

Saadia Sumbal*

Transnational Sufi Order and Pakistani Diaspora in Britain

Abstract

This article explores the expansion of Pakistan-based transnational Sufi-inspired Deobandi silsila, Naqshbandia Awaisia in Britain. I argue that "Sufi networking is practicing in the transnational space without breaking the boundaries of nation state and has integrated various strands of Islam to acculturate to west in a South Asian milieu" A true „transglobal“ phenomenon occurs, when a religious tradition transcends its geographical confines, disseminates its message across the world and acculturates variant strands of religious, social and cultural formations to create a niche in western secular milieu. The change of location to a non-Muslim environment has resulted in an important adaptation taking place in silsila. The focus of attention in the place of origin, was the shrine itself, however in the new location, and changing context the priority has shifted to protecting and maintaining Islam itself.

Key Words: *Naqshbandiya Awaisiya, Transnational, diaspora, Sufism, Halqa-e-dhikr*

Introduction

With the migration of Muslims from outside the Arabic-speaking world in to Britain, Europe and North America, thriving Sufi communities developed in the twentieth century. Muslims from various countries like India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, South-East Asia, Algeria, and South-East Africa have settled in North America and Western Europe with their diverse and dynamic traditions of Islamic mysticism. They have brought with them their religious traditions, Sufism or Sufi-inspired reformist ideas and adjusted them to their new environments. They were often escorted by contemporary significant political and social debates and theological notion of their homelands. Sufism has arrived in Britain as part of the process of migration which has seen the creation of South Asian diasporas, now supplemented by communities from Turkey, Malaysia, North and sub-Saharan Africa, all places where Sufism in the Muslim context flourishes. I argue that dominant form of Islamic expression in Britain is a traditional Barelwi Islam identified with Sufis, shrines and cults. Most of the major Sufi orders existed in Britain, included *Naqshbandiya, Qadiriya, Chishtiya, Alawiya, Tijaniya* to name a few. However, unlike the USA, the original non-migrant non-Muslim population in Britain was less inspired and little influenced by Sufism.

Emergent study of Sufism in the west is marked by a shift towards resurgence and rejuvenation of Sufism, a vital part of popular Islam among diasporic South Asian Muslim communities. Numerous recent studies of Sufism focused on embodied charisma of Sufis and their global reach¹. Pnina Werbner and Ron Geaves discussed the global and local manifestations of a *Naqshbandi* Sufi movement and contested the apolitical image of Sufis, he rather highlighted the Sufis activism in local diaspora politics². Marcia Hermansen documented both diaspora and American Sufi movements. The first anthology of Western Sufi movements was edited by Jamal Malik and John Hinnells.³ An excellent anthology Sufism and the Modern in Islam focused on Sufism as a lived tradition and its

*Dr Sadia Sumbal, Assistant Professor, Department of History Forman Christian College University Lahore

¹ Pnina Werbner & Helene Basu ed., *Embodying Charisma: Modernity, locality and the performance of emotion in Sufi cults* (London; Routledge, 2002) Ron Geaves, *Theodore Gabriel, Sufism in Britain* (London, Bloomsbury, 2013)

² Werbner, *Imagined Diasporas Among Manchester Muslims: The Public Performance of Pakistani Transnational identity politics* (James Currey, 2002)

³ Jamal Malik and John Hinnells, *Sufism in the West* (London; Routledge, 2006)

adaptation to changes occurring in intellectual, social and political realm in Muslim majority countries.⁴ Catharina Raudvere and Leif Stenber highlight how translocal tariqas negotiated with tradition and globalization and interacted with other Muslim groups⁵. interacting with other Muslim groups in Western settings. All these works are focused on Sufi silsilas. Very little has been studied on transnational Deobandi activities. Dietrich Reetz mainly worked on globalization of Deobandi Islam, he demonstrated Deobandi oriented silsilas and *tablighi jamaat* operated through political organizations, *tarbiat* (training) conferences and *dawa* (preaching)⁶.

