufi brotherhoods, has largely succeeded in integrating the sacred with the profane, thereby transforming music and dancing into a way of touching upon and merging with the divine.

Some social groups considered Sufism as a popular religious model that not only mitigates the strictness of Islamic scholars’ teachings but also dismantles it and succeeds in deciphering its symbols within the chanting framework, turning the religious scholar in the popular imagination into a holy man, working miracles and protecting the city and its walls. This has provided marginalized classes with a sentiment of protection associated with the Sufi phenomenon Vis à Vis political authority during the Middle Ages (Al-Amri, 2006). However, the social changes experienced by some Arab countries in the aftermath of the colonial era led the Sufi brotherhoods into a period of confusion and apprehension, which was triggered by the decision to nationalize the ‘waqf’ sector, as was the case in Tunisia, a sector that used to be the economic artery which guaranteed the autonomy of Sufi brotherhoods and the religious establishment, in more general terms. Accordingly, these brotherhoods and their followers have been transformed into the enemies of progress with their dedication to superstitious thought, which is the perception that percolates from the official discourse of post-colonial Arab governments.

However, Sufism has proven, more than any other traditional genre, its viability and susceptibility to change, which is most notably substantiated by its success in becoming an artistic expression, not of the devotional kind as much as a professional artistic expression studied by specialists in musical sciences who direct their performances to audiences that consume this type of music. However, another reading of this transformation could reveal an extrinsically imposed trend, which caused Sufi art to shrink by excising its religious aspect and confining it to folkloric practices and customs punctuating individuals’ daily lives.

The Roots of Sufism in Tunisian Culture

Tunisia’s connection to Sufism dates back to the early centuries of Islam, when Sufism was in its first phase, and was known by figures such as Al-Bahlul Ibn Rashid (Al-Ajili, 1992), « and his disciple Abu Khaled Abdel Khaleq, who was renowned for his asceticism and nicknamed ‘Al-Qutat’. One of the Tunisian founders of the 4th-century Sufi school, Abu Osman al-Maghribi, became famous in the East. He was « Said Ibn Salam, a man from the whereabouts of Kairouan, a village named ‘kerkenet’ where he had lived in the ‘Haram’ for a while, accompanied by Ali Ibn al-Bakr, Habib al-Mughrabi, Aba Aya’ad Al-Nahjurji, Abba al-Hasan bin al-Sayegh al-Dinouri and other elders » (Al-Selmi, 1998). Abu Othman had a strong affinity with ‘inchad’ besides being an orator and an exegete. It is useful to know that Sufism has been present in Tunisia since its early days. There was the Mosque of The Sabbath or the Mosque of Damana, a place where the Sufis of the time met on Saturdays, following the example of the Prophet when he used to visit the Mosque of Qaba every Saturday, not forgetting the Ribat of Monastir, which turned into the first gathering place after the Saturday Mosque, where the Quran was collectively recited. However, Sufism in Tunisia only became an order at the hands of Abu Madin Shoaib, who
the Ribat of Monastir, which turned into the first gathering place after the Saturday Mosque, where the Qur'an was collectively recited. However, Sufism in Tunisia only became an order at the hands of Abu Madin Shoaib, who was inspired by Sheikh Abdelkader Jilani, the founder of the Qadiriyyah order, from which the Shadiyya order will branch out in Tunisia, where its founder resided, to sweep the Maghreb and the east. Shrines played a pivotal role in the spread of Sufi chants, as they formed a haven for their visitors to worship and recite their prayers as well as performing other collective activities (Zgonda, 2012).

The Crystallization of Sufi Art in Tunisia and the Doctrinal Standardization of Practices and Rituals

The Sufi chant in Tunisia is known as ‘hadhra’, and it is thusly named because it is an occasion on which to experience the presence of God, as well as being an important cornerstone in all Sufi orders, and hadhra is a Sufi term given to the all-male groups of performers known as the « Fuqra », God’s poor, who exclusively adhere to the Sunni Sufi ways in particular, and they are usually headed by an elder verse in the ways of the order and keen on shielding its practices from all that might hinder the possibility of reaching the moment of ultimate serenity. The hadhra revolves around the performance of different prayers and devotional chants containing the teachings of the order’s founders and their great successors, as well as declaiming poetry and praising the Prophet, peace be upon him, and the collective rhythmic recitation of Qur'an and the names of God, especially the name « Allah », in addition to sermons (Damaq, 2017). Most Sufi orders integrate in their collective liturgical chanting, a semi-dancing motion performed in a solid row, as in Issawiya, or in the form of opposite rows, as in the Shadily order in which the followers form a circle around the elder of the congregation. As to Sulamiyyah in Tunisia, it was characterized by the chanters moving in a way that follows the perimeter of the circle around the elder-the Pole- and from time to time, the latter would rotate around himself, emulating the motion of the earth around the sun (Al-Mahdi, The Relation of Sufi Music with Profane Music).

