

**The discursive construction of Muslim identities by contemporary Muslim
televangelists in the West**

By

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this work has been originally produced by myself for the present thesis and this is not previously being submitted for the award of a higher degree at any other institution.

Shaimaa El Naggat

Lancaster, UK, August, 2015

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Abstract

Televangelism or the use of satellite television/YouTube to preach religion has become one important media phenomenon, inter alia, among Muslim communities in minority contexts such as the United Kingdom and the United States of America (e.g. see Echchaibi, 2011). In a similar way to public figures, televangelists have become “media celebrities” with hundreds of thousands of fans and followers on YouTube and social media networks.

The aim of the PhD thesis is twofold: first, to provide an explanatory framework for the rise of the phenomenon of televangelism, explore the broader dynamics it relates to and its characteristic features; second, to examine three case studies of American Muslim televangelists popular in the West, who belong to three different generations, namely Yusuf Estes (born 1944), Hamza Yusuf (born 1958) and Baba Ali (born 1977). The “celebrity status” that these televangelists have acquired (see Chapter 1 of the study) raises the question of what self-presentation strategies televangelists draw upon (e.g. see Goffman 1959), i.e. what identities they present for themselves and what multi-modal features they use to construct their identities and appeal to their audiences. Further, the post 9-11 context, which has witnessed the rise of anti-semitic and anti-Muslim rhetoric raises the question of how the three televangelists, that have achieved popularity among Muslim communities in the West, represent Muslim identities in their sermons, for example, if they draw on particular legitimation strategies to respond to anti-Muslim rhetoric.

In fact, over the past few decades, many scholars in different disciplines (e.g. psychology, sociology and linguistics) have explored the concept of identities’ construction (e.g. see Triandafyllidou and Wodak 2003 and Anderson 2006). Discourse-language in use- can be one domain for constructing identities (e.g. Hall 1996: 17 and

Wodak et al 2009:22). Through discourse, individuals can instruct others and be instructed as to who they *think* they are, with whom they should align, and from whom to distance themselves; from that perspective, identity is a discursive construction (e.g. Wodak et al 2009:22). From this perspective, this study seeks to: a) explore the multi-modal and discursive strategies televangelists use to self-represent their identities and b) construct Muslim identities in their sermons.

Given the nature of the topic of the study and the many features that are related to this phenomenon (e.g. use of entertainment, use of websites and social networks), a Critical Discourse Studies (thereafter, CDS) approach is well-suited for the study. CDS can be briefly defined as an approach towards exploring complex social phenomena that pays particular attention to the relationship between language, ideology and power (e.g. Wodak and Meyer 2009; Angouri and Wodak 2014). A critical approach will enable us to go beyond perceiving televangelism as a “novel” phenomenon towards raising the question of what might be at stake in televangelism and what might be the wider interactions that have contributed to the shaping of this phenomenon and maintaining its existence.

This study employs an innovative synergy of the Discourse Historical Approach and the theory of Visual Grammar to deconstruct the layers of contexts surrounding the phenomenon of televangelism and to explore televangelists’ discourses. I argue that televangelism is a complex phenomenon that can be seen within the contextual prism of media power, transnationalism, info-tainment and rise of digital Islam, among other aspects (Chapters 1-4). The study makes general and more specific claims about televangelism and the discourses of the three American Muslim televangelists under investigation. First, the study illustrates that televangelists’ sermons and YouTube excerpts represent hybrid multi-modal fields in which televangelists navigate through different discourses and modes to self-represent their (multiple) identities, and gain wider

constituencies of audiences, which testifies to the understanding of this type of religious celebrity who can play multiple roles (see Chapter 6). Second, one finding of the study is that the three televangelists are -in varied ways- addressing the socio-historical context of Muslims in the West (e.g. awareness of misrepresentation in mass media), which could be one reason for their popularity.

In terms of the representation of Muslim identities in televangelists' sermons, using the DHA, I explore the nomination, predication and argumentation strategies, among other aspects and explain that one feature of the sermons of the three televangelists is that they are also addressing non-Muslims, attempting to bring about change of attitudes towards the perception of Islam. The study also reveals that, when Islam and the West are frequently imagined as incompatible entities in media discourses (see Baker et al 2013), the three televangelists have adopted different degrees of inclusivity towards the West, which is imagined differently in televangelists' sermons. Furthermore, argumentation strategies are used to give legitimacy to Islam/Muslims against a background of the rise of anti-Muslim rhetoric. Relevant to the representation of Muslim identities is that televangelists' sermons are a highly hybrid fabric that is open to many (contemporary) discourse topics and historical/religious references. Thus, the study illustrates that these important discursive aspects have two interrelated functions: a) to create distinct representations of Muslims b) to give legitimacy to televangelists' claims about Islam and Muslims.

The study, thus, takes up the critical challenge of exploring what might be the wider interactions that have led to the emergence and the continuation of televangelism. I identify and explore some of the broader interactions (e.g. rise of info-tainment society, emergence of transnational Islam). In this way, I extend the application of the DHA to religious discourse which has been little examined from a critical perspective (Chilton 2004: xii). I explore the discursive strategies and the multi-modal means the three

American Muslim televangelists use to represent their identities and to construct identities for Muslims in their sermons and examine televangelists' use of online spaces and analyze user-generated content of televangelists' fans. The study concludes that it is not only the three televangelists who are imagining a Muslim community. Rather, the accessibility of new media appears to have made it possible for some Muslims to (re-)imagine a global Muslim community. I attempt to unravel the development of this phenomenon, how it embraces many different styles, and what it means to the representation of religion (Islam) in the twenty first century. Hence, I illustrate and highlight the changing “face” of religious discourse.

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Preface

It all started on a hot day!

It was in 2003 when I first realized that televangelism has become an important and complex phenomenon. I was on a trip to El Gifton, a small island in the Red Sea; a female accountant of my age told me that she found more meaning to her life after watching the programmes of the televangelist Amr Khaled: “one can be modern, successful and religious”. She reiterated enthusiastically as we moved steadily in the Red Sea. Amr Khaled was the last thing we discussed before we got off board. El Gifton is a nature reserve, which literally meant that we had to climb down metal stairs in the sea! Somewhere close to the shore. Glittering water, the adventure of reaching the sea shore, and the cheers of men and women remained vivid scenes in my memory. So were the genuine and enthusiastic words of the young woman about Khaled's programmes.

For readers who are not familiar with Khaled's name, it is worth giving a brief synopsis of him, which will testify to the novelty of televangelism and its development. Unlike formally educated scholars who graduated from Al-Azhar University, Amr Khaled graduated from Cairo University in 1988 with a degree in Accounting (Campbell 2010: 89- 95). In the late 1990s, Khaled started preaching in private houses and social clubs, and became a well-known name. In 2001, Khaled appeared on the Egyptian satellite network Dream TV; his popularity grew and he continued to draw on a repertoire of media tools including books, CDs, audio-tapes and websites (*ibid.*). In 2008, for example, Khaled's media outputs

achieved the highest record in the International Book Fair, one of the largest book fairs in the Middle East (Lotfy 2009: 10-13).

One significant aspect about Khaled is that he has helped shape a new phenomenon in Egypt and elsewhere- in what came to be known as *televangelism*. In line with Khaled's informal style and use of colloquial language, many new preachers have appeared in Egypt such as Moez Masoud and Khaled El who were able to attract audiences (Zayed 2007: 1-16). Televangelism soon became popular in other Muslim majority contexts such as Malaysia and Indonesia. For example, the televangelist Aa Gym in Indonesia was able to attract millions of viewers to his weekly show (e.g. see Hoesterey, 2008).

There are many features that render televangelism a distinct phenomenon. First, unlike formally educated scholars who wear garb and speak in formal language, televangelists use informal language and relate their sermons to the everyday life of Muslims. Second, televangelism appears to be particularly appealing to young people; many of whom have perceived televangelism as a new approach to religious messages that addresses the everyday life of Muslims and focuses on individual relationships and goals (e.g. Howell 2008 and Wise 2003). For example, in his programme “Words from the heart”, Khaled draws on the religious narrative of the Prophet's life and his companions to focus on the importance of adopting an upright life in which young people choose good friends, eschew the use of drugs and keep good relations with their parents. The televangelist Hamza Yusuf, whose discourse is examined in much detail in this PhD thesis, asks his audiences to take the responsibility of reconciling between Muslims and non-Muslims and to denounce terrorism. Third, televangelism

embraces entertainment features, for example, sound effects, dramatic elements and camera movement techniques. The televangelist Ali Ardekani (Baba Ali), for example, draws on the use of songs, inserting images, gestures and acting in his video-blogs. Fourth, televangelists have digital proficiency; as they use a repertoire of new media tools such as websites and social media networks (see Chapter 4).

It is worth noting that televangelists' sermons are a discursive space in which particular representations of Muslims are constructed; for instance, Muslims are instructed as to what they should aspire to, particular historical eras are foregrounded, and discursive strategies of inclusion and exclusion are used to delineate who belongs to “us” and who are the other/s.

While the deconstruction of identities from a discursive point of view has gained some scholarly attention since the publication of *The Discursive Instruction of National Identity* (Wodak et al 2009; e.g. Unger 2013; and Schnurr and Zayts 2012), the study of religious identities has been given less attention. As Chilton (2004: xii) rightly observes, discourse on religion seems to be “a neglected area of research, as (it) has its overlap with politics”.

There are many reasons why this study focuses on Muslim identities' construction by Muslim televangelists in the West. First, while research (e.g. Campbell, 2010; 2012 and Howell, 2008) has given much attention to televangelism in majority contexts such as Egypt and Indonesia, what has been glossed over is the emergence of “home-made” televangelists in Western contexts such as the U.S. and the United Kingdom, who live in the West, give their speeches in English, primarily addressing English-speaking audiences (e.g. Schmidt, 2005;

Abdo, 2008 on the televangelist Hamza Yusuf). Hence, little is known about the discursive and rhetorical strategies these televangelists use to appeal to their audiences, which allow insights about televangelism as a new phenomenon and a new type of religious celebrity.

Second, within the context of misrepresentation of Islam (e.g. see Richardson, 2004 and Baker et al, 2013), one question that arises is: how will the three American Muslim televangelists, mentioned-above, who are primarily addressing English-speaking audiences, create a representation of Islam/Muslims. For instance, what arguments will Muslim televangelists use to justify that Muslims can live in the West without facing misrepresentation? In addition, as movement across past/present/future is one characteristic feature of televangelists' sermons, what historical eras will they invoke and for what purpose? What topics (and discourses) will their sermons integrate and elaborate? Further, in what aspects, if any, is there similarity of patterns of representation in televangelists' sermons online?

In fact, the novelty of televangelism (e.g. use of songs in sermons) and its popularity call for employing a critical approach that can enable us to understand why televangelism has gained popularity among some Muslim audiences, what broader dynamics it relates to and what this phenomenon means to the representation of Islam in the twenty first century.

I was ready to travel (again) in January 2011, this time not in Egypt but to the hub of Critical Discourse Studies at Lancaster University, to explore televangelism and televangelists' discourses. Using an innovative integration of the

Discourse Historical Approach with multi-modal analysis, I have examined a range of data and genres including televangelists' sermons on YouTube, their online spaces and the practices of their fans and followers. The following chapters, thus, recount my PhD journey and my exploration of the intricate relationship between televangelism, what it reveals about the power-structures of the twenty first century and the representation of Muslim identities.

Lancaster, UK, June, 2015

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Television or the use of television in religious preaching is not an innovation; it goes back to the 1940s and 1950s when religious institutions sponsored radio and television programmes for the dissemination of religious information (e.g. Bruce, 1990, pp. 29-48). However, in the 1980s, in the US, a new form of religious programme appeared. Fast-paced and entertaining, programmes constituted of a series of segments that included songs, talk shows, interviews, film clips and sermons. The programmes achieved huge popularity as a result of figures such as Oral Roberts and Pat Robertson; the phenomenon came to be known as televangelism (e.g. Bruce 1990).

By the end of the 1990s, televangelism became a phenomenon in Muslim majority contexts such as Egypt and Indonesia. Research (e.g. Lotfy, 2009 and Zayed, 2007) has given us some insights into the reasons of the popularity of this phenomenon in these contexts. In his award-winning book on televangelism in Egypt, Lotfy (2009) argues that televangelism has particularly attracted middle and upper-middle classes in Egypt; since these social strands have perceived televangelists' messages on personal development, working hard and gaining wealth as “a prescription for social mobility” (ibid. p. 55). In the same vein, in their research on televangelism in Indonesia, Howell (2008) and Hoestrey (2007) have suggested that one feature that grants televangelists a wider reach is that they

straddle many spheres. The Indonesian televangelist Aa Gym, in a similar way to Khaled in Egypt, is not only a preacher, but also a mentor who gives religious advices together with advices on time management. In other instances Aa Gym self-represents himself as a "rugged adventurer" (Hoestrey, 2007, p.100); as some of his videos feature him riding horses, scuba diving and sky diving (ibid.)

While literature (e.g. Campbell, 2011 and Howell, 2008) has given much attention to televangelism in majority contexts such as Egypt and Indonesia (see Chapter 2), the emergence of televangelism in Western contexts such as the US and the United Kingdom has been given little attention. Home-made televangelists such as Hamza Yusuf, Yusuf Estes and Baba Ali have been able to gain visibility; these are American Muslim televangelists who give their speeches in English, primarily addressing English-speaking audiences.

This study seeks to gain further insights into the phenomenon of televangelism by exploring the discourses (e.g. sermons and websites) of the three Muslim televangelists mentioned above, i.e. Yusuf Estes, Hamza Yusuf and Baba Ali. The aim here is twofold: I seek to get an in-depth understanding of televangelism and the broader dynamics that have shaped and sustained this phenomenon; second, I explore how the three Muslim televangelists represent their identities and construct identities for Muslims in their sermons. Thus, I approach televangelism critically by probing into the power structures and dynamics that have sustained its existence; and by exploring what the sermons and online visibility of the three televangelists can reveal about Islam/Muslims in the West in the twenty first century.

I would like to elaborate here on the notion of identity as a discursive construction, which I will further clarify in Chapter 3 of the thesis. Wodak et al (2009: 11) point out that identity is never a static phenomenon, but is always evolving and is continuously shaped. Discourse-language in use- is one domain for constructing identities (e.g. Hall, 1996 and Wodak et al, 2009:22). Thus, through discourse, individuals can demarcate the boundaries that separate them from others; for example, positively describing certain individuals/people, thus constructing them as an in-group, while describing other groups negatively, as an out-group.

I would also like to discuss why identities' construction in televangelists' sermons are worth exploring. First, with the increasing popularity of televangelists (e.g. Cesari, 2007:58; Echchaibi, 2011; Gilliat-Ray, 2010:166) and with the influence of new media on social reality (e.g. see Warnick, 2007: 7), several questions arises as to: how televangelists have gained their popularity and authority and what kind of identities televangelists are attempting to represent and construct in their sermons? The question seems to gain more importance in relation to Muslims in the West who have limited resources to getting religious knowledge and use the Internet as a primary source for seeking religious information (e.g. Mandaville, 2007:325; El Nawawy and Khamis, 2009:118 and Gilliat-Ray, 2010: 162-166 on the British context). Second, the post 9-11 context gives an added layer of emphasis to the importance of televangelists and their deemed importance in influencing their audiences. As I pointed out in the Preface, in mass media, Islam/Muslims are frequently represented as the Other (e.g. see Richardson, 2004).

Right-wing parties in Europe have based their political agendas and propaganda on anti-Muslim, anti-semitic and xenophobic rhetoric aiming to stop immigration of Muslims or to get Islam "out"; the British National Party in England (BNP), the Danish People's Party (DPP) and Pim Fortuyn List (LPF) in Netherlands are examples; for example, see Allen 2004: 139 on right-wing parties in Europe and Richardson and Wodak (2009a; b), Wodak et al (2013) and Wodak (2015) on textual analysis of rhetoric of right-wing parties in Europe. Writings by acclaimed journalists and intellectuals (e.g. Oriana Fallaci, 2002, Michel Houellebecq, 2003 and Christopher Caldwell, 2009) have argued that Islam and the West are incompatible; that Europe is succumbing to an "Islamic culture" (Cesari, 2009:2). Muslims are frequently misrepresented in newspapers as an "essentialized caricature" (Richardson 2004:5 on the British context). One consequence is that most Muslims have become aware of "othering" and "misrepresentation" (e.g. see El Nawawy and Khamis, 2009: 4).

It is against this background that some televangelists have gained popularity among Muslims in the West, attempting to shape Muslim identities. The fact that the three case studies, under investigation, are both Americans and Muslims gives rise to some salient questions. For example, within this context of awareness of misrepresentation, how would these televangelists represent the West? Will the West be the Other? If not, who will be? In addition, what arguments will they use to justify that they have the right to be "there", in "the West". In addition, as movement across past/present/future is one characteristic feature of televangelists' sermons, what historical eras/times will they evoke and for what purposes? What topics (and discourses) will their sermons include? In other words, how do the

televangelists *imagine* and discursively construct "Us Muslims"? And in what aspects there may be conformity of patterns of representation that can make up a discursive construction of an imagined Muslim community that is perpetuated in televangelists' sermons online?

Given the nature of this phenomenon, its complexity and the topic of the thesis, an approach that is well-suited for my study is Critical Discourse Studies (CDS). The latter can be defined as an interdisciplinary approach to language and communication that explores the relationship between language, power and ideology (e.g. see Wodak and Meyer, 2009 and Angouri and Wodak, 2014: 546-548; see Chapter 5). By adopting a critical perspective towards televangelism, I will deconstruct the intricate and frequently untransparent relationship between televangelism and the processes that may have contributed to the rise of this phenomenon (see Chapters 2 and 3 on globalization and the rise of transnationalism). More specifically, the study employs the Discourse Historical Approach to Critical Discourse Studies to explore an important dimension that is glossed over in literature on televangelism, e.g. televangelists' sermons as performance. Thus, I also employ Visual Grammar (e.g. Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996) to allow an insight into aspects such as the video-edition of televangelists' sermons and their use of dress code which all contribute to the processes of meaning-making. Thus, to recapitulate, this study has two aims: first, to adopt an innovative approach towards understanding televangelism, using Critical Discourse Studies as a framework. I ask what this phenomenon may reveal about the power structures of everyday life and the representation of Islam online. Second, I explore Muslim identities' construction in televangelists' sermons and what the patterns of representation (e.g. use of pronouns and argumentation

strategies) could reveal about the broader socio-political contexts of Muslims in the West, being the main target audience of televangelists' sermons. In the following section, I outline the main research question of the study.

1.2. Research Questions

There are three main research questions in the thesis:

1) How do three Muslim televangelists, popular in the West, construct and represent their identities in their sermons? What discursive and multi-modal strategies do they draw upon to construct their authorities?

2) How do three Muslim televangelists, popular in the West, represent Muslim identities in their sermons?

To answer this research question, I focus on four sub-questions:

2.1. How are Islam and the West referred to, named and predicated?

2.2. What topics, genres, texts and discourses do the selected televangelists draw upon and to what effect?

2.3. What historical eras (religious and non-religious) do televangelists evoke and recontextualize in their sermons?

2.4. What arguments do the selected televangelists use in their sermons to justify the existence of Islam in the West?

3) In what aspects are the three televangelists similar and/or different in their patterns of representations?

Since the PhD thesis employs a Critical Discourse Studies approach, I would like first to clarify some relevant terms that I will draw upon in the thesis (Wodak and Meyer, 2009; Reisigl and Wodak, 2009). From the point of view of media communication, a genre can be defined as "a way of communicating or interacting"; news programmes and websites are examples (Fairclough 2006:3). A "text" is "a specific and unique realization of a discourse" (Richardson and Wodak: 2009b:46), whereas discourse is "socially constituted and socially constitutive, related to a macro-topic and linked to the argumentation about validity claims such as truth and normative validity involving several social actors who have different points of view" (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001:89). Discourses, therefore, are "realized in both genres and texts" (Wodak, 2001: 66). A "sermon" can be defined as "a genre apart, serving a homiletic and didactic function, whereby human addressees receive doctrinal teaching and are exhorted to follow prescribed moral codes" (Howard-Malverde, 1998:570).

Having outlined the research context of the study and the definition of a few important terms, in the following section, I delineate aspects of the research design, including the use of Internet as a medium of data collection and the case studies' selection criteria.

1.3. The Internet as a Medium of Data Collection

Like many domains (e.g. politics, sports), religion is represented on the Internet. Helland (2004:23), for instance, has shown that both official and non-official Christian organizations have online presence. In a similar way to the

propagation of Christian faith online (Helland *ibid.*), Bunt (2004:124) shows that Islamic faith is propagated online in many ways such as chat rooms, forums and multi-media recitation of the Qur'an. Televangelists' sermons are not an exception in this regard; their sermons are generously available on websites, including blogs, forums and social media networks. There are numerous websites through which users can download/watch televangelists' sermons, e.g. Islamcity.Com, Islamicmedia.com.au and radicalmiddleway.org. This is besides religious channels available online such as Islam Channel¹ and Umma Channel² where televangelists' programmes are broadcast. Social media networks play an important role in the online visibility of the three selected televangelists; televangelists have hundreds of thousands of fans and followers who apparently follow televangelists' posts, statuses/tweets and updates (see Criteria of Case Studies' Selection).

YouTube emerges as an important platform for the mediation of televangelists' programmes (e.g. Echchaibi, 2011). This can be contextualized in the popularity of YouTube itself as an online platform (e.g. Burgess and Green, 2009 and Keen, 2007). It is one of the most rapidly growing video-sharing websites on the Internet: there is no limit to the number of YouTube videos that a user can create and download; it also has some "community" features, for instance, creating/following particular YouTube channels, and commenting on videos posted

¹ Link to the channel: <http://www.islamchannel.tv/> Last accessed 6th April 2015

² Link to the channel: <http://www.ummahchannel.tv/> Last accessed 6th April 2015

by other users (e.g. see Burgess and Green, 2009, pp. 1-6 and Keen, 2007, pp. 10-14 on the features of YouTube).