This article discusses how transnational Deobandi Sufi *silsila Naqshbandiya Awaisia* acculturate to Social and cultural space of Britain and how it functioned across political and cultural boundaries. The *silsila* highlights the complex conjunctures of tradition and modernity. Through use of technology, there was an urge to contribute to gradual modernization of Deobandi institutions, on the other hand the religious practices were steeped in *tasawuf* (mysticism), demonstrated through dissemination of *halqa-e-zikr*. Universalism and particularism typified Sufi practice in contemporary Britain. The article also discusses Sufism remained a dominant expression of Islam as it remained bound up with ethnic identity, that maintained traditions closely linked with localities in the place of origin. This article also puts forward the concept of „transnational Sufism from below“ in order to explore how migrants pragmatically use religious counselling in dealing with the exigencies of everyday life.

The Transnational Sufi *silsila*: de-territorialization to re-territorialization of space

To explain the process of transformation of *Naqshbandiyya Awaisia silsila* in to a transnational religious movement, I draw on the theoretical insight of Pnina Werbner's idea of de-territorialization to re-territorialization of space. Werbner explains de-territorialization in the context of post-second world war migration from Pakistan to Britain which caused a breakdown, a de-territorialization of earlier demarcated separate spaces of the West. The reversal of demographic flows (from colonies to the center) re-carved spaces, fragmented by the migration process. The process of fragmentation and de-territorialization was followed by acts of re-integration and re-territorialization.⁷ The migrant Muslims acquired space both in commodified form through purchase of houses, shops and established business and in the form of ritual transformation, through an expansion of religious movement and Sufi order which transformed „home spaces“ in to „moral spaces“.⁸ In the process of re-territorialization, the migrants constructed their own renewed unitary, cross-regional religious identity and national subjectivity.⁹

Theologically Maulana Allahyar, the *shaykh* of *Naqshbandiya Awaisiya silsila*, had strict adherence to *Quran* and *Hadith* steeped in *tasawuf* (act of being a Sufi), the doctrine of Sufism. The *silsila* propagated a message of puritan reformist Islam spawned by *Darul-Ulum Deoband* along with Sufi inspired rituals. He stressed the importance of the conduct of individual Muslims, purifying Muslim society from *bida* (innovation from the path of Muhammad) and constructing a true Islamic community. The silsila was based on a strong belief in the charisma of *shaykh* that spiritual benefit or *baraka* could not be acquired through a close connection with the *shaykh*. The *silsila* was internally organized in the form of *halqa-e-dhikr*.¹⁰ A link was formed between the experience of sacred and the daily problems of his disciples. Their belief in his miraculous powers gave them security and empowerment. He himself said, „*dhikr* is the most effective source of guidance.“¹¹ These preaching groups or *halqa-e-dhikr*, marked the formal expansion of *silsila Naqshbandia Awaisia*, with *halqa-e-dhikr* developed across the country, linked to the

⁴ Martin van Bruinessen and Julia Day Howell, *Sufism and the Modern in Islam* (London; I.B.Tauris&Co,2007)

⁵ Raudvere, Catharina, and Leif Stenber, ed. (London; I.B.Tauris,2009)

⁶ Dietrich Reetz, *Alternate Globalities? On the Cultures and formats of transnational Muslim networks from South Asia*, Brill NV, Leiden, The Netherlands, 2010 & Reetz, *The Deoband Universe: What makes a transcultural and transnational Educational Movement of Islam? Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, volume 27, No. 1, 2007. Also see Francis Robinson, *Religious Change and the Self in Muslim South Asia since 1800*, South Asia, Vol. XX, no. 1 (1997), p.9

⁷ Pnina Werbner, *Stamping the earth with the name of Allah; Zikr and the sacralizing of space among British Muslims*, *Cultural anthropology* 11(3) 1996, P.310

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Pnina Werbner, *Pilgrims of Love :The Anthropology of a global Sufi cult* (Karachi;Oxford University Press, 2003) P.5 Ron Geaves argued that Sufism had little impact on non-migrant non-Muslim population because Sufism in Britain remained tightly bound up with ethnic identity, while keeping traditions and customs intact with in the locale of place of origin. See Ron Geaves, *A case of cultural binary fission or Trans global Sufism? The transmigration of Sufism to Britain in Sufism in Western Society: Global networking and locality* (London; Routledge, 2009) P.97 Also see Akhil Gupta, James Ferguson, „Beyond Culture“: Space, identity and the politics of difference. *Cultural Anthropology* (theme issue), 1992, 7: 6-23