Sufi singing in Tunisia, like in other Muslim countries, has adopted two approaches: either using classic Arab songs, while modifying their lyrics or resorting to creative transformations at the level of words and melodies. The subjects of these chants often revolve around praising the Prophet, beseeching God the Almighty, in addition to singing the virtues of the Order’s elder and celebrating his prestigious status among other Sufi Poles. It is noteworthy that the singer’s profane function may interfere with the religious one, as the elder of Al-Issawiya order might also happen to be himself the master singer of Malouf in the city or in the village (Al-Mahdi, The Relation of Sufi Music with Profane Music). The Malouf is composed of two main sections: one section is considered as ‘serious’ and is linked to religious purposes, while the second is centered on banter, which is a flirtatious kind of Malouf related to worldly matters (Zghonda, 2012). The best evidence of the blending of traditional musical production and Sufi inchad (as well as Sufi prominent figures in Tunisia) might be the figure of Abu Abdullah Mohammed al-Zarif, whose mausoleum is located in Jabal al-Manar, near the shrine of Sheikh Abi Said al-Baji. This elder was well versed in science, literature and art and composed a poem in which he mentions the common musical maqams or structures in Tunisia known as "toboo".

What is interesting about the Sufi phenomenon, contrary to other Islamic schools of doctrinal thought, is the many and varied Sufi orders and the multiplicity of their branches. It so happens that Tunisia does not deviate from this rule, where the number of brotherhoods in the first half of the Twentieth century was five hundred and nineteen, while the number of shrines reached fifty distributed among cities and rural areas (Damaq, 2017). Studies indicate that Sufi orders were omnipresent in Tunisian society throughout the Husseini and the colonial period, on both the demographic and economic levels. The number of the Qadiriyyah order’s followers reached 117,681,000, while the Tijani order flaunted 6,094 followers. A toss the Rahmaniyya Khalwatiyya brotherhood, it succeeded in attracting 114,761 followers (Al-Ajili, 1992).

The musical production of these orders varied quantitatively as well as qualitatively to include poems, prayers and Sufi devotional chants. Although they have in common the glorification of the divine Self, praising the Prophet and singing the virtues of saints and holy men, they
differ in terms of the arrangement of their melodies, tones, rhythmicity and performance (Damaq, 2017). The Sufi orders have preserved the musical heritage and modified it by producing its own music and composing poems using the same maqams and rhythms on which the Tunisian musical heritage is based. These orders have also generalized, taught and disseminated this heritage, whether classic or popular, through its wide network of shrines (Al-Mahdi, *The Relation of Sufi Music with Profane Music*), and some of the most important of these orders are (to mention but a few): the Shadhlya, Qadiriyyah, Tijani, Issawiyya, Azzouzi, and Sulamiya.

Tunisia is known for another order famous for its female singers and associated with the holy woman Aisha Al-Manoubia, whose order centers on singing praises by a women’s group called *Al-Rubabiya*, named after the rebab. This involves a female rebab or violin player and four women playing the tambourine. They sing on weekly dates in the shrines of Tunis and the suburb of Manouba, and they participate in weddings, adopting the Issawiyya mode, thus setting the tone for individuals’ social events, such as weddings, circumcision parties and others (Al-Mahdi, *The Relation of Sufi Music with Profane Music*). This fact substantiates the integration of Sufi chants into the crucible of popular art, for near the capital, in the whereabouts of Mount Al-Manar, in the shrine dedicated to Abu Saeed al-Baji, one of Sheikh Abi Madin’s disciples, popular concerts were held in which the *mezwed* or bagpipes was played accompanied by singing. What follows is a famous praising refrain:

Ô sea captain, Beji my mate!

(*Al-Mahdi, the Relation of Sufi Music with Profane Music*)

The change and development of Sufi music in Tunisia demonstrates its adaptability to the social and cultural context, which is particularly patent when it comes to keeping up with the exigencies of political transitions and their impact on religious practices in the public space and places of worship, including religious chanting and the order’s rituals.