YouTube shares with other media genres on the Internet (e.g. blogs, forums, social media networks) a salient aspect related to the process of meaning making, relevant to identities' construction i.e. interactivity (Warnick 2007:70-90). Myers (2010 b: 264) for instance demonstrates that the blogosphere is a space for the expression of opinion and stance making; it allows for two way communications as users can comment on posts or even create their own blogs. In the same vein, Kirkpatrick (2010:304) remarks that Facebook is "an identity-based platform to communicate with people you know offline" and Boyd (2008:119) explains that social media networks "provide ... a space to work out identity and status and make sense of cultural cues and negotiate public life".

From one perspective, therefore, YouTube is related to processes of stance making and opinion expression, relevant to identities' construction. For example, one video-blog by the televangelist Baba Ali, with a hit record of around half a million views is re-mediated by different users in slightly different names: Who hijacked Islam? <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pDhGxRNrFII>; who hijacked my religion? <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uQnxnYEVp4U>. One may wonder why a user would re-mediate a particular YouTube video that already has about half a million hits. Apparently, s/he would not only like to attach that link to his own online personal space or YouTube channel, but also to widen its territory, to further publicize it so that other users may click it or see it, to further extend its influence.

Most relevant here is the possibility of breaking the hegemony exercised by traditional media including television and print media. This is because YouTube gives users the possibility to create their own videos that can challenge dominant opinions/views/discourses (e.g. Chun and Walters, 2011 and Warnick, 2007, pp. 98-101 on online parody and satire).

The above elements are important aspects that have informed my choice of YouTube as a medium of data collection in terms of its popularity and its importance as a video-sharing website that can allow for counter-views. In addition, on YouTube, we can identify the number of views for a particular YouTube video, which is a criterion I took into account in data selection.

1.4. Case Studies' Selection Criteria

Because the aim of the PhD thesis is to examine televangelists' sermons being one influence that can impact Muslims' world views and opinions, the popularity of the televangelists to be selected was an important criterion. For this purpose, two criteria were used for case studies' selection:

- a) Televangelists' search records on YouTube and number of fans/followers in social media networks

- b) Relevant literature written about televangelists (e.g. *The 500 Most Influential Muslims* by Esposito and Kalin 2009).

The reason for using both criteria is that there is scant literature on Muslim televangelism in the West. The procedures of case studies' selection started by examining televangelists featured in two websites: Radical Middle Way and Halal Tube. Formed after the 7/7 London bombings, Radical Middle Way³ is a resource of literature and audio-visual material of Muslim scholars and media figures (Chapman et al 2012: 188). In addition, Halal Tube, <http://www.halaltube.com/> provides a list of contemporary Muslim televangelists, allowing users to listen to/download some of their sermons. Both websites were used as reference points enabling me to identify and select the most popular contemporary televangelists in the West. Comparisons were made between possible case studies with reference to YouTube search results, and televangelists' followers/fans in social media networks. Out of a pool of approximately fifteen televangelists, the three that were found to be most popular were included; each belongs to a different generation, allowing for a wider contextual lens of analysis in terms of the use of a variety of discursive features (e.g. use of slang and humor by Baba Ali). Records of televangelists' YouTube search results and the number of subscribers on social media networks are shown below.

Table 1.1. YouTube Search Results, Fans and Followers of the Selected Case Studies⁴

³ Link to the website: <http://www.radicalmiddleway.org/> Last accessed 6th April 2015

⁴ Last updated on 6th April 2015

Name of the televangelist	YouTube hits	Facebook likes	Twitter followers
Yusuf Estes b. 1944 American	No official channel; however, You Tube search leads to 166,000 results	527, 321 likes ⁵	ca. 15, 000 followers ⁶
Hamza Yusuf b. 1958 American	No "official" channel; however, You Tube search leads to about 215,000 results.	419, 909 likes ⁷	ca. 87,000 followers ⁸
Baba Ali b. 1975 American	75,237 subscribers 15,646,234 views ⁹	20,737 likes ¹⁰	ca 37, 000 followers ¹¹

In the following, I present the bio-information of the selected case studies:

⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/y.estes> Last accessed 6th April 2015

⁶ <https://twitter.com/yusufestes> Last accessed 6th April 2015

⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/ShaykhHamzaYusuf> Last accessed 6th April 2015

⁸ <https://twitter.com/hamzayusuf> Last accessed 6th April 2015

⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/user/ummahfilms/featured> Last accessed 6th April 2015

¹⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/ummahfilms> Last accessed 6th April 2015

¹¹ <https://twitter.com/ummahfilms> Last accessed 6th April 2015

Yusuf Estes

Born in 1944 in the US and a convert to Islam in 1991⁽¹²⁾, he is one of the televangelists of the oldest generation. He is described in *The 500 Most Influential Muslims* by Esposito and Kalin (2009:101) as "a well-known Muslim preacher who lectures all over the



world. He is the former national Muslim chaplain for the US Bureau of Prisons and uses technology, such as uploading lectures on the Internet and appearing on television to spread Islam in an easily understood manner. His website has close to seven million unique hits".

An overview of the sermons by Yusuf Estes shows that Estes not only addresses Muslims but also non-Muslims. Quite often, he starts his sermons by asking: "How many non-Muslims are there? Raise up your hand", which indicates his missionary agenda of identifying non-Muslims as target audience. His personal website¹³, one among many, has a picture of him as a young man before turning to Islam and has a reply he has written to a journalist explaining how he, being an ex-Christian preacher, has converted to Islam. Trying to convert an Egyptian Muslim man from Cairo, whom he saw as an "infidel", yet apparently was impressed by his "good morals", he engaged in debates after which he decided to "embrace" Islam¹⁴. In his sermons, he repeatedly refers to his "conversion story". His website has links

¹² See his Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/#!/islamnewsroom>

¹³ Yusuf Estes" website: <http://yusufestes.com/> Last accessed 6th April 2015

¹⁴ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ev776NEercY&feature=relmfu> Last accessed 6th April 2015

to video and audio-excerpts accompanied by a caption: "Watch/hear Sheik Yusuf Estes help 1000 enter Islam around the world". In short, his main interest seems to pass information to non-Muslims about Islam (shall we say invite, convert?), which he repeatedly says is an important objective for a Muslim¹⁵. He is featured on many TV channels (e.g. Peace TV, Guide US TV and Huda TV) and his programmes are widely accessible on YouTube and other Islamic channels (e.g. Halal Tube). In addition, some of his sermons, mediated on YouTube, are given in varied Muslim contexts: in the United Kingdom, the United States, India and Dubai. Judging by his fans on Facebook, one can deduce that Yusuf Estes enjoys relatively wide popularity with approximately 527,000 fans that apparently follow his news including updates of his tours, pictures and fund raising projects.

Hamza Yusuf

Born in 1958 in the United States of America and a convert to Islam in 1977, Hamza Yusuf carries the title of an "Islamic scholar" and "an intellectual"¹⁶. According to the book by Esposito and Kalin referred to above (2009:78), Yusuf is "the Western world's most



¹⁵ For instance, in one sermon, entitled "Wake up", he argues that it is important that Muslims are involved in "guiding" other non-believers to Islam.

¹⁶ For instance, see Gilliat-Ray 2010:166 on Hamza Yusuf. I define the intellectual here as a person of recognized intellectual attainments who speaks out in the public arena, generally in ways that call established society or dominant ideologies to account in the name of principle or on behalf of the oppressed" (Hewitt, 2003:145).

influential Islamic scholar who has built a huge grassroots following, particularly among young western Muslims". He has established one college in California, the Zaytuna College, which mixes traditional Islamic studies with contemporary Western thought. It aims to "train students in the varied sciences of Islam, while also instilling in them a sophisticated understanding of the intellectual history and culture of the West"¹⁷. In addition, he is an advisor to some academic institutions on Islam and some philanthropic organizations; for instance, Stanford University Program in Islamic Studies and George Russell's "One nation" that promotes pluralism in America¹⁸.

Lending further support to scholars who have indicated that discourses on Islam in the West are undergoing changes (e.g. Mandaville 1999:18; 2007; see Chapter 3), we can safely classify him as one of those who "critique" contemporary Muslim discourses from within¹⁹. For instance, one of his published articles argues that denying the Holocaust undermines Islam²⁰ which attempts to defy anti-semitic discourses in Muslim contexts (e.g. see KhosraviNik (2010) on the anti-semitic discourses by the former politician Mahmoud Ahmadinejad). On another occasion in 2006, Hamza Yusuf claims that when some Muslims burnt the

¹⁷ The website of Zaytuna college: Last accessed 6th April 2015 <http://www.zaytunacollege.org/about/>

¹⁸ According to Hamza Yusuf's website, <http://sandala.org/about/hamzayusuf/> Last accessed 6th April 2015

¹⁹ The term is taken from Mandaville (1999:18), which he refers to as a "notion that has gained particular currency in recent years among diasporic Muslim intellectuals in the West".

²⁰ The article is published in many websites and forums, for instance, <http://www.tikkun.org/article.php/Yusuf-WhyHolocaustdenialunderminesIslam/print> Last accessed 6th April 2015

flag of Denmark, they ended up doing what they criticize the West for: blaming a whole community for the action of a handful of people²¹.

Like Yusuf Estes, Hamza Yusuf's sermons are generously accessible online. In addition, he has a blog where he posts personal thoughts, notes of his lectures and updates of his events. Besides, he has a number of fan pages on Facebook administered by himself and his fans. Like Yusuf Estes, he is one of the "traveling preachers" who give sermons not only in the United States but also in the United Kingdom and in Malaysia.

Baba Ali

Ali Ardekani was born in 1975 in Iran and grew up in the United States of America. While Yusuf Estes and Hamza Yusuf have online visibility, Baba Ali, his nickname, is truly a product of the digital age. He first broadcast on YouTube and rose to publicity through a series of video-blogs that triggered millions of hits,



which granted him airtime on TV channels such as the Islamic Channel (based in the United Kingdom) and Guide Us TV based in The United States (MacFarquhar²², 2008). Unlike the other two televangelists, Baba Ali is not concerned with "big goals" such as bringing Muslims back, as Hamza Yusuf always argues, to the highest moral ideals. More precisely, he is a down-to-earth

²¹ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ryPX3ZIPTjk> Last accessed 6th April 2015

²² Published in New York times: http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/08/us/08video.html?_r=3&oref=slogin/
Last accessed 6th April 2015

televangelist who deals with topics such as the carelessness of Muslims in Friday prayers and makes fun of Muslims who hide the fact that they are Muslims at work, and, in another instance, gives Muslims tips on how to avoid being suspected of being terrorists (because they are Muslims) in an airport.

Baba Ali has set up a marriage website, "Half our deen", helping Muslims to find their spouses via the Internet; the website is "distinct as it go [es] deeper by asking questions regarding how they [profile] users understand Islam, what their family expectations are, and even what their personality is like"²³.

Ali does not give long sermons like the other two televangelists but rather gives short sermons, about ten minutes, a hybrid genre of sermon and drama in which Ali primarily acts the characters he wishes to criticize while giving his message at the end. For instance, in his YouTube video "Culture versus Islam"²⁴, he acts the character of a young man using slang that another character, the father, cannot identify. These scenes come in the context of the main point that Baba Ali makes in his video, that children lose contact with their parents as a result of parents' mistaken interpretation of Islam. Baba Ali's Facebook page defines him as "an artist" and in his timeline picture; he poses in a theater holding a mike.

²³ <http://www.facebook.com/#!/halfourdeen/info> Last accessed 6th April 2015

²⁴ Link to the YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GT3ol-iuCGU> Last accessed 9th June 2015

In light of the above, there are some similarities and differences between the three televangelists that are worth noting. The three are contemporary Muslim televangelists who grew up in the United States of America and therefore are both Americans and Muslims. This sets them in contrast to other televangelists who are based in Muslim majority contexts and have given some of their sermons in English, for example, Zakir Naik in India or Moez Masoud in Egypt. The three televangelists, however, are different, in terms of their approach to religion: Yusuf Estes seems most interested in propagating faith to non-Muslims, Hamza Yusuf urges Muslims to regain "their moral compass" and Baba Ali is more interested in Muslims' social life in the West from finding a spouse, to responding to claims and misinterpretations about Islam and Muslims. Therefore, their discourses convey different ideologies and subject positions. This allows for a comparison and juxtaposition of how each televangelist imagines a Muslim community and in what discursive aspects they overlap, which will enable us to identify if there are recurrent patterns in televangelists' representation of Muslim identities that constitute a distinct representation of Islam/Muslims in televangelists' YouTube sermons.

1.5. Data Selection Criteria

In the following, I present my data selection criteria:

- The macro-topic²⁵ of the selected sermons is "Islam/Muslims in the West", as it allows for an examination of how each televangelist represents

²⁵ Van Dijk (1995: 385) defines macro-structures as "topic" or "theme" that account for the "global meaning" of discourse or conversation.

Islam/Muslims in the West. The texts selected are first mediated in the post 9/11 context. While anti-Muslim sentiments existed in the pre- 9/11 context (e.g. Runnymede Trust used the term "Islamophobia" in 1997) it became more apparent in the post 9-11 era (see Allen 2004: 131; Cesari 2010:20-23 and Triandafyllidou and Wodak 2009: 239-261). This gives rise to the important question of how Muslim identities are represented in televangelists' sermons in this context and how each televangelist instructs Muslims on how they should react and become.

- Only “sermon” is selected. In comparison to “interviews”, the sermon is primarily aimed at persuasion, which gives way to the representations of Islam/Muslims by each televangelist.
- As a performance, the sermon can be looked at as "socialized, molded and modified to fit into the understanding and expectations of the society in which it is presented" (Goffman 1959:44). Drawing on Bell (1984), Sharoff and Secăra (2007:176) point out that "the context in which a speech is given acts as a filter (the context also includes the audience)". Therefore, the sermons selected were all given in the West²⁶ (e.g. England, Australia and the United States). The texts selected covered the time span from 2004-2008. While September 11, 2011 represents a "rift" in the relationship

²⁶ Despite the fact that the context of Muslims (as a collective group) possibly differs from one Western country to the other, there has been conformity of practices among Western countries (e.g. Islamophobia, migration restriction see Allen 2004; Cesari 2007; 2009) that makes me regard the West as one uniform context when it comes to some attitudes towards Islam.

between the so-called Islam and the West (e.g. Cesari 2010:23), other events took place during the period of 2004-2008, that kept the "spirit" of 9-11 "going"; metaphorically speaking; for example, the terrorist attack in Madrid (March 11th 2004) and the Prophet Muhammad Cartoon publication (September 30th 2005). On the political spectrum, the sermons, therefore, occur during George Bush's "war on terror" or before Barack Obama's presidency where an attempt has been made to "seek a new beginning", using Obama's words, with Muslims around the world²⁷. The following table presents a summary of the sermons selected for analysis.

Table 2: Details of the Sermons Selected for analysis

Televangelist	Name of video and link on YouTube	Place and date given	YouTube hits	Length
Yusuf Estes	Why the West needs Islam: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c33fYIRuN3M	5 th of June 2008 Australia (University of Melbourne) Islamic Information and Services Network of Australasia (IISNA)	146, 807	61 minutes

²⁷ Link to Obama's speech in Cairo: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B_889oBKKNU Last accessed 6th April 2015

Hamza Yusuf	A message to humanity ²⁸ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ih-Zt0_HkBk	1-4th?) September 2004 Chicago, ISNA convention (41st Annual ISNA Convention, September 3-6)	3,162	34 minutes
Baba Ali	Who hijacked Islam? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VqmMdpKw378	Jul 28, 2006	489,277	7 minutes
	Why Islam https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p2C1k5INUdQ	July 14, 2007	908,884	8 minutes
	Culture versus Islam https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GT3ol-iuCGU	July 21, 2006	325, 276	7 minutes
	How did you convert to Islam https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E79L5s_ZvCM&feature=relmfu	August 4, 2006	243,178	10 minutes
	Muslim while flying https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=noINcJ1G7w	June 2006	373, 469	6 minutes
Total minutes	133 minutes			

²⁸ In fact, this sermon is re-mediated on YouTube in a shorter version in two parts with the title "Islam and the West": <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ttcA9Kto9M> and http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mx_OopuSEQY, with hit records of 59,728 and 49,350 respectively; Last accessed 6th April 2015

There are some differences that are worth noting between the above selected texts. As for texts by Yusuf Estes and Hamza Yusuf, the sermons were given at conferences and conventions sponsored by Muslims organizations in the West, namely the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA), and Islamic Information and Services Network of Australasia (IISNA) (Australia), being important organizations that represent Muslims in the West (e.g. Ghazali, 2004 and Ali, 2009). In this way, they differ from Baba Ali's video-blogs aimed at imagined online viewers. However, the fact that the sermons of the first two televangelists are video-recorded, and that the televangelists themselves are public figures indicate that the speakers are probably aware that they are addressing an international audience that go beyond their limited co-present attendees²⁹.

It is worth noting that the choice of a few sermons to analyze was predicated on the length of sermons that span in total 127 minutes. The unequal length of data examined for each televangelist was due to the different style of preaching that makes two genres: relatively long sermons by Yusuf Estes and Hamza Yusuf as opposed to the relatively short "sermon/drama" genre by Baba Ali.

²⁹ For instance, in one sermon given in India, Yusuf Estes says the following: "it is sad when we start our programmes defending our right to even breathe and in some cases we feel like that, we feel we are being scrutinized, looked at under a magnified glass that any mistake we make, is gonna be on YouTube tomorrow or may be on the 6"O clock news the next day but it is good in a way for us..<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z21bEuvHJCU> Last accessed 6th April 2015

In the following, I would like to explain how the data selected is representative of the discourse of each speaker. As for Yusuf Estes, the sermon “Why the West needs Islam” is representative of his discourse in many ways. It invokes discourse topics on conversion of non-Muslims that are common in Yusuf Estes' sermons/YouTube excerpts such as “four people convert to Islam after Yusef Estes' lecture³⁰” (uploaded to YouTube Jan 2013), “Another Sister Accepts Islam (Crying) as her Way of Life- With Sh Yusuf Estes”³¹ (uploaded to YouTube Dec. 2013) and “looking for truth, Yusuf Estes, Christian converts to Islam ”³² which are about non-Muslims converting to Islam and Estes' guiding them to utter *shahada* or belief in Islam.

Another distinctive feature in Yusuf Estes' discourse is the positive construction of Us (Muslims) and the negative construction of Them (Westerners and non-Muslims). As I will demonstrate in Chapter 7, the sermon “Why the West needs Islam” represents Estes' use of the positive presentation of Us and the negative presentation of them, e.g. non-Muslims and Christians who are represented as attacking Muslims. This can be evident in other sermons for Estes for example, his sermon “introducing Islam to non-Muslims”³³, given in Australia (and uploaded to YouTube in 2012) and “Why they attack us”³⁴ (uploaded to YouTube in 2012). At the beginning of his sermon “introducing Islam to no non-Muslims”, Estes points

³⁰ Link to the sermon: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YGV-c3P5-4U> Last accessed 27 January 2016.

³¹ Link to “Another Sister Accepts Islam (Crying) as her Way of Life- With Sh Yusuf Estes”:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_z0ZUiCanms. Last accessed 27 January 2016.

³² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WwBAPxgTruU> Last accessed 27 January 2016.

³³ Link to the sermon: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RJttCU_Tzb4 Last accessed 8 February 2016.

³⁴ Link to the sermon: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZLgiL5LpRI> Last accessed 8 February 2016.

out that the topic of his sermon is how Muslims can “respond to the harsh attacks and criticisms against Muslims, the Prophet and Islam in every aspect of it”. The negative representation of Christians in this sermon is conveyed through the narrative of a Christian preacher -whom Estes met in an inter-faith debate-who “attacked” Islams and “misquoted” verses from the Qur'an. The narrative of the story ends with Estes pointing out that -as a result of the attacks of that preacher-many non-Muslims took *shahada* (i.e. converted to Islam) on that event, invoking the discourse topic on the conversion of non-Muslims to Islam which is recurrent in his discourse. The sermon “why the West needs Islam” also bears features that characterizes Yusuf Estes' sermons/YouTube videos such as the use of narratives and voice animation. For example, in his sermon “Introducing Islam to non-Muslims”, Yusuf Estes recounted his conversion story and his encounter with a young Muslim man from Egypt, who made him interested in Islam.

Moving on to Hamza Yusuf, there are many ways in which the sermon “a message to humanity” is representative of his discourse. First, it is a highly inter-discursive hybrid fabric in which Yusuf invokes discourse on religion and politics; as he calls for the unity of Abrahamic faith, criticizes George Bush's government and creates a parallel representation of Islam and the United States of America (see Chapter 7). The hybridity of Yusuf's discourse - realized in his sermon - can also be evident in many of his sermons; for example, in the “9/11 Unity Walk Speech”³⁵ given in 2011, Hamza Yusuf holds a comparison between the 9/11 attack and Pearl Harbor, and calls for the unity of Muslims, Christians and Jews, thus invoking

³⁵ Link to the speech on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LTW7Pz7N_RE Last accessed 8 February 2016.

discourse on religion and politics. In another YouTube video, “Does God love war”,³⁶ given in Berkeley (US) in 2006, he calls for bringing down the global armament trade, criticizes the involvement of the United States in wars across the globe and denounces the division of US and them (Islam/West) that can lead to wars. His sermon ends by showing Islam's call against tribalism and indiscriminate violence, thus creating an interdiscursive fabric of religion and politics. Second, another characteristic feature of his discourse - realized in his sermon “a message to humanity” - is dismissing the dichotomy of Us and Them through the positive representation of Americans/Westerners. For example, in the sermon “United we stand”,³⁷ given in Washington DC in 2011, Yusuf called on the human community to reassert their rights to have a good governance. He also praised the U.S. as a nation that is “much better than it has ever been” (e.g. in terms of white/black equality). Another topic he invoked is his assertion that he is - like many Muslims in America - American and is part of it.