¹⁰ A circle or group of followers who assemble at one place and do *dhikr*. See Ahmed-ud- Din, Hayat-e-Tayaba

¹¹ *Ibid.*, P. 45

original center founded at Manara (district Jhelum) in 1960.¹² The first *halqa-e-dhikr* was established in district Chakwal and Manara, which grew into a permanent center of *silsila* and *tablighi* activity, called “*Dar-ul-Irfan* in 1977.”¹³

Maulana Allahyar envisaged the spread of the movement outside South Asia in 1977. He began his *tablighi* work initially in China, Saudi Arab, United Arab Emirates. The *silsila* extended to Britain, America, Canada and Malaysia after his death, through Akram Awan, the khalifa majaz of Maulana Allahyar. Almost no literature is available, that helped us determine the course of the movement into various countries, the only material gathered, was through interviews with migrant Pakistanis in Britain.¹⁴ The *silsila* tried to reach out to the South Asian Muslims through a simple message of combining Sufi principles of leadership with a reformist message. One of the first steps that khalifa of the *silsila* is said to have taken was to instruct his followers to set up *halqa-e-dhikr* which were held weekly and monthly in lodges of followers which restricted its access to wider people, as opposed to mosques and madrassas which played vital role in dissemination of Islamic message to larger audience. The *halqa-e-dhikr* were centered on a local Ameer or *sahib-e-majaz* of Britain Zamir Awan, nominated by khalifa in Pakistan, followed by vice-Ameer of *halqa-e-dhikr* in various cities, including Manchester, Glasgow, Leeds, Birmingham, Bradford, Edinburgh etc. Central London was divided in to East and West with respective vice-Ameers. The first Sunday of every month, *ijtima* (congregation) was held under the supervision of vice-Ameer of *halqa* and an annual *ijtima* was held in the *silsila*'s mosque at Birmingham, attended by khalifa of *silsila* from Pakistan. The annual *ijtima* began with the address of khalifa, followed by *dhikr* and a class of *tarbiat* (spiritual training).

The members of *silsila* were mainly British born middle aged Muslims of South Asian origin, India and Bangladesh, hence the cultural milieu is pre-dominantly South Asian, with very few Muslims from Africa and West Indies as part of the order.¹⁵ The inner circle of disciples with a deep commitment to *silsila* consistently participated in meetings for *dhikr*, keeping a connection with the Khalifa in Pakistan through his local Ameer of *halqa*. A more larger circle attended the religious practices of *tariqa* on special occasions, such as annual *ijtima* and finally, a more diffuse circle who believed in khalifa as a spiritual model or guide, yet were not part of any collective activity of the *silsila*. *Halqa-e-dhikr* forged a national network, which linked Pakistani diaspora from different places in a new social configuration which turned out to be voluntary, intellectually and spiritually exploratory¹⁶. There was a slow and sustained expansion of *silsila*, particularly in the industrial towns of the midlands like (Birmingham), Leicester and North of England (Manchester and Bradford) as urban middle classes, especially traders in Britain were influenced by Deobandi reformism.¹⁷ Yoginder Sikand comments on this situation in the following words “*tablighi* ethos attracts those British Muslims who in their social and economic dealings have little interaction with non-Muslims, such as unemployed, small Muslim shopkeepers, business men, builders or pensioners.”¹⁸

Transnational Islam in South Asian milieu

Sufis and their centrally focused orders or regional cults had wide acceptance among majority Punjabi Pakistani diaspora. They were active followers of particular local Sufis or Pirs of South Asian origin. Most of them were inclined towards *Shariatized* Islam and followed Prophet's Sunnah, and simultaneously hosted and attended the lectures of visiting Barelvi Sufis or Pirs, also sought protective amulets or healing from local and sub-continental Pakistani Pirs. Participation in Processions on Eid *milad-un-Nabi* and commemoration of urs festival without being