**Sufi Art in Tunisia: the Ebb and Flow duality and New Manifestations**

While Sufi musical experiences have varied from one country to another, the popular and cultural impact of the Tunisian experience seems unique, as it is worth noting in this context the performance of « Al-Hadhra » directed by Fadhel Jaziri and Samir Agrebi, who have succeeded in pulling Sufi singing out of the isolation of shrines to promote it to the wider public, in the midst of a phase where the country was experiencing a tight political control that restricted religious practices (Abdellatif, 2018). « Al-Hadhra » has gained popularity both inside and outside the country, and its various performances have been extended over many years, and have been repeatedly copied, reproduced and emulated in a way that has revived the devotional singing sector in Tunisia and has made it accessible to the masses to render it part and parcel of popular culture, on the one hand. On the other hand, it reflects a kind of artistic stagnation and a tradition lacking in creativity and innovation. The multiple performances of « Al-Ziyara », produced almost two years after the events of January 2011, underscore the importance of characteristics of change and renewal of cultural forms and elements rooted in society such as Al-Hadhra. How well do young Tunisians who attended the performances of « Al-Ziyara » know Sufi orders and Sufi music? What are the implications of their interest in this musical genre at the intersection with the question of identity and cultural belonging as evidenced by religious and sectarian affiliation (though not reduced to it)?

The Tunisian Youth's Knowledge of Sufi Orders

Tunisian youth have a relatively superficial knowledge of Sufi orders, as the representations put forward by interviewees regarding the concept are often vague. However, that does not imply their total ignorance of the notion. When we talk about Sufi music, it is often automatically linked by the interviewees to the religious perspective. This association often follows two paths. The first path is to attach it to the religious aspect of prayer and praise of God and his Prophet, which is often found in the performances of The Sulamaya and the Hizb Latif, for example. That is a method of worship aiming at proximity to God. The second path refers to seeking the blessing of holy men as well as the customs and traditions associated with it.
such as ‘kharjet,’ visits, pledges made to holy men and food offerings. In this context, we have observed a repeated reference to some Sufi orders, such as the Shadhilya and the Qadiri, for example, or to some holy men and women whose names are associated with some of the songs, such as Abdelkader Jilani, Abu al-Hassan al-Shadhli, Um al-Zain al-Jamalia, Essayda Al-Manoubia, and Sidi Mahrez.

This does not mean, however, that knowledge of Sufi orders is totally absent as far the interviewees were concerned. For example, Mohammed Saleh is one of the study participants who presented a clear conception of Sufism as a « spiritual journey » or « a highway to God. » Muhammad Saleh discussed Sufi orders and good saints, calling them « schools of worship », named after their founding elders. Shaïma, another interviewee, tackled the history of these orders and their elders, who mainly came from Morocco through Algeria and who were linked to miracles and legends that earned them, according to her, a high position in society. Shaïma also referred to some other Sufi practices, such as the stenbali, which is the specialty of black people in the Tunisian south, or « Zambala », a set of extraordinary performances that are presented in some Tunisian feasts on the occasion of Zarda, where the individual whom they call ‘Zambala’ dances and enters into a trance to the tune of some specific songs in his own way and then performs some extraordinary feats such as eating glass or walking on nails or other superhuman acts matching his skills or talent. These practices were frowned upon by some interviewees because they are equated with self-inflicted violence and blasphemy given the excessive attachment the shrines’ visitors evince to the righteous saints, which is not acceptable in their view, because Islam rejects the existence of a mediator between worshippers and God.

These statements reflect an advanced level of knowledge by the group of participants, possibly due to some of them having studied university subjects in the domain of humanities, which facilitates their access to such knowledge. It could also be ascribable to their initial upbringing. Shaïma, for example, mentioned that her family had a solid connection to Sufi culture, stating that her father told her how his uncle was a member of the Issawiya, for example, and that many members of the family had a strong attachment to Sufi music. Most of these study participants referred, in one way or another, to cultural deposits linked to Sufi music, through their initial upbringing at the hands of parents and grandparents, who sought the blessings of good saints, visited their shrines and made pledges. It was also through media coverage of official events such as holidays and holy seasons such as the month of Ramadan, the celebration of the Prophet’s Birthday, and the Hijri Year, occasions on which Tunisian television broadcasts Sufi music and performances such as « Al Hadra », or in traditional weddings and parties celebrated to the tunes of Sulamiya, for example. Even when a person dies, Sufi chants are sung to bid farewell to the deceased through the celebration of a Hizb Laitif. All these instances suggest that young Tunisians, despite their poor knowledge of Sufi music, have cultural deposits that spiritually trigger in them a nostalgia of sorts for this musical genre.