Moving on to Baba Ali's discourse, the sermons selected for analysis exemplify two main topics relevant to Muslims/Islands in the West that run through Baba Ali's YouTube videos, namely “misrepresentation of Islam” (section 8.3.1. Discourse on the misrepresentation of Islam) and “ethnic Islam” (section 8.3.2. Discourse on ethnic Islam). Discourse on “the misrepresentation of Islam” is represented in many YouTube videos for Baba Ali (examples: “who hijacked my religion”; “How did you convert to Islam”, “Why Islam” and “Muslim while

³⁶ Link to the speech on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F-yacoQ0gFM> Last accessed 8 February 2016.

³⁷ Link to the speech on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=09cCrnvTq_c Last accessed 8 February.

flying”). The salient feature in this discourse topic is the use of argumentation strategies to counter the representation of Islam in mass media as being linked with terrorism; for example, through the claim that Muslims have been in the West generation after generation and that Muslims are in the West in large numbers. Furthermore, another discourse topic I examined relevant to Muslims in the West is ethnic Islam or culture versus Islam (e.g. see 8.3.2. Discourse on “ethnic Islam”). As I will indicate in Chapter 8, this discourse topic is represented in many YouTube videos for Baba Ali such as “culture versus Islam”, “my culture”, and “racism and pride”. Within this thematic cluster, his video “culture versus Islam” is selected for analysis for having the highest views on YouTube (see Chapter 6). As I will demonstrate in Chapter 8 of the thesis, Baba Ali here touches upon topics that are discussed in literature on Islam/Muslims in the West, for example, the inter-generational gap between Muslim parents and youth and young Muslims' dissatisfaction with the “ethnic” practices of their parents such as forced marriage. In terms of the ideological positioning of Islam and West, I will explain in the forthcoming chapters that unlike Hamza Yusuf and Yusuf Estes, “the West” as a social actor does not seem to occur in Baba Ali's YouTube videos; rather Baba Ali negatively represents the media which in his view is responsible for the misrepresentation of Islam/Muslims (see section 7.3.1. addressing multiple audiences).

1.5. Outline of the thesis

The thesis consists of ten chapters. Thereafter, Chapter 2 explores the phenomenon of televangelism in terms of its main features, and its broader

dynamics, for example new media power, the predominance of “info-tainment”, the commodification of religion and fragmentation of religious authority. I argue in this chapter that televangelism is a complex phenomenon and can be perceived from many varied perspectives.

In Chapter 3 “Muslim identities in a global context”, I investigate the complex meanings of identity and draw on the concept of imagined communities. I trace the emergence of “transnational Islam” in terms of its dynamics and manifestations (e.g. rise of global media technologies and e-religion). I argue that transnationalism, rather than “diaspora” can be a theoretical framework through which we can understand the processes of identities' construction, particularly among Muslim youth in the West (e.g. Vertovec and Cohen, 1999, p. xxi and Faist, 2010, pp. 14-22). This is a significant aspect of the theoretical framework of the study; since it will enable us to better understand the processes underlying identities' construction of Muslims in the West and how televangelists' sermons and their online visibility fit into these processes.

In Chapter 4, I turn attention to the Internet (e.g. Barton and Lee, 2013; Page et al, 2014) as one medium through which the selected televangelists have achieved popularity. First, I engage with the question of whether the Internet provides a virtual public sphere; then, I examine what happens to new media when it meets religion. I aim here to gain a perspective on the dynamics and manifestations that are shaping religion on the Internet. One aspect I highlight in this chapter is how televangelists' fans play an important role in “popularizing” their discourses and extending their visibility.

In chapter 5, I examine the methodological frameworks I will draw upon in examining televangelists' sermons and online data. I locate the thesis within Critical Discourse Studies and employ a synergy of the Discourse Historical Approach (e.g. Wodak, 2001 and Wodak and Meyer, 2009) and multi-modality (e.g. see Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996; Le Baron and Streeck, 2013; van Leeuwen, 2005; 2011 and Wodak 2001) to deconstruct salient features of televangelists' performance, including the use of staging, dress code, color schemes and gesture and to explore the salient discursive strategies most related to persuasion and identities' construction; for example, use of repetition and narratives; creation of in-groups and out-groups (e.g. Wodak et al, 2009) and the use of historical and religious references in constructing a collective memory for Muslims (e.g. Heer, Manoschek, Pollak and Wodak 2008:7).

In chapter 6, I explore the first research question of the thesis, i.e. how each televangelist self-represents his identities. I argue in this chapter that each televangelist constructs multi-faceted identities, inter alia, as preachers and media celebrities. I argue that -in representing their identities- televangelists draw on many resources including drama-related features (e.g. staging and gestures), discursive strategies (use of particular topics rather than others), and cinema techniques (e.g. graphic elements and reaction shots). Thus, I highlight how televangelists' sermons have become a multi-modal field.

In chapter 7, I examine how Islam and the West are linguistically referred to and predicated. I will throw light on the different ideological positions the three

televangelists adopt towards the West. For example, whereas Hamza Yusuf constructs a bi-cultural Muslim identity in which he addresses his audiences as both Americans/Westerns and Muslims, Yusuf Estes adopts the strategy of “calculated ambivalence” in which two contradictory images of the West are given, using negative and positive predication. Baba Ali, however, refrains from using the West as a homogenous entity; however, he negatively represents the media, as the other.

In Chapter 8, I explore the discourse topics and fields of action that each televangelist invokes and how these elements contribute to the construction of a distinct representation of Islam and Muslims. As I will illustrate, topics that are recurrent in televangelists' sermons include the misrepresentation of Islam/Muslims and Muslim civilization.

In Chapter 9, I investigate how each televangelist re-contextualizes religious and historical references in his sermons and to what effects. I examine the two sources that the three televangelists draw upon: Qur'anic resources and the Prophet's sayings. I further explore the historical references made by each televangelist, the eras they refer to and their meanings. Finally, in Chapter 10, I present a summary of my findings and suggest opportunities for further research in the domains of religious studies and Critical Discourse Studies.

Chapter Two

2. Televangelists as "media celebrities": What is at stake in televangelism?

Historically speaking, the use of television as a medium of religious preaching started in the 1950s in the United States (e.g. Bruce 1990: 29-48) when religious institutions sponsored radio and television programmes for the dissemination of religious information. In the 1980s, however, a new form of religious programmes appeared. Fast-paced and entertaining, programmes constituted of a series of segments that included songs, talk shows, interviews, film clips and sermons (Schmidt and Kess, 1986, p. 36). With telephone counseling and prayer requests, callers were automatically placed into a computerized mailing list through which appeals for donations were sent (ibid.).

Back then, it was the first time that songs, interviews and recorded clips were integrated into sermons by religious figures. These programmes attracted wide audiences and as a result of their popularity, religious figures became- for the first time- media celebrities, on equal grounds to popular stars. Televangelism was soon transferred to Muslim religious contexts in many countries. As thousands of audiences in the United States turned their TV programmes to watch programmes by televangelists in the 1980s, audiences in Muslim majority contexts such as Egypt and Indonesia turned around TV sets years later to watch the televangelists who were –broadly speaking - different in their dress code and style of presentation from the formally educated preachers.

As has been the case with Muslim majority contexts such as Egypt and Indonesia, Muslims in minority contexts such as the United Kingdom and the United States soon produced their "home-made" televangelists. British and American Muslim televangelists were featured on religious satellite channels such as Huda TV, Islam Way, Islam Channel UK and on YouTube.

As one main aim of the PhD thesis is to explore how televangelists discursively construct the religious identities of their audiences, this entails first an understanding of the phenomenon of televangelism, which raises some interesting questions. For instance, what does televangelism –as a hybrid phenomenon of entertainment and religion- suggest about the representation of Islam in the twenty first century? In addition, what wider interactions and dynamics may relate the phenomenon of "televangelism" to a similar phenomenon, i.e. "politico-tainment" where politics and entertainment are blurred (e.g. see Riegert, 2007; Wodak, 2009, 2010)? In addition, what critique can we give on this combination of what was once sacred (religion) and entertainment; and what does the popularity of televangelists, particularly among Muslim youth, reveal about religious authority and leadership in Islam in the twenty first century?

In this chapter, I argue that televangelism can be better understood as a by-product of the interaction between media power, the rise of infotainment and the commodification of religion (e.g. Couldry, 2003a and 2003b; Hallin, 2008 and Kellner, 2003; 2010). It is worth noting that in Chapter 3 of the thesis, I will take my investigation further by focusing on Muslim identities' construction and the rise of transnationalism.

Thematically, the chapter is divided into two parts. In the first part, I delineate the main characteristic features of televangelism. In the second part, I explore the wider interactions that appear to be relevant to the shaping of televangelism including media power, the rise of infotainment, and the fragmentation of authority. This is followed by a closer inspection of the socio-historical context of Muslim youth in the West that represent the main audiences of the selected televangelists (e.g. see Gilliat-Ray, 2010: 162; Echchaibi, 2011).

2.1. The main features of televangelism

As a phenomenon, televangelism has particular characteristics. I list them below; I will elaborate on these features in the following sections:

- The use of entertainment features such as music and sound effects
- The interest in commercialization
- The presentation of religion as a force of social change and as being relevant to everyday life (see below).
- Televangelism is also a phenomenon that appears to be relevant to Muslim youth of middle and upper-middle classes, which adds further meaning to this phenomenon in terms of its possible societal impact (see below).

First, entertainment is a salient feature of televangelism (e.g. see Howell, 2008 Lotfy, 2009). In Indonesia, Howell (2008) examines the sermons of two popular televangelists, Aa Gym and Arifin Ilham. She points out that entertainment

features are integrated in various ways into the sermons of both televangelists. For instance, Sufi³⁸, practices are adapted to create a visually engaging spectacle that includes massive audiences, celebrities and famous figures (ibid. p. 52). Howell (2008: 52-58) points out that the movements of the head and upper body characteristic of Sufi performances are simplified into the mere recitation of the names of God and the repetition of short phrases and passages from the Qur'an. In addition, Aa Gym, compared to Arifin Ilham, makes more use of entertainment features by singing and telling jokes in his services (ibid. pp. 56-58). One aspect Howell (2008, pp. 58- 60) mentions is that televangelism in Indonesia is most influenced by Sufism, unlike televangelism in Egypt.

While exploring televangelism in Egypt, Lotfy (2009:17) indicated that what was striking about Egyptian televangelism, when it first appeared in the late 1990s, was not only the "style" of the "new preachers" that was different from the style of traditionally educated religious scholars in terms of dress code and use of language but also in terms of the presentation of religion as a force of individual change (ibid.). The televangelist Amr Khaled, Lotfy explained, called on his audiences to dismiss pessimism, work on improving their talents and skills and adopt a positive attitude to life (also see Kutscher 2009:33). Furthermore, Lotfy (2009:19-25) adds it is the upper and middle-classes that are particularly attracted to televangelists' discourses, because these social strands do not lack wealth or

³⁸ Sufism can be defined as a mystical dimension of Islam in which Muslims seek the divine truth through direct relationship with God. It first appeared in the 7th century as a reaction against the worldliness and luxurious lifestyle of the early Umayyad period (661- 749) (Encyclopedia Britannica) Online: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/571823/Sufism> Last accessed 6th June 2015.

capabilities and to them the concept of "civic Jihad" is more appealing than the radical messages of Islamist ideologies.

In fact, the popularity that some televangelists such as Amr Khaled have achieved in Egypt triggers an examination of religious discourse and practice in Egypt, which can provide a better understanding of the reasons that have rendered televangelism particularly appealing to middle and upper-middle classes in Egypt. In this vein, one influential religious establishment is Al-Azhar University, which teaches Islamic studies together with logic, grammar and rhetoric. During the era of Gamal Abdel Nasr, Al Azhar went through a modernization process through which secular knowledge was taught including science, medicine, engineering and pharmacy. The aim was to produce “complete scholars versed at the same time in religious and secular knowledge” (Zeghal 2007: 119). Zeghal (2007: 119) argued that the modernization of Al-Azhar and its representation as an advocate of moderate Islam have both contributed to Al-Azhar's prominence as a religious establishment; for example, its curricula are adopted by some South Asian countries such as Malaysia and it attracts an increasingly large number of international students (Zeghal 2007: 119).

Despite the leading position of Al-Azhar as a religious establishment, in my view it falls short of addressing topics that are relevant to the lives of Egyptian youth. This can be testified in a study by Zayed (2007), who examined the contemporary discourse of Al-Azhar in its magazine that carries the same name. Zayed (2007) found that the majority of the articles produced by the magazine were aimed at the admonition or *waaz* and focused on explaining how religious rites such as fasting and praying should be practiced correctly. This could be

juxtaposed with the discourse of the televangelist Amr Khaled, as an example, who addresses topics relevant to the everyday life of (Egyptian) youth such as friendship, how to treat parents and love in Islam.

Another aspect in relation to Al-Azhar's discourse is that it appears to present a traditional discourse that is against the (secular) aspects of the Egyptian society such as the working of women. One article, for example, which Zayed (2007) examined, adopted a gendered classification in which women were perceived to be more suitable to particular jobs such as nursing and teaching. This could be opposed to the discourse of Amr Khaled who was able to reconcile aspects of the modern life with religious discourse. For example, he wore modern clothes such as shirts and jeans/trousers vis-a-vis the *jilbab* usually worn by Al-Azhar clerics and advised young Muslims, including women, to work on improving their skills and making the best use of their time through playing sports and through learning computer courses.

The popularity of televangelists among youth of middle and upper-middle classes in Egypt has also an economic dimension to it. New middle and upper-middle classes have appeared in Egypt of educated professionals and hard-working businessmen (Lotfy 2009: 25-27) and televangelists' messages which praised wealth and individual improvement seems appealing to the aspirations of those classes in terms of social mobility and gaining more wealth (Lotfy 2008: 25-27).

From another perspective, televangelism in Egypt has also distinguished itself from the discourse of militant Islamist groups that rose in Egypt in 1980s. A notable example was al-Jama'a al-Islamiya. Established in the 1970s, it aimed to

“radically change society and politics by abolishing the existing regime and violently taking over state power”. This, to them, “seemed the only viable way to (re)-establish a 'true Islamic state and society'” (Hamzawy and Grebowski 2010: 3). *Al-Jama‘a al-Islamiya* conducted a series of violent acts including the murder of the intellectual Farag Fouda and Luxor massacre in 1997 that led to the death of 62 people, mostly tourists. At the end of 1990s, after years of violent confrontation with the Egyptian government, *al-Jama‘a al-Islamiya* was defeated by Egypt’s security forces. Accepting their failure to radically define society and politics, however, it underwent a revisionist stage in which they denounced violence and “urged for nonviolent political and social activism” (Hamzawy and Grebowski 2010: 1).

Thus, in many ways, on the political and religious levels, the discourse of televangelists in Egypt - Amr Khaled being an example - appeared to be able to address many gaps and achieve multiple aims. Firstly, unlike Al-Azhar's discourse that focused on religious rituals, Khaled was able to relate to the everyday life of Muslim youth in Egypt as he gave advice on topics such as making friendships, and spending the spare time from an Islamic point of view. Second, whereas the violent Islamist discourse that gained visibility in the 1980s in Egypt put its followers in a violent confrontation with the state, televangelists' discourses constituted a “safe religion” (Lotfy 2009: 37) aimed at individual development and civic engagement. As the popularity of Khaled grew, for example, he created many initiatives to fight illiteracy and to encourage youth to give up smoking. Relevant to the above is the emergence of new strata of middle and upper-middle classes in Egypt, of skilled workers that have the economic potential, yet are deprived of any

form of political and civic engagement (Lotfy 2009: 25). Thus, as I described in my encounter with the young female accountant in Egypt in the Preface to the thesis, Khaled was able to give meaning to the lives of many Egyptian youth within a context of political frustration and a discourse by Al-Azhar that seemed out of touch with the context and aspirations of Egyptian youth.

In another context, in Indonesia, Howell (2008:52-58) was able to show how the two popular televangelists Aa Gym and Arifin Ilham presented religion as a means of personal development. Addressing his audiences, mostly from middle and upper classes, the televangelist Aa Gym integrated his religious message with advice on personal development and business management (e.g. promoting communicative skills, managing stress and socializing pp. 56- 58). He has three mottos: "start with yourself", "start with small things" and "start now". One thing Howell (2008 *ibid.*) highlights is that in both contexts, in Egypt and Indonesia, religion is presented as a means of triggering individual change. To further elaborate, the televangelist Amr Khaled calls upon his audiences to dismiss pessimism and take part in civic action (e.g. see Lotfy 2009: 17); for example, by volunteering to the organization he established, Life Makers³⁹, which is aimed at fighting illiteracy and drugs.

Within the context of global Islam, Echchaibi (2011) reviews the content of programmes by the two Egyptian televangelists, Amr Khaled and Moez Masoud, and the Iranian-born American video-blogger Baba Ali (who is being examined in the thesis). Echchaibi contends that one common element among the three televangelists is that they preach a kind of religion that is highly relevant and

³⁹ The link to the organization: <http://lifemakers.org/> Last accessed 6th June 2015.

applicable to modern life (p. 34). In the Internet program, "Ask Baba Ali", the televangelist Ali Ardekani responds to questions on topics such as dating, marriage and friendship (p. 34). According to Echchaibi (2011:34), Muslims in the post-9/11 context are confronted not only with crucial questions about "jihad" and "suicide-bombing" but also with day-to-day questions about music, television and dating. In addition, the three televangelists appeal to the "umma", the wider community of believers, which has become "more concrete and potentially realistic" through the proliferation of Islamic websites (39-42). As televangelists call on "civic responsibility", they appeal to a transnational umma that is only "meaningful through local and national networks of interaction" (p. 41). Interestingly, he sees "the umma" as a marketing tool to appeal to Muslims on a global scale (also see section 3.6.1. The meanings of *umma* for more on the term *umma* and its importance).

Still discussing televangelism, another relevant study is Adnan (2010) who has explored a government-sponsored religious television program mediated in English in Malaysia. The program is divided into three sections: the activities of local youths at public universities, Islam and science and motivational words from Malaysian academics and experts. In his study, Adnan makes use of textual data and interviews to explore how Islam is represented. He notes that except for the second section of the program about Islam and science, a non-technical register was used with the first person present tense to convey the idea of the presenter talking to the audience (p.37). The words of the highest frequency were "life", "lifestyle", "youth", "young" and "value", which he interpreted as one objective of the program, to instill positive values among youth (p. 38). Other objectives were

highlighting the role of science in Islam and presenting an image of a "modern" Islam open to multi-cultural differences (p. 38-39). In fact, as I will illustrate in Chapter 8 of the thesis, one discourse topic Yusuf Estes invokes is Islam and science (space), which testifies to the argument that televangelism is one manifestation of an Islamic popular culture (Mandaville 2007, pp. 327-331, also see below). Adnan (2010) concluded that by having more programmes like these, people in Muslim majority countries such as Malaysia will be able to respect their multi-cultural differences. One limitation Adnan acknowledged is that he did not show to what extent the program has achieved what it aimed for in terms of highlighting the role of science in Islam or promoting multiculturalism.

The above studies shed light on the phenomenon of televangelism in terms of main themes and scope of popularity. One common remark in studies on televangelism is that it mainly attracts young Muslims of middle and upper classes (for example, see Echchaibi, 2011, p. 26 Howell 2008, pp. 50-58). There are two points that are worth noting with regards to televangelism in the West. First, the fact that youth represents the main audience of televangelists triggers an exploration of the wider socio-historical contexts of Muslim youth that may have contributed to televangelists' popularity. For instance, since 9-11, discourses have become predominant that designate Muslims as the "other" (e.g. Allen, 2004; Baker et al, 2013 and Wodak et al, 2013 on the anti-semitic and anti-Muslim rhetoric of the far-right). In addition, studies on Muslim immigrants (e.g. Schmidt, 2005) have shown that there is a growing dissatisfaction of Muslim youth with the Islam of their parents, for instance, in terms of the expectations of women's rights and gender relationship roles. Second, I argue here that televangelism has become

part of an Islamic popular culture (Mandaville, 2007, pp. 327-331) that is generously mediated and re-mediated through a multitude of media platforms, including television and the Internet (e.g. Cesari, 2007, p. 58 on "electronic religiosity").

While the socio-historical context of Muslim youth, including their engagement with popular culture, will be explored in the forthcoming sections in the chapter, in the coming section, I will start by investigating the broader contexts that seem to have given televangelism its characteristic features, i.e. the rise of neoliberalism, the power of media and the rise of infotainment (Geertz, 1973d:89; Hallin, 2008; and Kellner, 2003; 2010).

2.2. The power of media

Relevant to the question of why televangelism has gained popularity among some Muslim audiences is a broader question of why mass media, including the television and the Internet, have come to have "very particular power-effects" (Couldry, 2003a: 1; Thompson, 1995).

In this vein, Couldry (2000; 2003a; 2003b) argues that the power of the media is sustained through a myth or an assumption that that "there is a Centre to the social world, and that, in some sense, the media speaks for that Centre and that we accept that Centre's position in our life as legitimate" (Couldry 2003a:2). Couldry (2003a: 115-135) supports his claim by investigating reality TV and self-disclosure on television. Since confession is an act that entails "an authority that

requires the confession" (Couldry 2003a: 123), Couldry argues that this authority does not emanate neither from the TV presenter nor from the audience in the studio but rather it is "the authority of television itself", as "the assumed representative of the social Centre and our access point to social reality" (ibid.). To reformulate what Couldry has explained, the authority or power of the media lies in the imagination that media is the Centre of society and to confess on TV, literally means confronting and encountering that Centre, i.e. to speak to what is legitimated and perpetuated by the media as "speaking for society as a whole", for its "Centre" (Couldry 2003 a: 47).