¹² *Naqshbandia Awaisia Silsila* was restored by Maulana Allahyar after a lapse of five hundred years, ever since the death of Maulana Abdur Rehman Jami. Ibid., P. 252

¹³ Ibid., P. 313 The center would be coupled with the regional centers, working in connection with the center Dar-ul-Irfan. A department of press and publication was set up which was responsible for dealing with correspondence and the publishing of monthly risala “Al-Murshid”. The Committee of publication was comprised of Hafiz Razzaq, Col. Matloob, Professor Buniad Hussain, Professor Baagh Hussain Kamal, Fazal Akbar, Haji Altaf Ahmed, Muhammad Hamid. See Abul Ahmed-ud-Din, *Hayat-e-Tayaba*, P. 313

¹⁵ Interview Interview with Major Imran Ahmed, Lahore, 18 may 2017

¹⁶ Werbner, *Playing with numbers: Sufi calculations of a perfect divine universe in Manchester* in Ron Geaves, Markus Dressler and Gritt Klinkhammer, *Sufis in Western Society* P.127

¹⁷ Yoginder Sikand, *The Origins and Development of the Tablighi Jama'at (1920-2000): A Cross-country Comparative Study*(The University of Michigan, 2002)

Tablighi Jama'at, P.228 also see, Interview with Farrukh, London, 13, June 2017

¹⁸ Ibid,P.260

initiated in to Sufi silsila was a common feature. Nevertheless, the performance of *dhikr*, the remembrance of God's name, is not so popular on weekly or monthly basis. The Barelvi mosques in Manchester and Birmingham were reputed to have very large *dhikr* circles, however the *dhikr* on weekly and monthly basis was not a popular phenomenon. The absence of charismatic *shaykh* among diasporic communities was an essential factor for attracting less adherents.

As within South Asia, the two dominant groups, the Deobandi and Barelvi denominations, command a clear majority in Britain.¹⁹ Deobandi scholars defined Sufism as essential to their reformist mission and sought to refashion Sufism solely as an ethics of the self. This orientation is also reflected in the creed of Deobandis, emphasising the unity of reformism and spiritual mysticism. Three Deobandi institutions with an organized networks, gained centrality in the expansion of Deobandi denomination in Britain, these included, the missionary organization *Tablighi Jamaat*, which remained vital for the institutionalization of Deobandi Islam, the seminary *Dar-ul-Uloom* Bury and the clerical body *Jamiat Ulama-e-Britain* (JUB).²⁰ The two main seminaries which represented Deobandi Islam in Britain were, *Dar-ul-Uloom al-Arabiya al-Islamiya* Bury, established in Bury in 1973. The institution received more than £40,000 from Saudi "philanthropists" (Inter-Islam) as financial aid in 1976. A second seminary, the Institute for Islamic Education, *Dar-ul-Uloom* Dewsbury which was also the headquarters of the Deobandi missionary organization, the *Tablighi Jamaat*, opened in Dewsbury in 1982.²¹

The style of *Naqshbandiyya Awaisiya silsila* was different from Deobandi milieu, encompassed *madrassa*, mosque-centered activities, political groups and ideological organizations, here the focus was on *tasawuf* and Sufistic practices.²² Roger Ballard notes that mosques presented most overt manifestation of Islamic presence in Britain and carried out wider set of religious functions.²³ Mosques provided a loci of collective rituals like offering prayers and a place to assemble, socialize and exchange ideas. The *silsila's* *tablighi* work was disseminated through *halq-e-dhikr* in mosques in a secular space of British society, where a strong Sufi legacy already existed. The dominant form of Islamic expression in Britain was traditional Barelwi Islam, influenced by Sufism.²⁴ Out of one hundred mosques in Birmingham, only three were of Deobandi denomination. The heterodox character of Sufism consisting of Sufi cults, amulets and miraculous aid extended by Sufi in day to day life was popular in Britain. Pnina Werbner argues that South Asian Muslim diaspora try to identify them with global Islam while in fact practicing a Pakistani South Asian version of Islam.²⁵