**Tunisian Youth's Knowledge of Sufi Music**

In most cases, we did not notice the existence of a systematic knowledge of Sufi music and its most salient features, as mentioned earlier in the historical overview. In most cases, the first actual contact with Sufi music was on the occasion of Sami al-Lajami’s presentation of his show « al-Ziyara ». However, these interviewees do not have exclusive affinities with Sufi music. It is noteworthy that Tunisian young people are open to all manner of musical genres, each person according to his/her taste. This does not necessarily imply a complete ignorance of Tunisia’s Sufi heritage. Many study participants exhibit a partial knowledge of the said heritage. Sufi music in Tunisia is associated, in the imagination of young people, with six basic dimensions that can be inferred from interviews conducted with the research sample:

First, a historical dimension: It is an ancient traditional music that we have inherited from previous generations and that dates back hundreds of years.

Secondly, a musical dimension: it is a music based on fast and simple rhythms mainly relying on the use of drums in addition to strong singing voices.

Thirdly, a gender dimension: It is mainly a music performed by men, often practiced in closed
groups, whose membership gives precedence to a kind of spiritual legitimacy before musical
talent.

Fourth, a performance-related dimension: informed by traditional costumes, flags, incense and dances that accompany this music.

Fifthly, the religious dimension: It is reflected at the level of words, i.e. poems, devotional songs, prayers and other texts with a deep spiritual religious diction, which sing the glory by God or praise the Prophet and the righteous saints.

The sixth dimension is related to customs and conventions: through its association with official customs and traditions such as holidays, religious and informal occasions (weddings, funerals and visits to the shrines of good saints).

The Performance of « Al-Ziyara » and Its Attraction with Young People

As was mentioned in the previous section, the participants’ first actual contact with Sufi music was through attending the performances of « Al-Ziyara ». This first experience, which had a strong positive impact, generated a curiosity to search for and learn about similar but earlier performances, such as the men’s Hadhra of Tunis, the Issawiya, or the performance of the « Falaga », which drew the interviewees’ attention, although it is not a Sufi show per se, but its traditional dimension made some of the study participants, who have no experience in this field, classify it as Sufi music. This first encounter was often by coincidence or curiosity, triggered by reviews or parts of the show being available on social media (mainly Facebook and YouTube) or through comments made by friends or relatives who watched the show and wanted these young interviewees to share this experience. From this perspective, Sufi music has become a favorite for these young subjects and even morphed into a kind of obsession for some of them. Many subjects have mentioned how they frequently attended the shows. One of the interviewees even stated that he attended « Al-Ziyara » more than 100 times. These shows have also become an area for testing and building social connections, friendships and even romantic relationships. What we can clearly note is that « Al-Ziyara » contributed to the creation of a young taste group interested in this traditional genre of music.

However, why has Sufi music in particular, among other classical musical genres, managed to attract the attention of young people nowadays? The answer is mainly to be found through the examination of the main features of « Al-Ziyara ». The initial attraction to this musical genre is, at first, an attraction to the show itself. There are several instances of those who prefer the show by itself without necessarily favoring Sufi music in general. However, this limited interest often develops into an interest in Sufi music itself. However, what are the characteristics that made « Al-Ziyara » attractive to this young group? The most important feature of the show is the combination of the authenticity of Tunisian identity (as represented by traditional costumes, the use of drums, poems, and classic devotional songs) and global modernity, as epitomized by the fast musical style, the introduction of a set of modern instruments and the performance-related dimension comprising the harmonization of stage lighting and the choreography of dances. Add to this the prominent presence of young as well as female singers and performers participating in the show, which sets it apart, according to the interviewees’ opinion, from its predecessors that prioritized the male performers and neglected the dynamic dimension of the show as they focused on the singing voices of performers who often belonged to older age groups.