In line with Couldry, Thompson (1995) explains that mass media is "symbolically powerful" (ibid. 16-17). Media communication is powerful because it "may lead others to act or respond in certain ways, to pursue one form of action rather than another, to believe or disbelieve, to affirm their support for a state of affairs or to rise up in collective revolt" (ibid.).

Another aspect underlying media power is what can be referred to as "space-time distancing" (e.g. See Giddens, 1984; Thompson, 1995). According to Giddens (1984, pp. 95-110), who coined the term, one inherent characteristics of modern societies is the "fading away of time and shading off of space" (ibid. p. 132) for instance, through the rise of print houses and through the expansion of means of communication. In line with Giddens (ibid.), Thompson (1995) has argued that mediated communication is "detached from its context of production both spatially and temporally and re-embedded in new contexts which may be located at different times and places" (p.21). This does not only mean –to

Thompson- that the power the media exercises transcends spaces and localities but also that mediated communication can be taken up and appropriated differently by different groups of people (p.30-33). According to Thompson (1995), mediated communication is not a passive process, but rather an active process "in which individuals take hold of and work over the symbolic materials they receive" (ibid. p. 39).

In my view, the distancing of "space and time" in media outputs offers an explanation from a theoretical perspective as to why some televangelists have achieved a "transnational popularity"; as audiences in different localities can appropriate and relate their messages to their own contexts. For instance, the video-blog by Baba Ali "Who hijacked my religion", referred to in Chapter 1, is critical of how Western media represents Islam and calls on the audiences not to take media stereotypes and the actions of some "misguided followers" as representative of Islam. The video-blog appears to be aimed at (non-Muslim) Western audiences. Yet, Muslims in non-Western contexts may identify with it within the context of global awareness of misrepresentation of Islam after 9-11 (e.g. see El Nawawy and Khamis, 2009: 4).

While the above social theories give an account of why mediated communication has "very particular power-effects" (Couldry, 2003a, p.1 and Thompson, 1995), other studies (e.g. Kellner, 2003; 2010; Hallin, 2008) have related media power to the broader context of the rise of neoliberalism in the twenty first century.

It was the 1980s and 1990s, in the United States of America that the media system shifted towards market-oriented media through privatization of state-run media and the growth of broadcast markets and foreign investments (Hallin 2008: 47). The author states that commercialized mass media contributed to the predominance of neo-liberalism practices. It has played a role in "promoting the growth of the consumer society" (p. 49) and is "firmly rooted" in it (ibid. p. 55).

In line with Hallin (2008), Kellner (2003; 2010) elaborated on the dynamics between media culture and consumerism; where culture can be defined here as "a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life" (Geertz 1973d:89).

Drawing on the French theorist Guy Debord (1967), Kellner (2003: vii) states that media culture is shaped by the spectacle of the consumer society. Examples he gives are sports spectacles, fashion industry and music performances which are predominant elements that relate to celebrities, advertisements and branding. The Internet has also become a "spectacle", Kellner added, where "it is no longer good enough just to have a website; it has to be an interactive spectacle, featuring not only products to buy, but music and videos to download, games to play, prizes to win, travel information and links to other cool sites" (ibid. p. 4).

Kellner (2003) drew on Castells (1997b:1) who argued that the technological revolution of the twenty first century brought about the growth of interactive global networks that began to "reshape the material basis of our

society" (ibid.). Kellner, however, added that "entertainment" acted as an important mechanism between "information revolution" and the "new technologies", which have led to a "network infotainment society" (ibid. p. 14).

Thus, Kellner (2003) points to the rise of the "infotainment" society. It has infiltrated media culture from science programmes in which visual effects, complex interlocking images, and a conversational style of content presentation are intertwined (Fairclough 1995a:3-8) to entertaining politics in which politics is fictionalized (e.g. see Wodak, 2009 and 2010) and the domains of politics and entertainment are blurred (e.g. Riegert, 2007 and van Zoonen, 2005).

In fact, we can get a better understanding of televangelism if we compare the dynamics of televangelism to the dynamics of "politico-tainment", i.e. the blurring between entertainment and politics (e.g. Riegert, 2007; van Zoonen, 2004; 2005; Wodak, 2009). These dynamics, I will illustrate below, depend on the interaction between politics/religion and popular culture on the one hand (e.g. see van Zoonen, 2005; Wodak, 2009; 2010) and religion and consumer culture on the other (e.g. see Miller, 2004; Carrette and King, 2005 on commodifying religion).

In the following, I will explore the dynamics of "politico-tainment", relating it to televangelism. I raise the important question of how we can evaluate the phenomenon of infotainment; this is followed by an investigation of the interaction between religion and consumerism. I will examine the rise of consumer culture and its impact on our understandings of the role and functions of religion in the contemporary world (e.g. Miller, 2004 and Carrette and King, 2005).

2.3. Politicotainment

One media phenomenon that has attracted scholarly attention (e.g. Riegert, 2007; Street, 2003, p. 85 and Wodak 2009) in recent years is the increasing interdependence between politics and popular culture. Van Zoonen (2005: 45), for instance, remarked that during the 1980s, the British Labour Party became engaged in the Red Wedge, a music band in which youth, musicians and politicians campaigned against Thatcherism. In the United States, American presidents invited popular musicians to the White House and used popular songs as their campaign anthem (e.g. Clinton's use of Fleet-Wood Mac's "Don't stop thinking about tomorrow") (van Zoonen *ibid.*). In the same vein, Street (2003, p. 85) referred to popular stars' engagement in politics, for instance, Bono's campaign to end the debt of the Third World. Focusing on right-wing politics in Europe, Wodak (2013, p. 28) remarked that right-wing politicians make use of self-presentation techniques that draw on celebrity popular culture, as they represent themselves as "the savior of the man and woman in the street".

Drawing on the above examples, researchers (e.g. Riegert, 2007; Wodak, 2009) have highlighted the convergence between the practices of popular culture and politics. Riegert (2007), for instance, perceived Big Brother with "its use of interactivity... and its raw authenticity" "a parallel with democratization" (*ibid.* p.10). She adds that political life and democracy in this way "are enacted in participatory multi-media formats" (*ibid.* p.10).

While it may be difficult, in light of the above examples (e.g. Street, 2003; van Zoonen, 2005; Wodak, 2009), to draw a line between the domains of politics and entertainment in their contemporary configurations, Holly (2008:329) offers a useful framework that delineates two types of "politicotainment", namely politics that makes use of entertainment as exemplified above in the use of popular music in political campaigns or by right-wing politicians (e.g. see also Wodak, 2013); and political entertainment that makes use of "political tropes, topics and events strategically as material to construct its fictional world of images and to make its products interesting and attractive" (Holly *ibid.*).

In the latter type, i.e. political entertainment, studies (e.g. Richardson, 2006 and Wodak, 2009; 2010) have focused on the popular drama series *The West Wing* as an example of a media genre in which politics is "fictionalized" (see Wodak, 2009, 167). Wodak (2009) drew on the narrative theory developed by Propp (1968) and Wright (1977) to explore the depiction of the hero in *The West Wing*. She suggested that the fictional depiction of the US President in the drama series, Mr. Bartlett, is similar to the depiction of the hero in the genre of Wild West movies. As in Wild West movies, Mr. Bartlett is portrayed as having an exceptional ability (giving speeches) and is recognized by the society as a "hero" who faces a "villain" (*ibid.* p. 174). Politics, in this way, Wodak argued, is constructed through the Manichean division of "hero" versus "villain" and "good" versus "bad" (*ibid.*).

One important question that Wodak (2009) explored is what the popularity of *The West Wing* may indicate about people's perception and understanding of politics. Citing Crawley (2006: 129), Wodak (2009:160) pointed out that several

unions and associations in the United States mentioned President Bartlett's characteristics as a good example that "the Presidential candidates Gore and Bush would be wise to copy" (ibid. p. 167). Another journalist remarked that the endorsement of Barack Obama by many liberal voters might emanate from a general hope that he resembles the fictional President Bartlett (Wodak 2009 ibid.).

In line with Wodak (2009), van Zoonen (2005) points out an important interaction between entertainment and politics. In both domains, it is "performance" that is the mechanism through which politicians and popular stars construct their constituencies of audiences, an aspect which I explore in my investigation of televangelism (Chapter 6). In contrast to politics in the past where the politician relied on his/her persuasive skill, van Zoonen (2005) contends, contemporary politics has become a "performance" where the politicians' success depends on self-presentation, style and charisma (Riegert, 2007; van Zoonen, 2005 and Wodak, 2009).

In my view, it is only through exploring the broader dynamics between popular culture and politics/religion that we can go beyond perceiving televangelism, in a similar way to "politicotainment", as an "innovation" towards a conception of it as a by-product of the neoliberal ideology and its manifestations, namely the rise of the consumer spectacle (Kellner, 2003) and the interactions between entertainment, network society and consumerism (Corner and Pels, 2003).

What televangelists have done in a similar way to politicians is that they have made use of the "infrastructure" of the dominant culture by integrating music

and aesthetic visual elements in their programmes, by commercializing their programmes and by making use of the networks of fans that have consolidated their visibility in cyberspace (see Chapter 4 of the thesis). One can visually represent the dynamics of televangelism in the figure below:

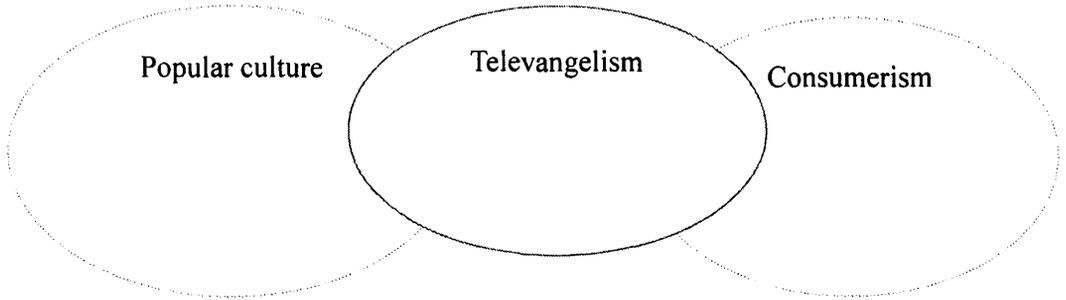


Figure 2.1. Televangelism as an interaction between the practices of popular culture and consumerism

As infotainment has infiltrated contemporary media, televangelism being one of its manifestations, one question that follows is how we can evaluate this phenomenon? I discuss this point below and revisit this question in the concluding chapter of the study, after I have examined televangelists' discourses.

Media critics have adopted varied attitudes towards infotainment (e.g. van Zoonen, 2004; 2005 and Wodak, 2009). Van Zoonen (2005), for instance, seems to be most critical of "politicotainment", and of infotainment by implication, as she mentions that "the celebrity politician of television does not have to depend on

anyone else except his own talent as a performer. He owes nothing to any lobby association, interest group or party as long as the media aura of his public body lasts" (ibid. p. 79). Riegert (2007) and Wodak (2009; 2010) seem to be more interested in exploring what "politicotainment" reveals about "real politics". For instance, Wodak (2009) interprets the "fictionalization" of politics in the popular US TV soap *The West Wing*, inter alia, as an indication of audiences' disillusionment with politics and their cynicism about politicians' ability to make decisions (ibid. p. 20). Riegert (2007:1-10) points out that some genres of reality television have come to replace "real" politics.

Perhaps Holly (2008), if compared to van Zoonen (2005), seems to be more sympathetic towards infotainment. While Holly remarks that dramatization, emotionalisation and aestheticization are salient features of infotainment, he argues that these elements have to be evaluated separately as to whether they function merely as "packaging" elements or if they can be seen as "stimulating, enriching and facilitating comprehension" (ibid. p. 328). According to Holly (2008 ibid.), infotainment seems to be an inevitable outcome of a "tendency for modernization that ...has long tried to better reach audiences by means of media-specific design"; and as such, it has to be evaluated on its own terms.

In fact, I agree with Holly (2008) that we cannot evaluate the phenomenon of infotainment without contextualizing it in the broader dynamics that seem to have led to its emergence. Building on Wodak (2009)'s critical discursive approach to the phenomenon of infotainment, I argue below that televangelism is a by-product of the interaction between religion and popular culture on the one hand

and commodification of religion on the other. I explore these topics in the following section.

2.4. Religion and the consumer society

As I have suggested earlier (1.1. Introduction), one critical aspect about televangelism is what it reveals about the representation of religion in the twenty first century. I argue that televangelism can be contextualized in the rise of the culture of consumerism, according to which everything, including religion, can be commodified (e.g. Miller, 2004; Carrette and King, 2005). Examples that testify to the commercial aspects involved in televangelism are: televangelists' selling of tickets for their events, selling DVDs of their sermons and the broadcast of their programmes on satellite channels. In fact, to digress here, one observation that the analytical chapters will demonstrate is how Baba Ali's and Yusuf Estes' sermons draw on advertisements and how users themselves use the online spaces of the three televangelists to advertise their own Islamic online spaces (see Chapter 4), which takes us to the question of authority that I will discuss in the following sections.

On the question of commodification of religion, Miller (2004) has given us some useful insights. Focusing on popular culture, the author illustrates how religious themes, ideas and symbols became an object of commodification from the use of gospel songs by popular artists (e.g. Moby's album *Play*), to the selling of religious figures toys (e.g. Hindu God finger puppets) to the therapeutic

programmes that combine "mind-cure techniques such as autosuggestion and hypnotism with Christianity" (ibid. pp. 73- 86).

What is relevant here is that such commodification, Miller (2004) argues, has dual impacts on the meanings and functions of religion in the contemporary world (ibid. p.84). Originally, religious traditions "involve connecting symbols and beliefs to practices that form a way of life" (ibid. p. 91). However, as religious themes and symbols are commodified, they lose "their communal, ethical and political consequences" and "become free-floating cultural objects ready to be put to whatever use we desire" (ibid. p. 84).

In addition, the consumer society has given rise to a "consumer self" which under "the massive cultural force of advertising", derives its meanings, wholeness and belonging through consumption (ibid. p. 85-88). With consumerism, a need for a "therapeutic" religion has emerged, one that the middle classes in particular need, to placate their contradictions and to assist them in "a social world reconfigured in terms of market competition" (Miller 2004: 86). It is worth quoting him at length:

People no longer hunger for salvation or an era of justice, but for the feeling, the momentary illusion of personal well-being, health and psychic security (ibid. p. 85).

What is at stake here is that in this way "elements of religious traditions pose less of a challenge to the status quo; they can be easily made to conform to the default assumptions and practices of the dominant culture (ibid. p.91).

In line with Miller (2004), Carrette and King (2005) tracked one domain where religious symbols and themes are commodified, i.e. spirituality and its glorification in the contemporary world. Drawing on one understanding of the secularization⁴⁰ thesis according to which religion is relegated to the private sphere (e.g. Davie 2007: 53), the authors argue that this thesis is challenged by the glorification of the spiritual in the contemporary world, which shows from the branding of cosmetics and body sprays as "spiritual" to programmes offering "spiritual techniques" for business development (ibid. 2005: 1-16). Commodifying religious resources as "spiritualities" exploits "the historical respect and aura of authenticity of the religious traditions", while dissociating itself from the world religions that have been perceived as problematic since the secularization processes (e.g. see Bruce, 1996: 26 and Davie, 2007: 53).

What is at stake in the contemporary reconfigurations of spirituality, Carrette and King (2005) claimed, is that they are "not troubling enough" (ibid. p. 5); rather than challenging the status quo or the structures of inequality, they help consolidate the neoliberal grip. It is important here to point out the distinction that Carrette and King (2005) made between (old) "revolutionary or anti-capitalist spiritualities", exemplified in Buddhist notions of soothing the suffering of others

⁴⁰ It is worth noting that secularization is a debatable concept. Bruce (1996: 26), for instance, defines secularization as: "the decline of popular involvement with the churches; the decline in scope and influence of religious institutions and the decline in the popularity and impact of religious beliefs". Berger (1999:2-3), however, disagrees with the idea that religion has declined in modern society: "The idea is simple: Modernization necessarily leads to a decline of religion, both in society and in the minds of the individuals. And it is precisely this idea that turned out to be wrong".

or Islamic notions of just economy; and modern forms of spiritualities. The old spiritualities seem to address "structural and social inequalities", whereas contemporary spiritualities are taken over –in their many configurations- by the consumer capitalist ideology (pp. 17-21). For instance, under "business-ethics/reformist spiritualities", Carrette and King refers to the Quaker tradition and some Catholic social ethics schools that "accept, with some ethical modification, the status quo of the market and business world; and do not seek to question the underlying basis of its ideology" (p. 18). There is also what they termed the "capitalist spirituality" in which traditional religions' call is transformed from the importance of community and social interconnectedness to "the desirability of working for the corporate community or buying more of this or that product" (ibid. p. 20). In other words, rather than being a "critical reflection" of the consumer culture, modern spiritualities- in this way- act as a "perpetuation of the consumer status quo" (ibid. p. 23) as they "smoothe out resistance to the growing power of corporate capitalism and consumerism as the defining ideology of our time" (ibid. p. 11).

Most relevant to my PhD thesis is Carrette and King's reference to televangelism in the US as one form of "consumerist spirituality" in which faith is perceived as a means to increasing material wealth (Carrette and King, 2005: 19; also see Woodhead and Heelas 2001: 174 on "prosperity religions"). If commodification has indeed encroached upon religion (e.g. Miller, 2004 and Carrette and King, 2005), Islam is not an exception in this regard (e.g. Gökariksel and McLarney, 2010). I examine the commodification of Islam in the following section.

2.5. Commodification of "Islam"

There are many studies that attest to the interaction between consumerism and religion in Islam (e.g. Hasan, 2009; Hirschkind, 2001).

Focusing on the context of Indonesia, Hasan (2009) discussed the commodification of religious symbols/themes in Islam, from the selling of religious pamphlets by street vendors, to watching an Islamic soap opera to attending study circles with popular preachers. These activities, the author claims, have become part of a popular culture that "links an individual, indirectly perhaps, to a larger social group and global Muslim community in a general sense" (ibid. p.231).

In Egypt, Hirschkind (2001) examined the popularity of "cassette-recorded sermons of popular Islamic preachers", which since the 1970s and until now, has become "one of the most widely consumed media forms among lower-middle and middle-class Egyptians" (ibid. p. 625). While he points that tapes are produced by particular companies and are offered for sale in many places (e.g. outside of mosques and in front of train stations), they are one product among other products associated with "Islamist social trends" including modest dress styles for women, perfumes, books and pamphlets from Islamic publishing houses (ibid.). Hirschkind (2001) adopts an ethnographic approach to the exploration of the practice of listening to tape-recorded sermons. He has underlined the interaction between consumerism and religion; for instance, where cassette sermons are used as a

"technology of self-improvement" and as a "means by which a range of Islamic virtues could be sedimented in (audiences') characters, enabling them to live more piously and avoid moral transgressions" (ibid. p. 627).

From another perspective, Gokariksel and McLarney (2010, p. 7) focused on consumer culture and Muslim women. They showed, for instance, how the Muslim veil is transformed into "a commodity moving through the ever changing cycles of the global fashion industry" through trendy and colorful style (ibid.). While the veil is worn by some women as a sign of piety, as a consumer product, it has become a practice of social distinction in terms of class and taste (ibid. p. 7).

If we examine televangelism from the point of view of the rise of consumer society, we can see some relevance between televangelism and Miller's (2004) statement on the rise of the "therapeutic" religion that does not conflict with neoliberalism, as the dominant ideology, but rather smoothes its flow. On televangelism in Egypt, Lotfy (2009) points out that popular televangelists in Egypt have predominantly praised the accumulation of wealth and presented religion as a way of life (ibid. p. 17). In Indonesia, Howell (2008) remarks that the popular televangelist Aa Gym integrates in his programmes advice on business management and personal development (ibid. pp. 56-58), which lends truth to Miller's remark, cited above, that modern spiritualities serve to assist the individual in "a social world reconfigured in terms of market competition" (ibid. 2004: 86). With regards to the three Muslim televangelists, being examined in this study, "therapeutic" religion has entailed addressing the socio-historical context of Muslim youth in the West, for example, by bringing up the topic of

misrepresentation of Islam; Baba Ali also addresses topics most relevant to Muslim youth in the West such as the generational gap between youth and parents and their different perspectives (see Chapter 8 for the analysis of the main discourse topics by the three televangelists).

It is noteworthy here that commercialization is one activity the three televangelists undertake; for example, as their books and DVDS are offered for sale on websites and through the events they hold in which attendees have to pay fees to attend. Most specific to Baba Ali is how he inserts advertisements in his YouTube videos and how he establishes a link between Islam and entrepreneurial success. To illustrate, one YouTube video by Baba Ali, posted on his blog, is entitled "Finding the Halal investment" in which he recounts his experience of starting "Halal projects", pointing out that "there are not many Halal investments", that do not involve "alcohol" or "interest". Dealing with his partnership with two animators whom he networked with, he points out how one project, a video-game entitled "Mecca and Medina", gave him 24% return profit. The aim of the YouTube is to sell tickets for an event in which talented people, "the hidden gems of the Muslim umma" can come together and "build business networks" with investors and entrepreneurs; this is more valuable, Baba Ali reiterates than the 75 dollars that the participant will pay to attend the event. What Baba Ali is doing here-true of the remark by Miller (2004) on therapeutic religion- is to help his audiences build networks and start enterprises, i.e. to assist his audiences in a market/business driven world. In addition, Yusuf Estes owns a religious channel, "Guide US TV" that he promotes in one of his Facebook pages (Figure 2.1.).