The *Naqshbandiyya Awaisiya silsila* had been characterized by its orthodox stress on *sharia*, synthesizing it with mystical Islam, based on the concept of spiritual allegiance with the souls of *mashaikh* in *Barzakh*. The *silsila* is based on the principle of individual obligation of every individual to propagate the teachings and practices of Islam

¹⁹ In the late nineteenth century, the Barelvi movement grew in response to the perceived threat of Deobandi puritanism. Today these tensions continue to dominate political and religious discourse in South Asia. Barelvi Muslims represent the traditional or cultural Sufi practices of Islam, such as the milad (the birthday of the Prophet), qawwali (devotional music), urs (death anniversary of a Sufi saint) and other festivals.¹⁹ Deobandis place "more stress on orthodoxy and knowledge of Islamic texts", although Deobandi Islam grew out of the Sufi tradition. Deobandis advocated a balance between the law (*shari'a*) and the path (*tariqa*), between reformism (*islah*) and in mysticism (*tasawwuf*). The Deobandis accepted those forms of Sufism which they saw as compatible with the *shari'a*. See Barbara D. Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900* (New Jersey; Princeton University press, 1982)

²⁰ Jawad Syed, Edwina Pio, Tahir Kamran, Abbas Zaidi, ed. *Faith-Based Violence and Deobandi Militancy in Pakistan* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016)

²¹ It was the project of Sheikh Yusuf Motala, who acted on the instructions of his mentor, Sheikh Mohammad Zakariya (1898–1982). The journalist Innes Bowen writes that, there are 24 registered seminaries in the UK, comprising "sixteen Deobandi, five Barelvi, one Shi'ite, one of the Muslim Brotherhood and one founded by the late sheikh Dr Zaki Badawi". Philip Lewis (2014, p. 238) In 2014, data collected by Mehmood Naqshbandi (2014) concluded that of the UK's 1,740 mosques, 754, or 43.3 percent, were Deobandi. See Dietrich Reetz, *Alternate Globalities? On the cultures and formats of transnational Muslim networks from South Asia*, Brill NV, Leiden, 2010. Reetz, *The Deoband Universe: What makes a transnational and transnational Educational Movement of Islam? Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, volume 27, No. 1, 2007 P.156

²² Interview with Mohsin Naveed, Manchester, 06 June 2017

²³ Roger Ballard, *Popular Islam in northern Pakistan and its reconstruction in urban Britain in Sufism in the West* Jamal Malik and John Hinnells (ed) (London; Routledge, 2006) P.177

²⁴ The followers of Barelwi Islam gather around healers, living saints, incorporating into their religious life, exorcism of demons (*jinn*), intense devotion for the prophet (*pbuh*). The pre-dominance of Barelwi form of Islam helped South Asian popular culture to flourish amongst Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin of Muslims in Britain. See Geaves, *A case of cultural binary fission or transglobal Sufism? The transmigration of Sufism to Britain in Ron Geaves, Markus Dressler and Gritt Klinkhammer* (ed), *Sufis in Western Society Global networking and locality* (London; Routledge, 2009) P.97 Also See Werbner, *Imagined Diasporas among Manchester Muslims: The Public performance of Pakistani transnational Identity Politics*, P.311

²⁵ Werbner & Basu, *Embodying Charisma*, P.129

through *halqa-e-dhikr*. The successor in Britain could not have same charismatic aura that of the khalifa.²⁶ This said the khalifa did not possess the cult or the spiritual charisma which was essential to galvanise followers around him. In the diasporic mystical orders, advocating strict emphasis on *dhikr* only, could not appeal majority of the people, primarily because mostly the Pakistani migrants draw on practices and beliefs that are connected to tradition rather than orthodoxy.

