

Islam and the Media of Devotion in and out of Senegal

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Few devotees of the Muridiyya, a Sufi congregation that emerged in colonial Senegal at the turn of the 20th century, have the opportunity to glimpse or touch their spiritual masters. Exalted Murid figures rarely leave their compounds in rural Tuba, and access to them is restricted to high-ranking initiates such as Muslim scholars, government officials, and business leaders. Ordinary disciples are more likely to view religious figures in the variety of media circulating in and out of Senegal. The desire for and appreciation of mediation to facilitate proper practice and proximity to the divine distinguish Murid adepts from their Sunni counterparts. The electronic mediation of devotional practices produces feelings of nearness to spiritual leaders for disciples in Senegal and abroad. Through visual practices related to electronic media, devotees receive religious merit and grace that lead to spiritual and material enrichment and create their spiritual community.