Figure 2.2. Yusuf Estes promoting his channel "Guide US TV" on one of his Facebook pages.

In addition, it is the "feel good" Islam – to use Miller's term- in which the televangelist Hamza Yusuf provides reconciliatory tones for his Muslim audiences in the possibility of being both, Americans and Muslims. The same is generally true of Yusuf Estes who has described practising Muslims in one YouTube video as generally "better" than their Western (non-practising) citizens (see Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 for more insights into the representation of Muslims in televangelists' sermons).

As indicated earlier (1.1. Introduction), an important aspect related to televangelism is what it reveals about the structure of religious authority in the twenty first century. This takes me to the following section.

2.6. Religious authority

One issue that the phenomenon of televangelism raises is religious authority in Islam in the contemporary age. Building on one important remark by Wodak (2009) on the popularity of US TV-soap *The West Wing*, being a possible indication of audiences' disillusionment with politics, I would like to raise the question if the popularity of televangelism, by analogy, may signal audiences' disillusionment with traditional religious scholars.

In my view, if televangelists have become a source of authority to some Muslim audiences (e.g. see Echchaibi, 2011; and Gilliat-Ray, 2010), it is partly because the *ulama* or formally educated scholars have become displaced from the Centre of religious authority, as new dynamics and platforms of attracting audiences have emerged (e.g. see Sisler, 2007). A note about the changing nature of religious authority is perhaps important.

For long, the dissemination of religious knowledge was under the authority of formally educated scholars, or *ulama* as students relied on an oral tradition where they studied religion through the memorization of the Qur'an and the Prophet's sayings (e.g. Eickelman, 1982:10 and Robinson, 1993: 245). The advent of print capitalism to the Muslim world in the nineteenth century, however, marked an important change for the practice religious authority as religious texts became accessible to larger constituencies of readers. This, in a way, Eickelman argued (1982), initially extended the control of the *ulama* on the dissemination of religious knowledge.

However, with the rise of literacy rates and the availability of religious texts-now in print form- religious knowledge became accessible to larger constituencies of readers who can now "read" and "interpret" (Robinson, 1993: 245). As Robinson (1993: 245) put it, "books . . . could now be consulted by any Ahmad, Mahmud or Muhammad, who could make what they [would] of them".

If print capitalism has broken the monopoly of religious scholars on Islamic knowledge, the predominance of new media has even accelerated the dynamics of accessing religious texts. Through CD Roms, websites, blogs and forums (e.g. Bunt, 2000, 2003; and El Nawawy and Khamis, 2009) the Prophet's sayings, exegesis and jurisprudence can be stored and accessed by users in multi-media format (Mandaville, 2001: 178).

In fact new media, particularly the Internet, have become an important platform where voices can compete for religious authority (also see Chapter 4).

One stark example in this vein is the issuing of *fatwas*, i.e. authoritative opinions, online (e.g. Sisler, 2007: 206). Whereas in the past, one traditional route for getting *fatwas* was accessing educational institutions or formally educated scholars, *fatwas* can now be offered through websites (e.g. Islamonline.net; Islamcity.com) where answers to questions are responded to by scholars associated with the website (Sisler, 2007: 206). This means that new media has opened up new spaces where varied actors can claim religious authority.

This applies, inter alia, to Muslims in the West (e.g. Kutscher, 2009; Mandaville, 2001: 177). Sisler (2007), for example, shows how *fatwas* posted in English, seem to particularly address issues of Muslims in Europe and the United States (ibid. 209). For instance, he cites the case of one *fatwa* issued by the European Council for Fatwa and Research which –unlike one reading of Islamic law- has permitted the use of a loan in order to solve a housing situation (ibid. p.3). Published by Islamonline.net and Ukim.org, the fatwa has triggered a debate on cyberspace, and "has clearly influenced subsequent fatwas, for example one issued later by Al-Azhar" (ibid. p.3). The latter example testifies to the creation of a global "public sphere" where some Islamic interpretations may be discussed, negotiated and contested in chat rooms and websites across the board (Mandaville, 2001, p. 177; Sisler, ibid; Turner, 2007 and van Bruinessen 2003); in Chapter 4, I will elaborate on this topic further as I examine manifestations of the virtual public sphere. The issuing of Fatwa by the European Council for Fatwa and Research also demonstrates that Islam in Europe can shape and/or reshape the dominant interpretations of Islam in some Muslim majority contexts. Whether *fatwas* are issued by religious institutions such as Al Azhar University or independent organizations such as the European Council for Fatwa and Research, the cyberspace has become an important platform where religious knowledge can be disseminated, contested and negotiated, undermining or asserting the authority of particular actors.

To add to the above, the easiness of communication and the interconnectedness of economic ties, as a result of the processes of globalization, have brought about new platforms and interactions for disseminating religious

knowledge (e.g. Mandaville, 2001:173; Metcalf, 1996: Xv and Turner, 2007). Metcalf (1996: xv) refers to international publishing networks that publish books on Islam in English, linking Washington D.C. with London. Researchers (Mandaville 2001; Turner, 2007; van Bruinessen, 2003) refer to the emergence of online magazines such as Q-News and the Muslim news that are "available to those whose first language is English" (Mandaville 2001: 173).

While I argue that televangelism is indicative of the emergence of new platforms where voices compete for authority, in my view, any considerations of televangelism in the West have to take into account the broader socio-historical context of Muslims in the West. This is because authority, like discourse, does not operate in vacuum but is contextually and historically bound (e.g. see Wodak and Meyer, 2009 on the Discourse Historical Approach).

In other words, if we presuppose that the selected televangelists have filled gaps in the "structures of everyday life" of some Muslim youth (to use one term by Miller, 2004: 91) then what voids can we point to here?

As I pointed out above, Muslim youth in the West have their characteristic (peculiar) context. For instance, unlike their parents who seemed to be strongly connected to the cultural traditions of the Islam of their country of origin, young Muslims, educated and socialized in the Western context, seem to be critical of the ethnic Islam of their parents (see Cesari, 2003; Mandaville, 2003). Cesari (2003), for instance, arguing against the essentialisation of Muslim identities, points out that young Muslims born in France undergo a transformation of identities as they

perceive their religion in terms of individual belief (p. 259-264). Cesari (2003) argues that unlike their peers in Muslim majority contexts who have less freedom in "individualizing" their religion, the pluralism in the Western context has led young Muslims to "privileg(e) personal choice over the constraints of religious tradition" (Cesari, 2003: 260). Dissatisfied with sectarian differences, some Muslim youth are in search of a "universal Islam" that focuses on the core values of Islam (e.g. equality, truth) (e.g. see Cesari *ibid.* 257).

It is worth giving an explanation of the term "universal Islam". According to some Muslim scholars (e.g. Ramadan 2004: 14-16; Nasr 2002), universal Islam can be understood within the context of the oneness of God, "the One, the Absolute and the Infinite, the Infinitely Good and All-Merciful" (Nasr 2002: 43); which renders Islam, Christianity and Judaism a community of faith as monotheistic religions. However, another approach (e.g. see Ibrahim 2006) defines the universality of Islam with reference to the (core) human values it preaches such as justice, freedom, seeking knowledge and care for the environment. Ibrahim (2006: 6-9), for example, argues that "Islam has always expressed the primacy of 'adl, or justice, which is a close approximation of what the West defines as freedom". Seeking knowledge is another concept that Islam attaches importance to; for example Netton, (1996) pointed out how "a love of knowledge and learning has been a leitmotiv of Islam from its earliest days. The Holy Qur'an instructs the believer to ask The Lord to increase Him in knowledge (Q 20: 114); while in a very famous *hadith*, the Prophet Muhammad instructed his followers to seek knowledge to even as far as China" (p. vii). In another study, Fairak and Rao (2005) showed how Islam - like Judaism and Christianity - took up an ecological

perspective in which the Qu'ran asks the believer to “contemplate the (wonders of) creation in the heavens and the earth” (Quran 2: 190-191; Fairak and Rao 2005: 71). Fairak and Rao further add that the Qu'ran has numerous mentions of creatures such as the mountains, the skies and stars, and suggest- based on Qu'ranic readings - that a “believer' (in Islam) is not only one who recites prayers all the time; however, philosophers and artists, who spend hours reflecting on the natural wonders, are true believers as well” (p. 71).

The search of some Muslim youth for a universal Islam that focuses on core values such as justice and freedom can be interpreted as a rejection of some ethnic/cultural perceptions for example in relation to forced marriage and gender roles. This seems to be echoed in in Baba Ali's sermons who criticizes forced marriage and the inter-generational gap between Muslim youth and their parents (see section 8.3.2).

In fact, the conception of a universal Islam - that focuses on core human values - raises the question about the role of culture in Islam, i.e. whether Islam could exist without any cultural variations or adaptations. In my view, a salient feature of the spread of Islam since the seventh century is that it has been able to accommodate to a variety of cultures and localities. Bowen (2010), for instance, asserts that jurisprudence or *fiqh* (i.e. legal rulings in Islam) is not static but is rather defined differently according to the differences in the contexts and the environments in which Islam existed (p. 163). One example he gave is the different rulings on obtaining a loan for housing. While some Muslim jurists prohibit borrowing at interest, the European Council for Fatwa and Research issued a fatwa

that allows Muslims to benefit from mortgages in European/Western countries since “if they were forbidden from banking institutions, then Islam would be weakening their social life, which would contradict the principle that Islam should benefit Muslims” (p. 174). Thus, in my view, proposing an Islam with no cultural associations could be seen as denying, rather than allowing, the great diversity and richness of cultures among Muslim believers.

Another important aspect that appears to be most relevant to Islam/Muslims in the West is the call on "critical Islam" (e.g. Mandaville, 2003; Turner, 2007; and van Bruinessen, 2003). Mandaville (2003) draws on the critical theory of the Frankfurt School making a distinction between traditional theory that "assumes the presence of certain underlying and eternal structures that determine all social outcomes" and "critical theory" that raises questions about why "what is accepted as "natural" came to be so... including the historical conditions—and particularly the relations of power—which gave rise to the present world" (p. 130-131). A number of scholars (e.g. Fazlur Rahman, 1982 and Nadawi, 1983) have focused on Muslims in the west, urging them to move beyond what was described as "the dogma" (Mandaville *ibid.*) of (some of) the Medieval religious literature that is not (yet) recognized as a product of its time and the interplay of the relations of power (*ibid.* 130-132). In this vein, research (e.g. Gilliat Ray, 2010, p. 162 and Mandaville, 2001) highlights how the call for the critical engagement with the religious tradition (e.g. exegesis, the Qur'an) by some Muslim scholars (e.g. Fazlur Rahman, 1982; Nadawi, 1993; Wadud, 1999) has resonated with some Muslim youth in the West. The above mentioned scholars call upon Muslims in the West to undertake "a fresh study of the Qur'an...(and to) read it as if it were not an old

scripture but one sent down for the present age or rather one that is being revealed to (them) directly" (Nadawi *ibid.* p. 190).

Within this context, mosque imams, a traditional source of religious authority, seem to be out of touch with the "intellectual pressures" that some Muslim youth may face. They largely appear to be imported from Muslim majority countries' contexts and may understand the questions asked to them but fail to understand the context of the questioner (Gilliat-Ray, 2010: 162 on imams in Britain). In another study on religious teaching in faith-based schools in the UK, Rosowsky (2012) remarked that in the congregation, which constituted of migrants from Pakistan (Mirpur), the imam spoke in Urdu to the audience "whose younger members have either both Panjabi and English or just English" (p. 622), which relates to Gilliat-Ray's remark on the difficulties that face the younger generation of Muslims in the UK in communicating with mosque *imams* (also see Rosowsky, 2008: 36-37 and 2011: 139-142 on the linguistic challenges facing young Muslims in the UK as a result of not using English in liturgical practice in mosques).

Adopting a CDS approach, one aim of this study is to explore how the above layers of context may reflect on the discourses of the three televangelists. This means going beyond the attitude towards televangelism as intrinsically "negative" (e.g. see van Zoonen, 2005) or trivial towards exploring the layers of contexts in which televangelists' discourses are contextualized. For instance, if approaching the religious tradition from a "critical" perspective represents an "intellectual pressure" to Muslim youth in the West, what is it that the three American televangelists might critique?

As I will demonstrate in Chapter 8 and Chapter 9 of the thesis, Hamza Yusuf levels criticisms at George Bush's government and appears to be in “dialogicality” with anti-Muslim rhetoric, for example, through the reference to the large numbers of Muslims in Europe and the US, giving legitimacy to Islam/Muslims and through a reference to the Muslim civilization that “did not divorce people from its land, culture and tradition” (see Chapters 7-9). This reference serves to subvert the representation of Islam in anti-Muslim rhetoric as a threat to Western values (see Baker et al 2008; 2013; and Wodak 2015). Baba Ali appears to be critical of the conflation between ethnic practices such as forced marriage and gender discrimination and Islam. In the following chapters, I will explore how the-above mentioned layers of context (e.g. misrepresentation of Islam and the inter-generational gap) appear to interact with the discourses of the three televangelists.

2.7. Discussion and conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored the phenomenon of televangelism from different perspectives. I started by exploring the characteristic features of televangelism, namely the blurring between information and entertainment, and the use of commercialization. I have examined the broader dynamics that have helped sustain the popularity of televangelism such as the predominance of infotainment, media power and the fragmentation of religious authority.

I argued that, as a media phenomenon, televangelism can be seen as a by-product of the interaction between the rise of consumerism and info-tainment. One can imagine here a huge machine with gears in which the movement of one seems to affect the other. One gear is the power of media itself that seems to drive or be driven by another gear, i.e. commercialization and advertising. As one gear pushes the other, the result is infotainment or, relevant to my PhD topic, televangelism as one form of popular religion.

From another perspective, televangelism may indicate the fragmentation of religious authority in the contemporary world. New platforms have emerged in which voices are competing to claim the authority to speak on behalf of Muslims and to address them. In the Western context, this has not only entailed establishing publishing houses, in which (new) discourses on Islam can be produced but also online platforms where varied social actors can speak for Islam (e.g. see Sisler, 2007).

Specific to televangelism in the West is the socio-historical context of Muslim youth who, inter alia, are exposed to a call for critical engagement with the exegesis and traditional Qur'anic interpretations (see Fazlur Rahman, 1982 and Wadud, 1999). In addition, while Muslim youth brought up in the West may regard themselves as "European" or "American", there is a rise of anti-Muslim and anti-semitic discourses in which Muslims, inter alia, are perceived as non-belonging, as the Other (e.g. Baker et al, 2013; Richardsdson, 2004 and Richardson and Wodak, 2009a and 2009 b). To illustrate, in his study on the (mis)representation of Islam in British broadsheet newspapers, Richardson (2004) has outlined the processes

through which Muslims in some media discourses are misrepresented, namely the creation of a “space (which can be political, cultural, social...)” that draws different boundaries between Us and Them and the attribution of negative “social value on both this space and its composition” (p.69). The differences between Muslims/Islam and the West, Richardson (2004, p. 75- 93) suggests are “translated into reports of Muslims which are marked by their inferiority, negativity and threat” (p. 75).

In a more recent study on the representation of Islam in British press, Baker et al (2013) illustrated how the representation of Muslims in British broadsheet newspapers is subject to processes of collectivization; Muslims are represented in collective terms such as “the Muslim world”, “the Muslim community” and “the Muslim country”. In line with Richardson (2004), Baker et al (2013) noted that Muslims (represented as a monolithic entity), are susceptible to negative representation; for instance, by constructing a view of a community that, among other things, has “the potential to be offended” and that is “separate from the rest of Britain” (ibid. pp. 126-127).

What I aim to do in my thesis, therefore, is to analyze how these layers of context might be echoed in (and shaping) televangelists' discourses. I cannot proceed, however, without exploring the meanings of identities' construction and its relevance to televangelists' sermons. In the following chapter, I resume the journey.

Chapter 3: Muslim identities in a "global world"

3.0. Introduction

One overarching question of the present study is how Muslim identities are discursively constructed in televangelists' sermons. In my view, one cannot explore the above question without examining the medium through which televangelists mediate their sermons, i.e. satellite TV channels and YouTube. These mediums have a global reach and transcend localities and borders; my entry point to the examination of televangelists' discourses will be to examine the wider framework of globalization and its processes.

In a broad sense, globalization can be defined as "the crystallization of the entire world as a single place" (Robertson, 1987a:38), where economic, political and cultural structures become increasingly integrated and intertwined (Giddens, 1990: 64; Mandaville, 2002: 67; and Thompson, 2000). This manifests itself in the rise of a world economy premised on neoliberal norms (e.g. see Featherstone, 2002: 2 and Mandaville, 2007: 312). It also shows in the increasing use of electronic media technologies, the increasing flow of people across borders and the legal possibilities of migration (e.g. Delanty, Wodak and Jones, 2011).

How such economic interconnectedness and technological advancement impact social relations and- therefore identities- has been the focus of much scholarly research (e.g. Castells 1997a and b; Hall 1991). According to Castells (1997 b: 2-4), many social and political changes have taken place at the start of the

twenty first century from the redefinition of family relationships based on "new" meanings of gender roles, sexuality and personality to the appearance of new forms of political expression and domination including the interdependence between media and politics (also see Wodak, 2009 on the phenomenon of politico-tainment). Amid these changes, Castells (1997a and b) argues, identity "collective or individual...becomes the fundamental source of social meaning" (ibid. 1997b:3). As he points out, a "regrouping" of people around primary identities has taken place, whether national, religious, ethnic or territorial (ibid. p.3).

From one perspective (e.g. Castells, 1997 b: 355-371; Smith, 1990; Hall, 1991; 1996 and 1997), "culture" –defined as a sense of shared collective memory– has played an important role in the revival of identities. Friedman (1990, pp. 319-323), for instance, cites an interesting example of the Ainu group in Japan; since the 1970s a cultural movement has developed that aimed -through establishing schools for producing handcrafted goods- to gain recognition and acceptance on equal terms with the majority population. In a similar way, in Hawaii, a cultural movement emerged in the wake of "the decline of American and Western hegemony in the world system" which led to a revival of local cultural identities (Friedman ibid. p. 323).

While the Ainu or Hawaiian communities are examples of "ethnic" identities that primarily operate within the borders of a nation state, i.e. Japan and the United States of America, in other instances, social ties are maintained across borders. In this vein, one can refer to the increasing interest in European identities

(e.g. see Mayer and Palmowski, 2004; Krzyżanowski, 2010) which according to Smith (1990: 172-180) are "transnational" and constitute a "family of cultures".

In fact, this study is partly triggered by the importance of identity as a fundamental source of social meaning (e.g. Castells, 1973:3). Since the aim of the thesis is to explore how each televangelist constructs a distinct representation for Islam and Muslims in their sermons, a theoretical understanding of the complex concept of identity is fundamental.

Thematically, the following chapter is divided into two sections. First, I elaborate on the concept of identity and "collective identity" (e.g. see Triandafyllidou and Wodak, 2003 and Wodak et al, 2009). Then, I focus on Muslim minorities in the West and take up the debate (e.g. see Cohen, 1997: 184-196; Vertovec, 2000) as to whether Muslim minorities in the West can be better referred to as "diasporic" or "transnational". In the second part, I summarize some insights into Muslims' perceptions of their religion, when it is trans-located from a majority context to a minority context, in the West. In other words, in this chapter, I grasp the dynamics that may influence Muslim communities, which are very heterogeneous, in the West (e.g. see Cesari, 2007 and Mandaville, 2007 on the emergence of transnational Islam). The significance of discussing the theoretical frameworks relevant to Muslim identities' construction is that we will gain insights into the processes and dynamics that the three American televangelists appear to fit into, which might have widened the scope of their visibility.

3.1. The complex meanings of identity

In order to explore how the three televangelists are discursively constructing Muslim identities in their sermons, we have to grasp, first, the many complex meanings of "identity". According to Triandafyllidou and Wodak (2003: 210), one basic meaning of "identity" is absolute sameness which entails two possible relations of comparison between individuals: similarity and difference. In their view, the locus of identity is social interaction because meaning- associated with identity- is not an inherent property of words but rather develops in context dependent use (p. 210). Constituted through social interaction, "identity", the authors argue, is a dynamic phenomenon, a process:

Identity viewed as a process is a condition of being or becoming that is constantly renewed, confirmed or transformed, regardless of whether it is more or less stable, more or less institutionalized (Triandafyllidou and Wodak *ibid.*).

As the authors point out, there are two forms of identities: individual and collective (*ibid.* p. 211). Arguing against an artificial separation between both forms, Triandafyllidou and Wodak advocate the view that individual and collective identities are interdependent and intertwined (*ibid.*). Collective identities as much as individual identities -the authors argue- are in a process of negotiation, affirmation or change through the individuals who identify with a given social category and act in their name (*ibid.*). Further, both phenomena include difference: an individual identity indicates how an individual is aware of his/her difference/s with respect to others; in a similar way, the feeling of belonging to a group is only

possible in connection with groups or categories to which one does not belong (p. 213).

If Triandafyllidou and Wodak (2003) perceive social action as the locus of identity, Hall (1997: 13-61) argues that social action and culture are intricately bound. According to Hall (1997:15), meaning creation- related to identity- is formed through systems of representation that connect language to culture. Since meanings are made up through social interaction and social norms, they are "constructed within not outside discourse" (Hall, 1996: 17). In addition, meanings are "produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices... and thus are the product of the marking of difference and exclusion" (ibid.); "Britishness is not French, not American... not Jamaican and so on" (Hall, 1997: 235). Underscoring the role of history and culture in meaning making, Hall (1997:32) points out that all meanings are produced "within history and culture; they can never be finally fixed but are always subject to change, both from one cultural context and from one period to another" (ibid.).