Diaspora encountered two essential elements of religious life, one is concerned with the religious practices deployed to address contingencies of life emerging as a result of drastic social changes like domestic and family issues, child-rearing, gender relations, parental authority, marriage issues, divorce. The growing number of filing divorce cases was construed among migrant communities as distancing from religion and culture in a western secular milieu. A close proximity to Sufi and his guidance could not alleviate their problems. The second deals with institutionalized *shariatized* orthodoxy as performed in mosques or *halqa-e-dhikr*.²⁷

According to Werbner, “it is a distinctive feature of Sufi orders that „all cult leaders engage in faith healing and amulet writing, and this is clearly a key source of income and new recruits.”²⁸ khalifa offered a variety of religious remedies and technologies. The khalifa provided different remedies, the protective *tawiz* (amulets) or *dam* (whereby his exhalation of breath often directed at a glass of water serves to transfer his baraka) and offered various *wazifa* (prayers). The khalifa on his visit to Britain, used to hold a special session on purification of heart through *dhikr*. It was a healing therapy which was quite popular even among the non-Muslim British. Werbner elaborates, “Healing is an integral feature of all Sufi orders, crucial to the redemptive economy of the lodge. The saint, dead or alive, is regarded as a healer, having command over invisible spiritual beings, fiery jinns, and other dark malevolent influences. He can penetrate people’s minds and hearts and diagnose their ailments and suffering.”²⁹ Hence the Sufi was a pivotal figure in their social and religious universe. As Werbner noted “living charismatic Sufi or *shaykh* can create a genuine religious Sufi trans-global movement come into existence, maintaining control over centers or sub-centers across the world.”³⁰ To sustain and acculturate in social formation of South Asian Islam in Britain, the *silsila* addressed their everyday concerns.³¹

The *silsila* kept a close cultural contact with Pakistan in a new cultural context of the West. The *silsila*’s place of origin and khalifa’s ethnic Muslim background, established his religious authority and authenticity creates an aura of authenticity. The Sufi ethos with in the cultural and ethnic boundaries kept it in a devotional framework of allegiance and did not let it to be transglobal in nature.

Though the *halqa-e-dhikr* of *Naqshbandiyya Awaisia silsila*, created the potential for developing intimate relations between prior strangers, however the absence of cult or organization and home-centered religious practices restricted its scope, access to larger society, hence maintained their traditional, forms of sociality.³² The Ameer of *halqa* in Central London Haji Mubashir said Sufism in Britain is closely integrated with ethnic identity, linked with the local rituals and practices performed in the localities in the place of origin.³³ Werbner, Yoginder Sikand and Ron Geaves also argue, many of the *tariqas* are developed as localised groups with strong loyalties to a particular family tradition imbued with solemnity through their lineal and genealogical link with a deceased saint. The focus on worship at the tomb of the saint reinforces this geographical location of sacredness and maintains the nucleus of local support.³⁴ One apt example the Ameer of *halqa* quoted was of Mirpuris (the people from Mirpur, Azad Kashmir) in Britain. This was the one of a central reason why South Asian and particularly Pakistani diaspora was less inclined to Deobandi message. The Ameer of *halqa* further said, “the silsila failed to inspire Muslim diaspora as

²⁶ Interview with Salman Ahmed, Lahore, 30, May 2018.

²⁷ Mikkel Rytter, Transnational Sufism from below: charismatic counselling and the quest for well-being, Journal of South Asian Diaspora, 2013.

²⁸ Werbner, pilgrims of Love :The Anthropology of a global Sufi cult, P.98

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Werbner, Stamping the earth with the name of Allah; Zikr and the sacralizing of space among British Muslims, also see Werbner, Imagined Diasporas among Manchester Muslims.

³¹ Werbner, Pilgrims of Love: The Anthropology of a global Sufi cult, p.7

³² Pnina Werbner, Intimate disciples in the modern world: The creation of trans-local amity among South Asian Sufis in Britain in Embodying Charisma, P.198

³³ Interview Haji Mubashir, London, 20 -04-2020

³⁴ Geaves, Sufis in Western Society: Global networking and locality, Sikand, tablighi Jamaat, p.124.

well as non-Muslims British. Many young Muslims left Islamic associations because they feel that something is missing," a „something“ that he identifies as spirituality.³⁵