Sufi songs are linked in the imagination of the Tunisian youth to all that is traditional and what, at the same time, reflects the essence of Tunisian identity. A large part of the interviewees also pointed out their aversion to modern music and their choice to return to the consumption of old music due to the value it represents at the artistic and identitarian levels. This includes classic Tunisian music in general and Sufi music in particular. However, we did not remark that the fact of listening to Sufi music for young people is associated with a religious inclination or a set of traditions marked by a spiritual and religious dimension. This practice is mainly subsumed within a worldly recreational context, essentially linked to the concept of sublimation, whose goal, according to some subjects, is to unload the negative energy within them and develop positive vibes by dancing to fast-paced music in addition to the mesmerizing performance-related effects (incense, lights, costumes, flags, dances on the stage) that enable them to disconnect from
reality for a certain period of time and create a kind of spiritual communion with a group of individuals who share the same artistic tastes.

**Tunisian Sufi Music and Its Regional Peculiarities**

Analysis of the content of the discourse and themes characterizing Sufi music has revealed an awareness among young people of its regional dimension. A number of interviewees point out that most of the songs performed in the show « Al-Ziyara » originate from the Sufi heritage of the Tunisian Sahel or the city of Bizerte (in northern Tunisia) on a second level (one of the interviewees explains this fact by the origins of the show’s director and most of the singers who come from the Sahel and the great success of the show in the city of Bizerte). The show’s program changed every time the show is performed in a particular location to include a collection of songs of the region representing its orders and lauding its holy men, which made these young people notice the differences in terms of rhythm and text structure between one region and another and therefore between one order and another. As for Sufi music in other countries, the subjects’ knowledge is limited, although some of them point to the differences between Tunisian and Eastern or Moroccan Sufi music, claiming that the Tunisian rhythm is so fast-paced that it drives the listener to dancing in a trance-like state (verging on a loss of consciousness) while the Eastern or Moroccan style is more sedate. In this context, one of the interviewees referred to the music performed by the Moroccan band Ibn Arabi, comparing it to the music of « Al-Ziyara » show.

**Conclusion: The Renewal of Sufi Music and the New Criteria Underlying the Sense of Belonging**

From the fieldwork and the analysis of interviews, we can deduce that the question of identity is present, even though in an implicit manner. This presence is felt through two key indicators. First, young people return to this kind of traditional, though innovative, music, as they put it, in a move to countermand the overwhelming mediocrity of the globalized art scene. What is offered today on this scene does not represent them as far as the matter of taste is concerned (at the artistic level), culturally speaking (at the level of subjects and purposes) or subjectively (as a consumer material devoid of depth). Young people therefore find themselves drawn towards the classic heritage, which becomes a strategy of resistance to ‘mediocrity’ for some and to ‘globalization’ for others, as well as a resistance to constraints and difficult social and economic situations. This indicator does not exclusively apply to Sufi music, but in this context, we can notice a tendency towards returning to all that is generally classic, as evidenced by the fact that Abdel Halim Hafez and Um Kulthoum were mentioned several times. The Tunisian heritage was particularly underscored, including Malouf, folk art and Hadi Jouini. However, « Al-Ziyara » is singled out for being a mixed musical genre with ancient origins and traditions but culturally susceptible to adaptation to keep pace with the development of artistic tendencies and their openness to new rhythms and standards.

On the other hand, the concern with the question of identity is reflected in the tendency to form a young public base among the fans of « Al-Ziyara » from all regions who have in common a range of values, standards and practices along with a specific rite of passage. What drives young people to come together within this base is the need to belong. Sufism, with its cultural deposits, reflects this dimension of belonging to a tribal, imagined and representative group, as well as to a modern group that constitutes the « Al-Ziyara » family. What distinguishes this affiliation, however, is that it is superficial, lacking in depth, as it is not based on sufficient knowledge of historical or cultural dimensions, and shorn of any ideological or ideological association. The determinants of belonging to the « Al-Ziaiyara » family, such as the one around which the Ultras groups are founded in the field of sports, are all different from the elements of ideological or religious affiliation, which are based on lofty ideas characterized by stability and permanence. The affiliation that young people seek before and during the show's performances is an occasional and circumstantial one at best that ends with the end of the show and is renewed before watching the next one. It is an affiliation that renders social norms more flexible, extreme constraints more bearable and maintains the possibility of moving within stereotypical moults that are supposed to be relatively stable. The features of identity formed from this type of affiliation are related to the ‘fluidity’ that characterizes modernity as defined.
by Sigmund Bauman (Bauman, 2005), whereby dissolvable social ties are formed thus allowing access outside of their framework at all times, in anticipation of the impact of long-term obligations and constraints.

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