The above conceptualizations of "identity" and the interaction between individual and collective identities (Hall, 1997: 269-271; Triandafyllidou and Wodak, 2003) are crucial for the theoretical framework of this study and my assumptions as a researcher. First, the authors highlight that collective identities are not a static phenomenon but in a process of change and transformation through the individuals who interact with and shape the collective group (Triandafyllidou and Wodak, 2003: 211). Second, the interaction between individual and collective identities offers an explanation of why labeling particular characteristics/features

as belonging to Islam/Muslims always implies a stark reduction. As Hall (1997: 249-258) points out, reducing an identity to "a few essentials, fixed in Nature by a few simplified characteristics" is one process of "stereotyping" where an exercise of power is practiced to the disadvantage of the excluded group (p.258). Sen (2006: 45-49) remarks that the singular classification of members of a group as one particular collectivity "is not just crude as an approach to description and predication; it is also grossly confrontational in form and implication". The above view leads to the assumption that each televangelist: a) could have a distinct (different) self-representation and b) could have a different representation of how Muslims are and should become.

The fluidity of identities' construction is central to understanding the meaning of identities. Another important concept that particularly relates to collective identities is the notion of "imagined community", i.e. a mental construct or an image of a collective group that conjures up in our minds. We gain further insights into this notion in the following section.

3.2. Imagined Communities

In his book, *Imagined Communities*, Anderson (1983) argues that communities larger than "face to face groups" are imagined communities; he defines an "imagined community" as one whose members "will never know most of their fellow members, meet them or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (ibid. 1983:15). Communities are to be

distinguished from one another "not by their authenticity but by the way they are imagined" (ibid.).

The idea that communities are imagined provides one salient conceptual framework in studies on identities (e.g. see Wodak et al, 2009 on Austrian identities and Krzyżanowski, 2010: 42-48 on European identities). For instance, in their widely acclaimed book on national identities, Wodak et al (2009:22), citing Anderson (ibid.), highlight how the emergence of print capitalism together with the rise in literacy levels have led to the possibilities of "rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and to relate themselves to others, in profoundly new ways" (Anderson 1983:40). An important aspect that the authors underscore is that identities are a discursive construction. It is through discourse that individuals can instruct others and be instructed as to who they *think* they are, with whom they should align, and from whom to distance themselves; from that perspective, identity is a discursive construction (e.g. Wodak et al 2009:22). Approaching "national identity" both as a mental construct and as a discursive one, Wodak et al deconstructed macro-strategies used in political speeches and focus-group interviews by a range of speakers (e.g. see Wodak et al 2009: 35-43).

The concept of identities as a mental construction (e.g. Anderson, 1983; Billig, 1995) and therefore as a discursive one (e.g. Wodak et al, 2009) has constituted an important framework in subsequent studies on identities. Krzyżanowski (2010: 42-48), for instance, explored the discursive construction of European identities and emphasized that "language ideologies become a tool which supports the building of communities based on frequently-imagined aspects

of commonality and of the unity of groups which, in themselves are internally not homogenous".

Yet the conception of "imagined communities" was subject to critique primarily because it was squared within the framework of the nation state in what is known as "methodological nationalism" (e.g. Beck, 2011: 1347 and Schiller et al, 1992). Schiller et al (1992; 2010:111) have emphasized that "taking state borders as societal boundaries creates a mode of logic that makes immigrants the fundamental threat to social solidarity; natives are assumed to share uniformly common social norms" (ibid. 2010).

From this perspective, the famous German sociologist Ulrich Beck (2011), argues against "equating modern society with society organized in territorially limited nation-states"; he rather takes a global uptake on identities. As he hypothesizes, the mediation of risks such as financial crisis, climate change, nuclear threats- that are broadcast on a global scale- have created imagined cosmopolitan communities of global risks:

Cosmopolitanism means all nations, all religions, all ethnic groups; all classes are and see themselves compelled given the potential of civilization and its potential for self-destruction to constitute a community with a common destiny in the interests of survival (p. 1353).

While Beck's theory seems to be specific to global risks as such and therefore not particularly relevant to the investigation of Muslim identities, what is

highly relevant to my research is how the predominance of mass media has forged new forms of identities- other than the established "old" typologies of identities, i.e. national, regional, ethnic and religious. One question that arises here is: since televangelists' sermons are mediated or re-mediated on YouTube, will this "new" medium have any impact on televangelists in terms of the communities they are addressing? That is to say, can one assume here that –at least- two collective entities are appealed to, namely imagined communities of Muslims and imagined communities of cyberspace users (e.g. see Herring, 2004; 2008; Androutsopoulos, 2006)?

In fact, as the analytical chapters will demonstrate, one common aspect among the three televangelists is that they are -also- addressing non-Muslim audiences. For example, in Chapter 7, I demonstrate that the pronoun “you” used by Baba Ali extends the reference to Muslims to a reference to generic audiences. Addressing non-Muslims is not in fact specific to Baba Ali but is done in many varied discursive strategies in the sermons of the three televangelists. To illustrate, the three televangelists appear to present counter-arguments made in exclusionary rhetoric; for example, by pointing out that Muslims have been in the West generation after generation, which subverts an assumption made in xenophobic rhetoric that Islam/Muslims cannot belong to the West (e.g. Richardson, 2004; Richardson and Wodak, 2009b). It seems therefore that the mediation of televangelists' sermons on a global medium such as the Internet and YouTube has made it possible for them to address and imagine not only Muslim communities but also to address non-Muslim audiences as I will demonstrate in the analytical chapters of the thesis (see Chapter 7-9).

Another question arising from the literature (e.g. Androutsopoulos, 2006: 421-423; Castells, 1997b: 385-391) is: how can users- that by default may not necessarily have a real life contact with each other- make up an online community?

Perhaps Castells' elaboration (1997b) on "the rise of network societies" can provide some clues to the answer to the above question. What has emerged with the technological revolution of the twenty first century, Castells (ibid.) argues, is the growth of interactive global networks, including new channels of communication that began to "reshape the material basis of our society" (ibid. p.1). Building on Rheingold (1993) who argued for the emergence of a new form of communication that groups people online around shared values, Castells (ibid.) conceives a virtual community as "self-defined electronic network of interactive communication organized around a shared interest or purpose" (p. 386).

In this vein, many studies (e.g. Baym, 2003; Herring, 2004 and Jones, 1997) have suggested that interactive platforms such as blogs and Twitter have allowed for the imagination of online communities.

It is important to point out here that research (e.g. Jones, 1997) has differed upon the criteria that constitute an online community. Jones (1997), for instance, illustrates that a pre-requisite of an online community is a "virtual settlement" which is characterized by interactivity, the existence of more than two communicators and a common-public-place where members can meet and interact, and a sustained membership over time. Herring (2004:346), however, seems to

adopt a stricter criteria; she argues that "not all online groups constitute virtual communities"; and that a virtual community is operationalized through dimensions, including the emergence of roles, rituals and hierarchies; self-awareness of the group as an entity that is distinct from other groups; evidence of shared history, culture and value; solidarity and support as manifest in humor and politeness. These features, Herring argues, provide sociability, support and identity to the members of this group, characterizing them as a community.

In the same vein, in his work on Twitter, Gruzd et al (2011), drawing on the concept of imagined communities by Anderson (2006), examined the network of one Twitter user in terms of the degree of interactivity and messages sent to users, language used, and sustained membership. As the authors put it, if a key element of an imagined community is the development of a common language, Twitter participants have adopted a set of linguistic conventions, for instance, the use of hashtags (#) for labeling topics, or the use of "(X of Y)", when messages exceed more than 140 characters, where X indicates the part number and Y the number of parts that complete the message (ibid. p. 1302). In addition, the presence of a shared historical dimension among members of a community is manifest, according to Gruzd et al (ibid.) in the use of Twitter as a global platform for raising awareness and in the use of Twitter as a platform for re-mediating headline news (see also Kwak et al, 2010). Based on the above features, Gruzd et al have concluded that "whether people are primarily on Twitter to follow others, to promote their ideas, or to broadcast what they are doing ...it is impossible for them to be on Twitter and not to be aware of other residents of this virtual place, just as in Anderson's concept of imagined community" (ibid. p. 1289).

Building on Gruzd et al (2011), I argue that YouTube broadly speaking has allowed for the imagination of virtual users and virtual Muslim users. This can be demonstrated in the analysis of user-generated comments that I undertake in Chapter 4 and in the analysis of the YouTube comments by Baba Ali (see Chapter 7) in which users have adopted features that may characterize an online community; for instance, interactions between commenters; use of conversational style (mimicking Baba Ali) and use of humor.

Since the selected televangelists have online visibility and are already popular, we can assume that it is impossible that the three televangelists are unaware that they are-also- addressing imagined users in cyberspace. This is particularly relevant to the televangelist of the younger generation, Baba Ali (born 1975), whose programmes are exclusively mediated on YouTube.

In addition, because YouTube is a "global medium", we can assume that constituencies of audiences will possibly be attracted to televangelists' discourses, from second, third and fourth generations of Muslim immigrants (e.g. see Gilliat-Ray, 2010: 166 on Hamza Yusuf), to Muslim converts who seek religious information, to Muslims in majority contexts (e.g. Dubai) that may have adequate knowledge of English and that have come across these televangelists as "famous preachers" in the religious sphere. Thus, the fact that the selected televangelists are American Muslims suggests that their immediate addressees are American Muslims, or broadly speaking Muslims in the West who have become unified by some predominant discourses of othering since 9/11 (e.g. see Allen, 2004: 134-137; Richardson 2004; Geaves, 2007 and Meer, 2010: 87).

In my view, to better understand why the three televangelists have acquired popularity among Muslim audiences, we need to examine the processes of identities' construction related to Muslims in the West who are the immediate audience of the three televangelists. If Muslims are an imagined community, then one question here is: which conceptual framework can enable us to examine the processes of identities construction among Muslims in the West? What type of community are we referring to here: a "diasporic" or a "transnational" one? As I explain below, these two terms are frequently employed in migration studies to refer to Muslims in the West, sometimes used interchangeably, despite the fact that they point to different processes. In the following section, I take up the challenge of drawing distinctions between these two conceptual frameworks of identities' construction. I seek to clarify the meanings of these frameworks and to contribute to the scholarly debate on the theoretical frameworks that can enlighten us on the processes of identities' construction among Muslim communities in the West. This is significant to the understanding of the mechanisms through which the three televangelists have acquired popularity among some Muslim youth in the West.

3.3. Diasporic ties and connections

In studies on migration, two terms that are used to describe the processes of identities' construction of Muslim communities are "diaspora" and "transnationalism" (e.g. Vertovec and Cohen, 1999: xiii; and Faist, 2010: 14-22). In the following, I examine the conceptual framework that each term stands for. I take up the debate (e.g. see Smart, 1987; Hinnells, 1997; Vertovec, 2000; McLoughlin, 2005) as to whether Muslim communities in minority contexts can be referred to as

"diasporic" or "transnational" communities; this is crucial to understanding the dynamics of identities' construction among Muslims in the West, and the relevance of these dynamics to the three case studies under examination.

3.3.1. Diaspora: an old notion with new meanings

As a proper term, Diaspora refers to the dispersion of the Jews "throughout many lands, signifying as well the oppression and moral degradation implied by that dispersion" (Safran, 1991: 83; also see Vertovec and Cohen, 1999: xvii). With the many terrible calamities that occurred to the Diasporic Jews over the centuries (e.g. Cohen, 2008: 3), "diaspora", now used in small letter to refer to other communities, has become associated with "forced displacement, victimization and loss" (Vertovec and Cohen *ibid.*). With such inherent traits, the term has been used to refer to other populations including Armenians, Africans, Irish and Palestinians (see Cohen, 2008, p. 2-4). As Cohen (*ibid.*) remarks, ten million Africans were transshipped for slavery and indentured labor forming the "misfortune that constituted the African diaspora". Similarly, two-thirds of the Armenian population were deported to Syria and Palestine during the Ottoman rule in 1915-1916 (Cohen *ibid.*). Likewise, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were forced to leave their homeland (Safran, 1991: 87).

If the loss of a "homeland" and experience of "victimization" are two important meanings of a "diaspora", memories of the "homeland" become part of the consciousness of the diaspora population (e.g. see Safran, 1991: 91-95). Speaking of the Palestinian diaspora Safran points out that hundreds of thousands

of Palestinians have "memories of their homeland and their descendants cultivate a collective myth about it" (p. 368). According to Safran (ibid.), the importance of the homeland to the consciousness of the diaspora is an important distinctive criterion that has characterized the Jewish Diaspora and following that the African and the Palestinian diasporas (ibid. pp. 87-90). Safran's remark on the role of the homeland in cementing the consciousness of the diaspora is particularly illuminating: it seems to be a defensive mechanism by the diaspora towards the "slights" of the host country towards the minority; "it is used to make life more tolerable by holding out a utopia –or eutopia- that stands in contrast to the perceived dystopia in which actual life is lived" (Safran ibid. p. 94).

If diaspora in its classical manifestations has the meanings of victimization and a return to "an imagined homeland", the meanings associated with "diaspora" have changed amid a mushrooming of interest in the term both in journalistic writings and in academia (e.g. see Cohen, 2008: 8 and Faist, 2010). Cohen (2008: 8), for instance, traced the development of the meanings of diaspora from a term connoting alienation, dispersal and uprooting to the everyday occurrence of the term which, in one use, connotes an exotic culture, identity and folk music.

In academic writings, as Vertovec and Cohen (1999: xvii) observe, the collapse of the post-colonial states (such as Rwanda and Burundi), and the break-up of the Soviet Union and of Yugoslavia have opened the possibility for many displaced populations to be qualified as "diasporas" (ibid. p. xvii). Commenting on the new meanings of diaspora, Faist (2010:12) underscores two particular characteristic features where replacement of old meanings has taken place. First,

instead of the forced dispersal –exemplified in the Jewish Diaspora and Palestinian diaspora- new notions of diaspora refer to any kind of dispersal, including trade and labor diasporas (e.g. see Cohen, 2008: 18). For example, under "labor diaspora", Cohen (2008:5) included the nineteenth-century system of "indentured" labor which affected many Indians, Japanese and Chinese. Second, instead of the prototype "Diaspora" cemented by the idea of the return to "an imagined homeland" (e.g. see Cohen, 2008: 4 and Safran, 1991: 91-95), newer notions replace the idea of return with "dense and continuous linkages across borders" (Faist, 2010:12). For example, commenting on the Diaspora of the Jewish population, Cohen (2008:12) argues that in some contemporary manifestations, the notion of a "homeland" have yielded to "softer notions of a "found" home in the diaspora and to a "virtual home" in a summer camp- perhaps augmented by occasional visits to Israel rather than permanent settlement" (ibid.).

As I have mentioned above, the political changes that have occurred on a global scale have led to the designation of many populations as "diasporas". Starting from the 1980s, Cohen (2008:1) remarks, the term has been used to refer to expatriates, expellees, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants and ethnic and racial minorities. Attempting to draw a line between what can or cannot constitute a "diaspora", researchers (e.g. see Cohen, 1997: 26; 2008: 6 and Safran, 1991) have delineated some criteria that should exist for a population to constitute a diaspora:

- Dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically, to two or more foreign regions;
- Alternatively or additionally, the expansion from a homeland

- in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions
- A collective memory and myth about the homeland including its location, history, suffering and achievements
 - An idealization of the real or imagined ancestral home and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety and prosperity and even to its creation.

Examining the above criteria, one important question to answer is: If the more recent meanings of diaspora entail "the movement" (rather than dispersal) from "a homeland" and a more enduring collective memory of an imagined homeland, could we refer to "religious diaspora"? Or more specifically, could we examine Muslims in the West as a "diaspora"? The following section engages with this question.

3.3.2. Diaspora religion

One question that has triggered debates is whether religion can be an essential binding element for a diaspora (Cohen, 1997: 184-196; Vertovec, 2000). Early in the late 1980s, the term "religious diaspora" was coined by Ninian Smart (1987), the famous scholar of religious studies. According to the author, the increased pace of globalization, manifest in cheap distant travel has brought about the possibility of building ties in religious communities. Through this interconnection, certain religions take on the aspect of "world" or "global" religions (Cohen 1997: 188). To illustrate, Smart (1987: 290-1) provided an

example of a newspaper which styled itself "an international bimonthly newspaper fostering Hindu solidarity among 650 million members of a global religion".

It was Hinnells (2010), however, who has apparently given the term (religious diaspora) more currency as he devoted one chapter entitled "the study of religious diaspora" in the second edition of the *Handbook of Living Religions*. According to the author, one drawback in the study of religions is that they are primarily examined in their old countries. Any examination of those religions in the West, therefore, has been treated as marginal to the main history of those religions (p. 686).

One issue that has emerged in literature (e.g. Hinnells, 1997; Cohen, 1997) is what concept we can use to refer to immigrants including second and third generation immigrants. According to Hinnells (2010: 686), "migration" or "migrant" is an unsatisfactory term for second and further generations of migrants whose religion, Hinnells argues, is not in migration but is part of the national scenes of their (Western) countries. Hinnells (2010: 686) finds in "diaspora religion" a better term; he considers the term applicable "to the religion of any people who have a sense of living away from the land of the religion or away from "the old country".

The conception of a "diaspora religion" is, however, contested in literature. In *Global Diasporas*, for instance, Cohen (1997: 189) argues against the use of the term. The so-called "world religions", Cohen points out, lack an important feature of a "diaspora": the idealization and the restoration of a "homeland" (e.g. see

Safran, 1991). His view on religions and diaspora is most quoted in studies (e.g. Vertovec, 2000; McLoughlin, 2005) that have argued against the use of the term. It is worth quoting him at length:

In general, I would argue that religions can provide additional cement to bind a diasporic consciousness, but they do not constitute diasporas in and of themselves" (ibid. p. 189).

Study by Vertovec (2000) offers more important thoughts concerning the interrelation between "diaspora" and "religion". Citing Cohen's earlier view (1977:189) that religions do not constitute diasporas, Vertovec (ibid. p. 10) provides another explanation against the use of the term:

This is largely because religions often span more than one ethnic group, and in the case of faiths that have come to be widely spread around the globe, religions normally do not seek to return to, or to recreate a homeland.

If Judaism and Sikhism are two obvious exceptions to the above claim (e.g. see Cohen, 1997, pp. 105-126; 2008), Vertovec adds that Hindu diaspora is another exception: "most Hindus tend to sacralize India and therefore have a special kind of relationship to a spiritual homeland" (ibid.).

In fact, I agree with Vertovec (2000:11) that Muslims (as a monolithic group) cannot be grouped as a "religious diaspora". To quote the author here:

It broadens the term (diaspora) far too much to talk –as many scholars do– about the "Muslim diaspora", "Catholic diaspora", "Methodist diaspora" and

so forth. These are of course world traditions that span many ethnic groups and nationalities that have been spread by many other means than migration and displacement (ibid.).

In another relevant study, McLoughlin (2005) contributes to the debate which he sees as one theoretical issue that has occupied scholars in the last decade (p. 540). An important point in McLoughlin's study (2005) is that he opens up the debate to a new direction, i.e. perhaps the reference to "transnationalism" or "transnational communities" would better grasp the dynamics of global religions (p. 541). So I will argue in the following section.

3.4. Transnationalism and Islam

Transnationalism refers to the establishment of social, cultural, economic and political ties that operate beyond nation-state (e.g. Grillo, 2004: 864 and Schiller, 1992: ix). As the political scientist Rudolph (1997:1) indicates, religious communities are "among the oldest of the transnationals... Catholic missionaries and Buddhist monks carried work and praxis across vast spaces before those spaces became nation-states or even states". According to Mandaville (2011: 9), transnational Islam existed in various forms, from Sufi masters that spanned regions, searching for knowledge or establishing links with other followers of the mystic order; to commercial, educational and political connectivity since the thirteenth century. As post-colonial migration of Muslims started in contemporary times in the 1960s and 1970s, immigrants established social patterns linking the country of origin to the country of settlement (Mandaville, 2009: 497).

In fact, the examination of how migrants establish ties, whether familial, religious and economic, between multiple localities, has been a central question in migration research since the 1990s onwards (e.g. Schiller et al, 1992; Basch et al 1994). Schiller et al (1992: 11-13) pointed out that an immigrant in New York may be called to talk to the Mayor of New York about the development of "our city" and in the next day return to his home town to talk about the development of "our nation". Through Internet and satellite channels, social ties are maintained, establishing "continuity in time and in terms of people's emotional and cultural attachment to an imagined community that spread beyond national boundaries" (Georgiou, 2006: 143-149). And through global communication systems, economic ties are established, for instance, by sending funds, remittances and earnings to the "home country" (e.g. see Schiller et al 1992: 1-5 on immigrants from Haiti, the eastern Caribbean and Philippines in the United States).

Recently, some attention has been given (e.g. Grillo, 2004 and Mandaville, 2009; 2011) to exploring how Muslim immigrants establish transnational networks and ties. For the purposes of the study, it is important to gain perspective on the emergence of transnational Islam, which will help explain the processes through which Muslims in the West can establish religious ties and how the three televangelists (i.e. Hamza Yusuf, Baba Ali, and Yusuf Estes) may fit in and support these processes.

In the following, I start by delineating the different ways through which transnational Islam is enacted, moving on to explore what happens to Muslims'

perceptions of Islam as they are trans-located from a majority context into a minority one and to examine the role that new media can play in generating religious meanings. The aim here is to explore the socio-historical context of Muslims in the West who represent the immediate audience of televangelists' sermons and to turn attention to digital media being an important platform for the mediation and re-mediation of televangelists' sermons. I will further explore this latter aspect in the following chapter. Transnational Islam is the focus of the following section.