Acculturation of Islam in global secular milieu of west

In a new global de-territorialized space, the *silsila* which had a conservative character in Pakistan, had surpassed its traditional ethnic boundaries and accepted people from diverse ethnic background in multiple countries, however the core following retained a strong local ingredient.³⁶ The *shaykh* of the *silsila* defined, Muslim on the idea of worldwide religious community of Islam. The *silsila* gave preference to the relationship between Muslim believer and the *Umma* over the identity of a believer.³⁷ Migrants in western countries were broadly categorized either through their religion or their ethnicity.³⁸ There was an ambivalent relationship between modernization and tradition. The *silsila* at one level tried to re-construct a universal Islamic identity in re-territorializing the new space which is primarily towards discovering a universal consciousness of *Umma*, giving rise to a homogenized form of religious identity, on the other level *Naqshbandiya Awaisiya silsila*, propagated the universal/global Islamic ideas along with traditional practices steeped in *tasawuf* in a particular South Asian milieu.³⁹

Marta Dominguez Diaz also maintained, “when religions turn global. They develop not only international networks but „universal“ identities. This gives rise to global communities in which locals are imbued with a sense of belonging that stretches far beyond their localities.”⁴⁰ In case of *silsila*, the localized ethnic, religious identities and boundaries were strongly intact among Pakistani diaspora who resisted western culture. Transnational extension of networks can be seen as globalization as an extension of networks and values in space and time or what Anthony Giddens calls “time-space distanciation.” It is against this background that Muslim networking constructs religious and cultural interaction.⁴¹ In the process of adjusting to the new environment of west, the *Naqshbandiyya Awaisia silsila* adopted new changing methods of communication and exchanging information through internet for spreading messages. The weekly sessions of *dhikr* were held in Manara (Pakistan) and were connected with its followers throughout the world through a world-wide messenger „Paltalk“, facebook and an Islamic web-site Murshid.tv, dedicated to the memory of *shaykh* of the *silsila*. A monthly magazine „*Al-Murshid*“ was published from Pakistan, was circulated to the countries where *silsila* had its presence. The khalifa could be found on homepages, on various internet forums and his speeches, *dhikr* gatherings and public appearances to be found on You Tube. In this respect, modern technology acted as an instrument to become a means to diffuse charisma worldwide.

The *silsila* remained scriptural with a commitment to *fiqh*, *Quran*, *hadith* and *dhikr*. This shows that „*tasawwuf*“ has gone trans-global, not leaving the confines of ethnicity and locality at the same time. The three months long courses in *hadith*, *fiqh* and *Quran* were conducted in Manara center Manchester.⁴² The *silsila* developed the new formats and channels of networking through Sufi oriented websites and internet, to provide recorded lectures by Maulana Allahyar and his khalifa on various theological issues, addressing the needs of contemporary westerners, acting globally among migrants.⁴³ Olivier Roy, distinguishing the diasporic Islam from universal Islam, remarked that in diasporic Islam, Muslim immigrants maintained a sense of identity with their centers. The successor or khalifa tried to reconcile their transnational religious roots with the local culture of Islamic learning and integration of religious knowledge in a modern society.⁴⁴ This was primarily possible by creating a relationship between global and local Islam which was integral in defining and shaping the dynamism of *tariqa* and *silsila*. Marcia Hermansen also argue

³⁵ Interview Mubashir Ameer of Halqa Central London, 04-05 2020

³⁶ Ron Geaves & Theodore Gabriel, *Sufism in Britain* (London; Bloomsbury, 2013) P.6 & 29 Also See Ron Geaves, Markus Dressler and Gritt Klinkhammer (ed) *Sufis in Western Society: Global networking and locality* (London; Routledge, 2009)

³⁷ Amina Jamal, *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions, To enjoin virtue and restrain vice: Modernizing Discourses and engendered traditions in Pakistan's Jamat-i-Islami*, Routledge, Vol.11 Nos 3-4, Sept-Dec, 2010, p.336

³⁸ Derya Iner, Salih Yucel (ed) *Muslim Identity formation in religiously diverse societies* (New Castle; Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015) P. ix