3.4.1. Manifestations of transnational Islam

There are many manifestations of transnational Islam. One is the demographic mobility of flows of migrants, including nexuses of countries of origin and settlement, for example, France-Algeria, Britain-Pakistan, Germany-Turkey, Italy-Morocco (e.g. Grillo, 2004: 865; Mandaville, 2009:494). There are also globalized social and political movements that operate on a transnational or pluri-national level (e.g. see Cesari, 2007: 56-59 and Mandaville, 2009). To this category belong movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, and its Pakistani counterpart Jama'at-i Islami; these have crossed the borders of their origins to establish organizations in many European states (Cesari *ibid*); for example, Union of French Islamic Organizations, established 1983, the Islamic Community in Germany, established 1982, the Muslim Association of Britain established 1997 and the Intercultural Islamic League of Belgium, established 1972. To the same category belong Sufi orders such as Mourid and Tijaniyya that

are transnational in terms of operating through migrants' transnational networks and linking up diasporas (Grillo, 2004: 865).

There are also networks of non-governmental participants such as religious leaders and immigrants that have developed bonds that transcend the borders of nation-states (Cesari, 2007: 58). Mandaville (2007: 315), and Gräf and Skovgaard-Petersen (2009) cite the example of Yusuf al-Qaradawi, the religious figure who has created "a global infrastructure for the dissemination of his particular religious worldview"; he has established the European Centre for Fatwa and Research (ECFR) in Ireland, and has taken part in establishing the International Union of Muslim Scholars aiming to uniting scholars from different sectarian backgrounds in the name of a global Islamic unity (*ibid.*).

While al-Qaradawi provides an illustration of the mediation of religious discourse, situated within classical traditions, other figures have fostered a "reformist" and "progressive" approach to the religion (Mandaville, 2007: 315). For example, Mandaville (*ibid.*; 2001: 178-191) provides a list of scholars such as Hassan Hanafy in Egypt, Amina Wadud in the United States, and Fazlur Rahman in Pakistan. To Mandaville (2001: 188), these figures are "translocal"; they are no longer confined to the exclusive container of a nation-state. To quote the author, "Rahman and Hanafi have at one time or another been "traveling Muslims" and these translocal experiences have significantly influenced the development of their thinking by bringing them into contact with new peoples and bodies of theory, Muslim and non-Muslim alike". As I have indicated earlier, these scholars call for a critical approach to the understanding of religious tradition. This point is relevant

to this study because it is in the West- as Mandaville (2001: 182) informs us- that these voices have gained particular currency in recent years. Being an advocate of a critical approach to religious texts myself, this is one reason that has motivated me to explore televangelism in the West. In other words, the examination of the sermons of the three televangelists can serve to test the ground in relation to the above claim.

Digital religion or "virtual Islam" is another manifestation of transnational Islam. Cesari (2007:58) defines it as a form of "electronic religiosity" that is "contributing to the global expansion of Islam". The circulation of audio and video-tapes, and the broadcasting of independent television satellite shows are examples (e.g. Cesari *ibid*; Hirschkind, 2006; Mandaville, 2007: 318). In addition, bulletin boards, chat rooms and discussion forums on the Internet provide a space for alternative or contesting understandings of Islam where previously only nationally based understandings existed (Cesari *ibid*).

The above studies give account of the manifestations of transnational Islam, through the use of new media and the proliferation of global Muslim networks. This view is substantiated by studies on anthropology (Metcalf 1996 and Werbner 1996) which give us fresh insights into how Muslims in the West can maintain their religious identities.

One important anthropological study is by Schmidt (2005) who examined religious ties by Muslim youth in Sweden, Denmark and the United States of America. She highlights that the events of 9/11 and the rise of anti-Muslim

sentiments in many countries in Europe have reinforced the idea of a transnational Islam based on Muslims' awareness of misrepresentation and being a "threat" to Western secular countries (pp. 582-583). Referring to the televangelist Hamza Yusuf, whose discourse is being examined in this PhD thesis, Schmidt (2005) explains how the United States is looked upon by her informants in the Scandinavian context as an important Centre for the dissemination of religious knowledge in Western communities; it is in the United States, she argues where "the trails of transnationalism intersect with the trails of globalization" (p. 582). To illustrate, she cites the example of Aysha, a young woman from Sweden, whose dream was to travel to California to join Zaytuna College established by Hamza Yusuf. One important point in the context of Sweden is that transnational ties operate both on a transnational level and at a local level by inviting speakers from outside Sweden, where teaching material often consisted of downloaded texts produced by scholars abroad (p. 580).

There are other informants in Schmidt's study (2005) who did not attend conferences abroad; yet the concept of a border-crossing Islam applied within local settings as a means to attract new believers or "to demonstrate Islam's egalitarian character, for example to African-Americans" (p 581). In the above contexts, the upholding of transnational religious ties among her informants came within the context of seeking religious knowledge and shared feelings of misrepresentation and suffering (p. 582). Thus, the author testifies to transnationalism- and the creation of transnational ties- as a framework through which Muslims in the West construct meanings about Islam in the contemporary age.

In the same vein, Metcalf (1996:1-30) offers a psychological account of how Muslims in transnational settings relate to aspects of their religious life; she proposes that Muslims relate to Islam by "creating spaces". The calligraphy of a Qur'anic text in a Muslim home in Canada or the virtual prayer of the *adan* (prayer's call) coming from a computer are examples of how Islamic symbols can be replicated everywhere; or to cite one shopkeeper observing Ramadan in her study: "the same food, the same moon, God is everywhere" (ibid. p. 11).

As I will demonstrate in the following chapter, the dissemination of modern technology and the expansion of digital Islam, from YouTube sermons viewed online, to religious songs on websites (see Eickelman and Anderson, 1999) have created online spaces where Muslims (in the West) can relate to and replicate aspects of their religious experience in different localities (also see Metcalf, 1996: 1-30).

If globalized technology has become a means through which Muslims relate to aspects of their religious experience despite differences in geographical locations, the question remains: what happens to Muslims, and therefore Islam, as it is "transposed" from a majority context to a minority context. In other words, what changes may possibly occur to Muslims in the West as they encounter a myriad of ethnicities, cultures and lifestyles (i.e. secular and Islamic-oriented), beliefs and disbeliefs?

3.5. Islam in the West

As I mentioned earlier (section 3.3. Imagined Communities), an important conception in understanding collective identities is that communities can be imagined. In fact, intrinsic to Islam is the imagination of an *umma*- an (imagined) global Muslim community- that encompasses many cultures and ethnicities (e.g. Denny 1975). Because of the importance of the term *umma* in the Islamic tradition and its potential relevance to the discourses of the three televangelists, I choose to elaborate on the meanings of this term and its development (see below), before moving on to discuss the specific context of Muslims in the West. This study proposes that the Internet (and the misrepresentation of Islam in the post 9-11 context) has helped “activate” the theoretical notion of the *umma* or a global Muslim community in televangelists' sermons and in users' comments online. This takes me to the following section.

3.5.1. The meanings of *umma*

A conception relevant to the investigation of Muslim identities is the conception of the *umma* (i.e. an imagined Muslim community). According to Denny (1975), the term *umma* occurred 64 times in the Qur'an and has many varied meanings. One use of the term in the Qur'an is to refer to "a fixed time": "And If We delay the penalty for them for a definite term (*umma*), they are sure to say, "What keeps it back?" Ah! On the day it (actually) reaches them, nothing will turn it away from them, and they will be completely encircled by that which they used to mock at" (Yusuf Ali: 11:8) (Denny *ibid.* 38). *Umma* can also mean

"exemplar", as in the reference to Abraham in 16:120, "Abraham was indeed a model (*umma*), devoutly obedient to Allah, (and) true in Faith, and he joined not gods with Allah" (Denny *ibid.*).

Another important meaning of *umma* in the Qur'an is "community". In the Qur'an, 23:52, God recounts, addressing the Prophets: "Surely this community of yours is one community, and I am your Lord; so fear Me" (Arberry's translation). In 6:38, *umma* is used to refer to creatures with common characteristics: "There is not an animal (*umma*) (that lives) on the earth, nor a being that flies on its wings, but (forms part of) communities like you. Nothing have we omitted from the Book, and they (all) shall be gathered to their Lord in the end" (Yusuf Ali's translation).

Denny (1975; 1977) argues that *umma* in the Qur'an refers to a community in a religious sense. Delineating the meanings of *umma* in the Qur'an, scholars (Denny, 1975; Decasa, 1999) have underscored that one motif running through the concept of "umma" as a religious community is the idea of oneness. Humans the Qur'an, points out, originally belonged to one religion, yet went different ways: "At one time all people were only one nation (*umma*). God sent Prophets with glad news and warnings. He sent the Book with them for a genuine purpose to provide the people with the ruling about disputed matters among them (2:213, Muhammad Sarwar's translation). Classical interpretations, Denny (1975) and Decasa (1999:58-58) point out, refer to the whole mankind (represented in Adam and his descendants) as an *umma*, who submitted to one God, representing one religious community.

The *umma* also has historical significance. With the migration of Muslims from Mecca to Medina, the first Muslim community came to be constituted. If the social system in Mecca was based on tribal ties, it was the first time in Medina that Muslims revoked that social system in terms of a greater unity. Mandaville (2007:70) reminds us:

For those who participated in the first migration, then, it was not the geographic move from Makkah to Medina which mattered, but rather the much more dramatic split from their tribal kin-groups. These affiliations had been the crux and core of social solidarity in Arabia at the time, and to leave them behind in the name of Islam signified a major break with traditional practice.

To establish a community in Medina, a "brotherhood" was held between the Muslim migrants in Mecca and Muslim converts in Medina. Interestingly, a security pact was held between Muslims and the inhabitants of Medina that constituted three groups: the new Muslim settlers who had migrated with Muhammad, the converts of Medina and the polytheist clans and their Jewish allies (Arjomand, 2009: 565). Denny (1977:44) perceives the security pact as a "very much a political-military document of agreement designed to make Yathrib (Medina) and the peoples connected with it safe". The pact came to be known as the Constitution of Medina (e.g. Arjomand, 2009).

In the Constitution of Medina, *umma* was an important term that defined the parties to which the Constitution included. The term *umma* refers to a confederate community of clans comprising Muslim immigrants; Muslims of Medina and their affiliates of Jews; and non-Muslims. What is crucial in the constitution is one section on religious tolerance that stipulated that "The Jews of the clan of –Awf are

a community (*umma*) with the faithful covenanters, the Jews having their religion (d̄in) and the Muslims their religion" (Article 15).

As Arjomand (2009: 560) has argued, *umma* included both Jewish, Muslims and non-Muslims, marking the institution of religious pluralism in Islam. It was during Medina, Halliday (1990: 24) argued, that a "proto-cosmopolitan streak stressing unity" became materialized. In addition, the fact the Constitution came to defend a territory for its covenants made "umma" for the first time a "heterogeneous political unity" (Arjomand, 2009:565) and I would add a moral unity as well.

There appears to be a specific relevance between the theoretical conception of *umma* (an imagined Muslim community) and Muslims in the West. It is in the West, Mandaville (2001: 174) argues, that Muslims "come face to face with ... shapes and colors of global Islam, forcing their religion to hold a mirror up to its own diversity. These encounters often play an important role in processes of identity formation prompting Muslims to revitalize and compare their understandings of Islam".

The national and ethnic diversity of those who profess Islam, particularly in Western contexts, have led some scholars (e.g. Grillo, 2004: 863) to postulate that that "there is no Islam but Islams" (ibid.). The author, however, warns that the statement may be misinterpreted as "representing different inflections of an essential Islam, in different locations". The same view is echoed in Mandaville (2001a:55) who argues that the mention of many "Islams" risks the very

"essentialisation" that the plural "Islams" was intended to escape. Rather, he argues that there is indeed one Islam, one that is "far more fluid", "a single master signifier, with each aspect becoming another instance of a more general identity" (ibid.). To fully quote the author: "Islam can hence be seen as a single discursive field – a "lifeworld" perhaps – yet one whose borders are constantly changing" (ibid.).

In this vein, Grillo (2004: 864) testified to the diversity of Islam (in Europe) by noting that to the Muslims, the Other may not be a non-Muslim but a Muslim himself/herself whose ideas can be regarded as heretical and un-Islamic. As Grillo (2004:864) remarked, this othering may be due to "theological rather than sociological issues but they matter to Muslims themselves, not least in debates about Islam in/of Europe" (ibid). With this (possible) diversity within Muslims themselves and as Muslims come in contact with the "secular" West, some Muslims, research points out (e.g. Mandaville, 2001a: 181), "negotiate" their identities. To this point, we now turn.

3.5.2. Negotiation of identities

Research (e.g. Jacobson, 1997; Sartawi and Sammut, 2012 and Schmidt, 2005) suggests that an important aspect related to Islam in the West is that some Muslims are negotiating their identities.

One study is by Sartawi and Sammut (2012) who have examined inquiries sent by first-generation British Muslims to three mosques in London generally

attended by Muslims from different backgrounds including Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Americans. The data collected focused on queries where the participants were involved in a contradiction between what the researchers classified as "British" and "Islamic" worldviews. For instance, one participant inquired if she could change the name of her daughter from an Islamic name (i.e. Fardous which means paradise in Arabic) and inquired if the change of the name would be displeasing to God. Another participant inquired if he can offer liquor in his restaurant to attract more customers.

If negotiation of identities in the above examples revolves around accepting/practising views which the participants thought of as "un-Islamic", in other instances negotiation of differences takes place due to a generational gap between the parents' views of religion and those of the offspring (e.g. see Jacobson, 1997; Schmidt, 2005).

Since Muslim televangelism appears to be particularly relevant to youth (as I explained in Chapter 2) and since televangelists' sermons are widely mediated on YouTube - a medium that primarily attracts young audiences (e.g. Burgess and Green, 2009:3) - in the following section, I will explore aspects relevant to the socio-historical context of the younger generations of Muslims in the West. I take Muslim youth in the United Kingdom as an example.

3.5.3. Muslim Youth in the United Kingdom

According to Lewis (2007: 1-7), half of the Muslims below the age of twenty five in the UK, are born and educated in the UK; these are faced with social and intellectual challenges as a result of growing up in an environment different from that of their parents. Unlike their parents, they experiment with a variety of lifestyles, religious and secular, and have to "negotiate" the challenges they face either because of differences across cultures or across generations.

Jacobson (1997) focuses on the perception of British Pakistani community in London of the second generation. While alienation from the "British society" has been documented by many of the respondents in her study many of the respondents, particularly females, pointed out that they are dissatisfied with the views of their parents on how women should lead their lives. One respondent, for instance, stated "independence" and "voicing opinion" as part of her perception of being "British" that her parents attempt to shut down. This is echoed in Schmidt (1995: 575-577) who noted that the dissatisfaction with "ethnic Islam" on the part of Muslim youth has led them to the search for a global Islam.

In a related vein, Mandaville (2001:175) cites examples of contemporary Muslim scholars (Fazlur Rahman, 1982; Nadwi, 1993:190) in the West who urge Muslims to "go back to the sources and read for themselves, exercising good judgment and trusting in their own personal opinions as to what the texts mean for Islam today". As Mandaville (2001a:134) comments: "there is hence no reluctance to delve into the *usul al-fiqh* (the core texts of Islamic jurisprudence) but there has

been a shift as to what Muslims are hoping to find there. Gone is the obsession with the somatics of prayer and correct bodily practice. The emphasis now is on wider questions concerning Muslim identity and relations between Muslims and non-Muslims".

3.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have researched the conceptual frameworks that can enable us to grasp the processes of identities' construction among Muslims in the West. I have examined the complex meanings of identity. Following Wodak and Triandafyllidou (2003), I approach identity as a dynamic process, which leads to the hypothesis that each televangelist may have a different discursive construction of "Us, Muslims". An important theoretical underpinning of identity construction is that it depends on the construction of in-groups and out-groups or demarcating boundaries between the Self and the Other. I have suggested that the celebrity status that the three televangelists have achieved and their awareness of the dissemination of their sermons online leads to the assumption that the televangelists are presumably addressing not only Muslims but also imagined cyberspace users.

Having delineated the meanings of identities construction, I then moved on to discuss the theoretical frameworks used in literature to designate Muslims in the West, including the terms "migrants" and "religious diaspora". I have argued that these terms fall short of grasping the diversity of Muslims in the West. Instead, I postulated that "transnationalism" is a more adequate theoretical framework that

can grasp the dynamics through which Muslims in the West are forging ties beyond the nation state and/or creating meanings related to a global Muslim community. This in my view is substantiated by the processes of transnationalism, including the creation of globalized social and political movements (e.g. Sufism, Muslim Brotherhood) and the widespread of global media including the mediation of Islamic content online. Another aspect this chapter has examined is how the rise of anti-Muslim sentiments in the post 9-11 context has reinforced the perception of a global Muslim community based on Muslims' awareness of misrepresentation and being conceived of -in some discriminatory rhetoric- as a "threat" to European countries (see Wodak and Boukala, 2014:180-182). Reflecting on the data to be examined in the following chapters, misrepresentation of Islam indeed emerges as one common topic recurrent among the three televangelists (see Chapter 8). On the question of "transnational Islam", Metcalf's (1996) proposition on the creation of "imagined spaces" provides some useful insights into how some Muslims generate religious meanings through religious symbols or media forms such as YouTube sermons.

In my view, the emergence of "transnational Islam" can account for the popularity that the three televangelists have achieved, either through the transnational nature of these televangelists as "traveling" preachers (see bio-information of the examined televangelists) and/or through the mediums (e.g. YouTube, websites) through which these televangelists have widened the scope of their popularity.

If “transnationalism” is one contextual framework through which we can view the phenomenon of televangelism, the rise of “digital Islam” and e-religion is another important layer of context that can explain why televangelism-broadly speaking- has become popular. I discuss this theme in the following chapter.

Chapter 4: Religion and televangelism in cyberspace

4.0. Introduction

The continuous developments in modern technology over the past few decades have had their impact on the growing accessibility and expansion of digital media technologies (Couldry, 2012; Manovich, 2001:23). This has entailed the convergence of old media into new media (Manovich, 2001: 28); for instance, online press, digital radio and TV and the growing influence of new media types identified with “the use of the computer for distribution and exhibition” (Manovich, 2001: 19); for instance, CD Roms, DVD, digital videos, and computer games. In addition, the Internet has emerged as an important medium (e.g. Campbell, 2013), fostering new and rapid forms of global communication and coordination (e.g. Eickelman and Anderson, 1999:4 and Bunt 2000:2).

Research (e.g. Forchtner, Krzyżanowski and Wodak, 2013 and Lorenzo-Dus and Blivich, 2013) has suggested that the Internet and digital media technologies have become important mediums of communication in many domains, including politics and religion. To illustrate, in the domain of politics, Forchtner, Krzyżanowski and Wodak (2013) documented the rise of the far-right in Europe and the increasing use of electronic media by FPÖ in Austria to perpetuate anti-Muslim and anti-semitic messages. They explained that the political leader Heinz-Christian Strache of the FPÖ (Freedom Party of Austria) managed to gain more votes of young electorates by mediating two genres on the Internet: a YouTube song entitled “Viennese blood” (a theme that has anti-Semitic references and draws

on anti-Muslim rhetoric) and a hybrid comic/narrative genre that uses the topos of fear as a strategy to present a multimodal narrative of the Ottoman siege of Vienna that took place in 1683 (also see Wodak 2015).

Like the domain of politics, religion is mediated online. As early as 1990s, religious groups started to make use of the most common platforms at the time, i.e. Use Net (e.g. Helland, 2007) to form religious communities. With electronic media expansion, religion inhabited many platforms such as blogs, YouTube and social media networks. Contemporary manifestations of religion online varies from sermon excerpts that can be listened to online or downloaded as i-tunes, to websites that offer religious content in multi-media format (e.g. Cheong et al 2008; Campbell, 2010a on religious blogs; and van Zoonen et al 2010 and Mosemghvdlishvili and Jansz, 2013 on YouTube). Thus, televangelism can be perceived as a manifestation of the rise of digital Islam.

In this chapter, I argue that the Internet and digital media technologies are among the most important aspects that have granted televangelists' discourses (e.g. sermons and Facebook posts) wide visibility and popularity. The three televangelists make use of a plethora of new media platforms, including Facebook and blogspots (see below). The fact that the Internet is one main medium through which televangelists' discourses are disseminated calls for an examination of the broader practices and dynamics of “digital religion” that represent important layers of context through which televangelists' discourses are mediated and received.

One aim of this chapter is to explore the meanings of “digital religion”. As Campbell (2013:1) remarks, “digital religion does not simply refer to religion as it

is performed and articulated online, but points to how digital media and spaces are shaping and being shaped by religious practice”. This entails, inter alia, exploring the dynamics of online communication and how these have shaped and re-shaped religious practice (both online and offline), and the different practices related to the consumption of televangelists' messages online. Thematically, this chapter is divided into two broad sections: in the first section, I explore main themes in Internet scholarship, namely the Internet as a virtual public sphere, the different manifestations of religion online; and the interrelation between online and offline religious practices (e.g. Campbell, 2010; 2011; Hutchings, 2011 and Jacobs, 2007). In the second section, I move on to investigate the use of the Internet by the selected televangelists and their fans and followers. I examine some of the media platforms that the three televangelists use (for instance, Facebook, and YouTube) and examine the practices that surround the reception of televangelists' messages. I will delineate two patterns a) some users perceive televangelists' online spaces as a platform where they can experience devotional aesthetics (e.g. reiterating “God is great” in Arabic “*Allahu Akbar*”) and b) some users approach televangelists' online spaces as a platform to advertise their own online spaces (e.g. religious Facebook pages/websites) and gain more authority.

Thus, in this chapter, I capture the underlying practices and frames related to the consumption of religious content online, in light of relevant literature (e.g. Campbell, 2013; El Nawawy and Khamis, 2009; and Hirschkind, 2012) and in light of the analysis of user-generated content of televangelists' fans online. I argue here that televangelism can be perceived as a manifestation of “participatory

culture" in which "fans and other consumers are invited to actively participate in the creation and circulation of new content" (Jenkins, 2006a:10).