³⁹ Marcia Hermansen, *South Asian Sufism in America* in Clinton Bennett, Charles M. Ramsey, *South Asian Sufis: Devotion, Deviation and Destiny* (London, Bloomsbury)

⁴⁰ Marta Dominguez Diaz, *The one or the many? Transnational Sufism and locality in the British Budshishiyya* in Ron Geaves and Theodore Gabriel, *Sufism in Britain*, P.6 Also See Marta Dominguez Diaz, *Women in Sufism: female religiosities in a transnational order* (London; Routledge, 2015)

⁴¹ Reetz, *Alternate Globalities? On the cultural and formats of transnational Muslim networks from South Asia*, Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, The Netherlands, 2010, Pp.8-9

⁴² Interview with Zameer Awan, khalifa Naqshbandia Awaisia Silsila Britain, Birmingham, 03-June 2018

⁴³ Interview with Muhammad Yousaf, Manara district Jhelum, 24, May 2018

⁴⁴ Dietrich Reetz, *Travelling Islam, Madrassa graduates from India and Pakistan in the Malay Archipelago*, Working Papers, No. 8. 2013

that “networking among adherents de-territorialize Sufi movements. Globalization helps Sufi movements to negotiate with local cultures”.⁴⁵ Reform Deobandi movements share a looking-back to an ideal Islamic past and reconstituting this past in the present as the means to ensure a utopian vision for an Islamic future. The central element underlying *Da,wa* or *Tabligh* and *Tarbiyat* conferences was to correct the behaviors of Muslims and non-Muslims in the tradition of religious reformation or *islah*. In case of *Naqshbandiya Awaisiya silsila*, the Deobandi institutional network here overlapped with the Sufi *tariqa* and devotional practices enshrined in Sufi-disciple relationship.⁴⁶ Some specific effects of globalization are mobility, rapid dissemination of information through print, video, the Internet, and interaction between encounter of eastern (Muslim) and western (European and American) individuals and cultural elements. The adoption of technologies such as print and Internet by the *silsila* certainly contributed to shifts in strategies, discourse and outreach, nevertheless, these shifts could not make it global but remained ethnically and religiously bounded.⁴⁷ The *silsila* tried to recenter itself in Britain by embracing global and modern orientations along with popular, vernacular form of Islam, but it could not converge on the universal Islam. The underlying reason was in theoretical problem of conflating modern and traditional. However, the technology provided a means for the traditional supporters of Sufi-oriented Islam to narrow the gap with other religious groups which were effectively mobilized in Britain and elsewhere in the Muslim diaspora spaces.⁴⁸

Conclusion

The Deobandi institutional network overlapped with the traditional Sufi relationship of khalifa and disciple which indicated that translocal and transnational Muslim networks adapt to contemporary processes of globalization and socio-cultural milieu of the west. Nevertheless, the *silsila* did not transcend the traditional bounds and networks in which it was originated and gradually organized. The priority in a non-Muslim environment has shifted to protecting and maintaining Islam itself, especially in regard to the new British-born generations. In the wider Islamic field these religio-cultural milieus related to South Asian descent had to place themselves vis-à-vis other Muslim religious groups and institutions. This is a two-pronged process of accommodation with the modernization and managing their global presence and of competition for the commitment of fellow Muslims and the attention of non-Muslims. The *silsila* could not cross over ethnic boundaries to reconcile with universal Islamic identity. The modern institutions and technology was used in a very specific South Asian milieu, integrating global and local constructed a new „glocal“ forms of identity through transnational and diasporic interactions.

⁴⁵ Marcia Hermansen, Global Sufism “Theirs” and “Ours” in Ron Geaves, Markus Dressler and Gritt Klinkhammer (ed) Sufis in Western Society, P.29

⁴⁶ Dietric Reetz, The Deoband Universe: What Makes a Transcultural and Transnational Educational Movement of Islam?

⁴⁷ Global Sufism “Theirs and ours” Marcia Hermansen in Geaves, Sufis in western society

⁴⁸ David Westerlund, ed. Sufism in Europe and North America (Routledge, 2004) also see, Geaves, Sufism in Western society, P.97