4.1. The Internet: A virtual public sphere?

As I have indicated earlier (2.6. religious authority), research (Kutscher, 2009; Sisler, 2007) has positively described the Internet as a global "public sphere" where religious views can be discussed, negotiated and contested in chat rooms and websites across the board (Mandaville, 2001: 177; Sisler, *ibid*; Turner, 2007 and van Bruinessen, 2003). I assess this claim by engaging with the debate in Internet scholarship as to whether the Internet can represent/revive the public sphere (e.g. Papacharissi, 2002 and Wodak and Wright, 2006).

The term "public sphere" is postulated by Habermas (1992) who offered a historical account of late seventeenth and early eighteenth century Europe. He suggested that a readership of middle class men (*sic!*) was formed for a brief period during that period and represented "a sphere between civil society and the state, in which critical public discussion of matters of general interest" took place (Habermas 1989: xi). According to the author, one characteristic feature of the public sphere was that it disregarded power hierarchy and social inequality in favor of critical-rational debates. In the following quotation, Habermas (1989:36) comments on salons and coffee houses as a meeting point for the publics:

They (the institutional criteria in coffee houses) preserved a kind of social intercourse that far from pre-supposing the equality of status, disregard status altogether. The tendency replaced the celebration of rank with a tact

befitting equals. The parity on whose basis alone the authority of the better argument could assert itself against that of social hierarchy and in the end can carry the day meant, in the thought of the day, the parity of "common humanity".

Indeed, the conception of the public sphere as imagined by Habermas was subject to criticism (e.g. Calhoun, 1992 and Fraser, 1992). Calhoun (1992: 3) for instance, noted that men of lower socio-economic classes were excluded from the public sphere, and Fraser (1992) added that women were likewise excluded. However, the revival of the "public sphere" remained an answer to the question of how to enhance democratic participation, since it is through "the formation of public opinion (that) official decision making can be held democratically accountable" (Dahlberg, 2006:1).

A more recent engagement with the notion of public sphere is study by Wodak and Koller (2008:3) who have identified, at least, two theoretical approaches towards it: one approach accepts the criteria put forth by Habermas such as equal accessibility to information, eradication of social hierarchies and the importance of critical rational debates; the other has a post-modernist turn and puts emphasis on "plurality" of voices. To illustrate, in his account of the emergence of the public sphere in England, France and Germany, Habermas (1989) identified coffee houses as a space where "the bourgeois met with the socially prestigious but politically uninfluential nobles as 'common' human beings" (ibid. p. 35). Coffee houses served as a hub for information exchange among this emerging readerships (ibid. p. 34); Habermas exemplified by commenting on the engagement of

eighteenth-century writers with the coffee houses: "There was scarcely a great writer in the eighteenth century who would not have first submitted his essential ideas for discussion in... lectures before the academies and especially in the salon. The salon held the monopoly of first publication: a new work, even a musical one, had to legitimate itself first in this forum." (ibid. p. 34). As for the other approach to the public sphere, Wodak and Koller (2008) remark that it has a post-modernist turn and puts emphasis on "plurality" and creating "parallel discursive arenas where members of sub-ordinated social groups invent and circulate counter-discourses" (ibid.).

This study contributes to the conceptualization of the public sphere by identifying two methodologies in its examination in recent studies (e.g. Dahlberg, 2001; Papacharissi, 2002; Triandafyllidou, Wodak and Krzyżanowski, 2009; Warnick, 2007; Wodak and Koller, 2008; Wodak and Wright, 2006). On the one hand, some studies (e.g. Dahlberg, 2001; Papacharissi, 2002) have revisited this notion from a theoretical perspective in the light of relevant literature on accessibility of information on the Internet and the extent of rational-critical debate online. Another approach (e.g. Wodak and Wright, 2006) is qualitative and examines the realization of critical debate through the analysis of discourse, i.e. language in use, to investigate the platforms and processes through which online communication has led to the formation of public opinion.

To elaborate the above, a study that has engaged with the question from a theoretical perspective is Papacharissi (2002). She examined whether the potential of free expression online and anonymity can bring about "a more representative

and robust public sphere” (ibid., p. 13). She points out some limitations to the potential of the Internet as a public sphere. For instance, access to online information is not available in equal measure to all (since some lack access to computer/Internet in the first place). She has added that while self-expression of opinion on the Internet may “empower” users, it remains uncertain the extent to which online views can lead to “genuine civic engagement” (ibid. p. 17). Moreover, the predominance of commercialization which applies to Internet technologies (e.g. portals) undermines “the democratizing potential of mass media” (ibid. p. 19); since new technologies will become in this instance commercially driven, rather than encouraging/supporting critical discussion. building on these limitations, Papacharissi (2002) refrains from describing the Internet as a “public sphere”; rather, she designates it as “a public space” which “facilitates but does not ensure the rejuvenation of a culturally drained public sphere”.

If Papacharissi (2002) argues that the Internet cannot represent a “public sphere”, Dahlberg (2006), while initially pointing to the commodification of cyberspace as one limitation to the autonomy of public interaction online, proposes that “the Internet is facilitating discourse that replicates the basic structure of rational-critical debate and that in various ways approximates the requirements of the public sphere”. However, he flags up many problems that limit the formation of a public opinion based on equal access to information and rational-critical discussion; for instance, difficulty identifying the correctness of information put forward on the Internet, the domination of online interaction by particular individuals or groups and exclusions from online interaction as a result of social

inequalities. The critique of these limitations have led him to propose that technology should be developed which enhances critical deliberation and modifies the rules of discourse online (or netiquette) so that it would encourage deliberation and rational-critical discourse (ibid. pp. 16).

From a different perspective, Wodak and Wright (2006) have adopted a “hands on” approach to the question by analyzing online discourses, inter alia, in terms of the extent users have engaged critically with the topic/s under discussion. Two aspects they explored are: a) who participates in the first place and b) if a rational discussion takes place at all or if the various postings are independent of each other.

In their study, Wodak and Wright (2006) focused on the context of Europe, particularly examining *Futurum*, the online forum that was created to allow for public debates about the future of Europe for citizens of the European Union. In contrast to Papacharissi's (2002) pessimistic view about the potential of the Internet in reviving critical-rational discussions, the researchers argue that the Internet can represent a virtual public sphere. The authors examined discussion threads on the topic of multilingualism and language policies in Europe and detected that the forum (*Futurum*) created a space where participants engaged in debates about language policies and the future of Europe. For instance, whereas one user claimed that “German as European working language would be an additional victory from Hitler and therefore has to be refused” (ibid. p. 265), another user counter-argued his claim stating that “it is an unlegitm (sic.) offence to the germans and the german-speaking population in Europe, to link our

language exclusively to Hitler, denying that German is de facto the most spoken native tongue in Europe, the language of some of Europe's best literature, philosophy" (ibid. p. 266). Wodak and Wright (2006) noted that *Futurum* helped "bring (European) citizens closer to each other". However, they asserted that only when the main themes/topics raised in the forum would be drawn upon by policy-makers of the European institutions that these discussions would be useful to the EU institutions and could tackle the "democratic deficit" between "the European Union and the people it serves" (ibid. p.251; also see Triandafyllidou, Wodak and Krzyzanowski, 2009:2).

In a different context, in Egypt, Root (2012) assessed the creation of a virtual public sphere during the events of the Egyptian uprising that took place in 2011; the researcher analyzed one Facebook post by the activist Wael Ghoneim in February 2011. In this post, Wael Ghoneim clarified his position that he did not ask protesters to leave Tahrir Square. Exploring users' comments on Facebook, the author argued that the Internet provided a virtual public sphere that allowed for an inclusive environment that encouraged responses and enabled users to converge between different media forms as some users used text, pictures and videos to support their arguments.

As I indicated earlier, one question that has recently received some attention in religious studies (e.g. El-Nawawy and Khamis, 2009) is whether the Internet could provide a scope for religious deliberation and formation of public opinion. For instance, while building on the Habermasian conception of the public sphere, El-Nawawy and Khamis (2009:1-22) examined discussion threads in two online

Muslim forums: Islamonline.net and Islamway.com. The topics of the discussion threads included the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the infamous "Danish cartoons", ethnic cleansing in Chechnya and the corruption of the Arab leaders. Among the important findings of the study is that these forums provided a space for consensus based on collective endorsement of issues of shared interest, rather than a consensus reached after negotiations and/or debates around controversial issues (ibid. pp. 124-132). For instance, one topic that was raised in the discussion forum is how to have an "industrial development project for the *umma*" (i.e. the global Muslim community). One engineer suggested creating teams in the different areas of engineering to launch engineering projects across the Islamic countries. The suggestion was positively received by the users; for instance, one user wrote: "Thank you very much brother Wael for your idea and I am very excited about participation"; another used commented: "May God bless you for your great idea. We are in dire need for such a project".

Apart from study by El Nawawy and Khamis (2009), the majority of scholarly research (e.g. Bunt, 2009; 2010; Campbell, 2010; 2013; Hirschkind, 2012; Hutchings, 2011 and Jacobs, 2007) has explored the manifestations of religion in the virtual public sphere in terms of the extent of the plurality of voices and online practices, thus pointing to the potential of the formation of a public sphere online. This takes me to the following section.

4.2. Religion in the virtual public sphere

If we adopt a definition of the public sphere as one that allows for the “plurality of voices” and creating “counter-discourses” (see Wodak and Koller, 2008:3), then we can consider the claim that the Internet represents a platform where many religious voices and views are displayed, mainstream and independent voices alike. To get a deeper insight into how the Internet has become a space for the expression of plurality of voices online, I have chosen below to draw on examples from relevant literature (e.g. Bunt 2004) and to examine up-to-date examples drawn from my observations and analysis of religious representation online. Using up-to-date examples is in fact informed by the view that the study of digital religion is a relatively new sub-field of research and, indeed, one challenge it faces is keeping up with the growing use of the Internet and new media for religious expression, for example, in terms of documentation and categorization (e.g. see Campbell, 2013:1-8).

Helland (2007:964) points out that one example of mainstream official organization represented online is the Vatican; established in 1995, its website offers information about the Catholic Church and the doctrine of Catholicism. While exploring digital Islam, Bunt (2004) has shown that the Internet is home to multi-faceted religious, cultural and political complexities; three main strands of Islam are represented: Sunni, Shia and Sufis.

The proliferation of Web 2.0 media channels such as Facebook, YouTube and blogspot has further extended the visibility of religious organizations and has

given way to new voices. If we further explore the example of the Vatican by Helland (2007), we can observe that the Vatican has extended its presence to social media networks, including Facebook, allowing room for interactivity. One page related to the Vatican that has large number of fans on Facebook is “Vatican Radio English”; the page has about 370 thousand fans and mediates news and updates about the Pope and the Vatican Church. In a similar way to the website⁴¹ of Vatican Radio, the Facebook page is focused on the Pope. The “cover photo” of the Facebook page is an image of the Pope, smiling while holding a pigeon up the sky, behind him the Vatican and an obelisk. His smile, while holding the pigeon up to the sky connotes peace, friendliness and openness (see Figure 1). The focus on the pope in both media outlets, i.e. Facebook page and the website relates to one aspect of new media that relates to the three televangelists, i.e. convergence (see Barton and Lee 2013: 7), which suggests that the same media content can be mediated in many related online spaces.

⁴¹ Radio Vatican: <http://en.radiovaticana.va/> Last accessed 6th June 2015.



Figure 4.1. Vatican Radio English Facebook page⁴²

Of course, there are many other examples of independent (religious) voices in new media. An example can be drawn from the mediated content on the conflict in Gaza and Israel (8 July 2014 – 26 August 2014) in which the Facebook page the Jewish Voice of Peace (JVP) has gained visibility.

Founded in 1996, JVP⁴³ “is inspired by Jewish tradition to work together for peace, social justice, equality, human rights, respect for international law, and a US foreign policy based on these ideals. JVP opposes anti-Jewish, anti-Muslim, and anti-Arab bigotry and oppression”. Figure 2 represents a poster in a demonstration organized by JVP which aims to end the occupation in the Occupied Territories.

⁴² Radio Vatican Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/VaticanRadioEnglish>. Last accessed 28th August 2014.

⁴³ Link to Jewish Voice for Peace: <https://jewishvoiceforpeace.org/content/jvp-mission-statement> Last accessed: 24th November 2014.

The post, dated 20th August 2014, has about five thousand “likes” and is shared by about two thousand users on their profile pages, testifying to how social media can enhance the visibility/influence of (independent) voices online.

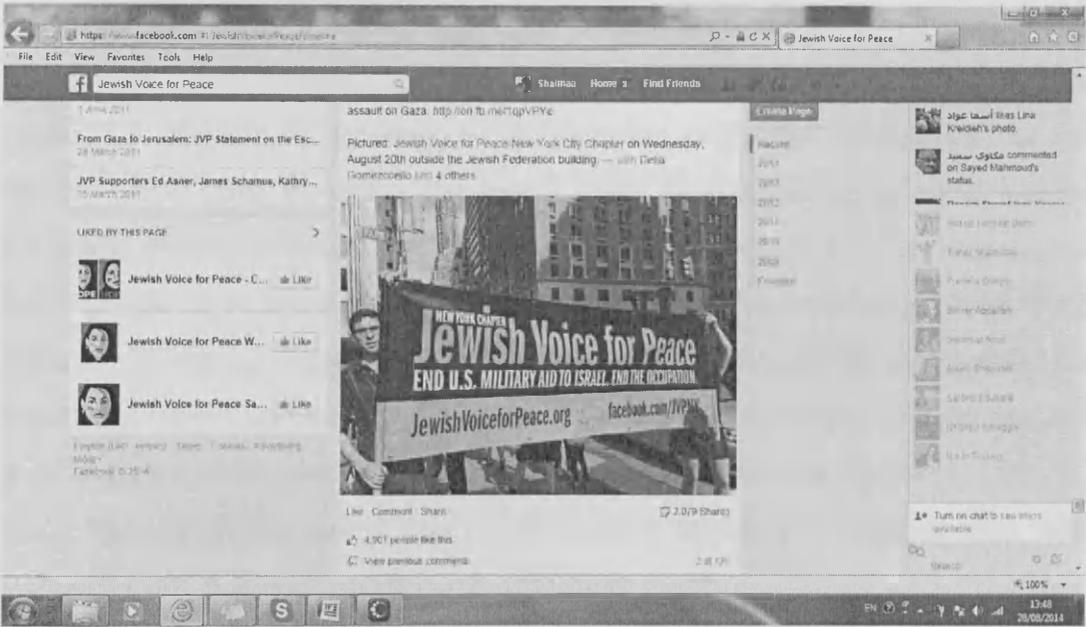


Figure 4.2. Facebook page of Jewish Voice for Peace

In addition to Facebook being the largest social media network, YouTube has emerged as an important medium of religious expression and mediation (e.g. Mosemghvdlishvili and Jansz, 2012 and Myers, 2010). Paolillo (2008), for instance, remarks that religion (particularly Islam followed by Christianity) forms the second biggest thematic cluster on YouTube, after music videos. The increasing use of YouTube to express views on Islam (e.g. see Mosemghvdlishvili and Jansz, 2012 and van Zoonen, Vis and Mihelj, 2010) triggers an investigation of the main themes in these videos and the motivations of users to create them.

Mosemghvdlishvili and Jansz (2013) examined a sample of 120 videos about Islam. They found out that YouTube videos on Islam gravitate around three main themes: a) educating/preaching Islam (n=20) aimed at Muslims and non-Muslims; b) videos that are anti-Islam in terms of verbal abuse and visual representation and c) videos that criticize the mis-representation of Islam in mass media; for instance the coverage of the cartoons of Prophet Mohammed in the British press (ibid. p. 489). The motivations behind producing these videos included: communicating views on Islam and “removing” the misconceptions some people have about Islam, particularly in Western contexts (p. 494). Self-expression without experiencing social constraint is another motivation for producing videos about Islam; for instance, one user who posted videos that are anti-Muslim reported that his Muslim acquaintances don't know about his channel, since "the relationship would only become sour if they knew I disagree with their religion" (ibid. p. 494).

The above examples lend truth to the claim that the Internet, including YouTube, has become a space of stance-making, views and counter-views (e.g. see Barton and Lee, 2013 and Myers, 2010). The fact that the criticism of the misrepresentation of Islam in mass media and preaching Islam emerge as two important themes in the YouTube videos examined by Mosemghvdlishvili and Jansz (2013) reminds us of a theme examined earlier on the fragmentation of religious authority (2.6. religious authority); it appears that YouTube and the Internet-broadly speaking- has widened the circle of religious expression, enabling more users to speak for Islam.

In another study, van Zoonen, Vis and Mihelj (2010) focused on the controversy surrounding the anti-Islam video *Fitna*, produced in 2008 by a member of the Dutch Parliament, Geert Wilders (e.g. See Wodak and Boukala, 2014:180-182). The authors explored the responses of the YouTube users to the production of the video and demonstrated that video blogging on YouTube has become an expression of a political and/or a religious self. This is realized through many different media genres, as the authors point out. One genre the study identified is the stand-up comedy; for example, a young man, standing on stage starts by ironically refuting some of the stereotypes about Muslims; for instance, he says “I don't live in a tent or keep my wife zipped up in it every day”. A dynamic upturn occurs in the video as the young man declares: “Trust me, I would like to go back to my country but I am already in it”; this is followed by the insertion of the US flag and a statement made by the speaker: “I believe in people of all different religions and beliefs living together in harmony”, which articulates a political stance. Another genre is the “jamming and saying sorry” that takes no longer than 15-20 seconds; in one version, one or more persons wear a wig (parodying Wilders' bleached hair) saying and singing "sorry". In other versions, a screen-wide cartoon Dutch flag is featured, with a round hole in it, through which the person puts his face, saying “I am sorry”. This is exemplified in the figure below.



Figure 4.3. I am sorry for Wilders' fitna⁴⁴

Van Zoonen et al (2010) have interpreted the performance of the participants (e.g. the use of the English "I am sorry" rather than the Dutch one) as an indication of assuming a global imagined community which they aim to reach. According to the authors, through these videos the users enact their religious and political self. The large amount of videos posted in response to Fitna ties in, according to the authors, with the conceptualization of a public sphere.

The above discussion indicates that the Internet has become a scope for self-expression and mediation of religion. Interestingly, the Internet has also become a space where rituals and religious practice can be performed (e.g. Campbell, 2013; Hutchings, 2011 and Jacobs, 2007). In the following, I further elaborate on the meanings of religious practice online.

⁴⁴ Link to the YouTube video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cGMw_pnDVSM. Last accessed 24th November, 2014.

4.3. Religious practice online

The emergence of religious forums and virtual churches and mosques have given rise to the question of how a sacred space can be constructed online; this has entailed much research about the characteristics of religious practices online. I define “religious practice” as a form of “social practice” which refers to “socially regulated ways of doing things” (Van Leeuwen 2008: 7). The performance of social practice, as Van Leeuwen remarks (*ibid*, pp. 7-12) entails many elements, for example, participants, a set of actions performed in a sequence and presentation styles such as the use of particular dress codes. Examples of religious practice include reading the Qur'an, praying, fasting and pilgrimage (e.g. Ayoub and Cornell 2005; Rosowsky 2008:6-11; and Rosowsky 2012:617). One important topic is how digital technologies have shaped religious practice (e.g. Campbell 2012; 2013), which gives us an understanding of how our perceptions of religion and religious practice may change or gain new meanings when religion is mediated online.

Jacobs (2007) has explored a virtual Christian Church designed so that users can perform “asynchronous cyber-rituals”, i.e. “those performed online at a time convenient to individuals and do not require collective online assignments at specified times” (*ibid*. p. 1103). Employing ethnography as an approach, Jacobs (2007) interviewed the designers of the Christian Church to find out how the architecture of the virtual church has created a sacred space. Jacobs (2007) emphasizes that a sacred space is created through a simulation of reality. This is achieved through architectural style, design and use of images; in the online

church, the user comes across a painted corridor, with the words “virtual church” woven into the carpet. At the end of the corridor, a screen appears with the words “open” and “close”. By clicking on the word “open”, a blurred image of people from the back appears where people are engaged in some activity taking place in the front of the hall; conveying a sense of space in which “the viewer is standing at the back of a Christian congregation joined together in worship” (p. 1108). In addition, there are links to all aspects of a “real world” service; for instance, the Worship Room has a link to a Christian radio station that broadcasts Christian pop songs and offers the possibility of “singing along with worship” while the accompanying music is provided in an audio file (ibid. p. 1114).

The interviews held with the Church designers and users emphasize that simulation of reality is an important aspect in the design of the Church; one participant has commented that the Church is “a place that can be visited analogous to visiting a church in the real world” and “a place where people can go and feel safe” (ibid. p.1110). The flexibility of online religious practice is another salient aspect; as one participant commented: it “was much easier to walk out” of a virtual sermon if he found it boring, without hurting the feelings of the pastor” (ibid. p. 1116).

From a different perspective, Hutchings (2011), while still focusing on “virtual churches”, explored if virtual churches have offline connection: the “Church of Fools” was non-denominational yet received funding from the Methodist Council. The Church of Fools, which attracted media attention and lasted only for four months, allowed for novel forms of religious expression;

participants, for instance, became avatars who could perform simple actions like kneeling and raising hands. They could also choose to remain invisible and view the world as “ghosts” that no one could see. The Anglican Cathedral in Second Life is another example (ibid. pp.1124-1127). It was originally established without the approval of the Anglican Communion; yet its leaders built informal connections with dioceses in England and New Zealand (Campbell 2010:123-127). As for Church Online (<http://live.lifechurch.tv/>), it was established in 2006 by the Oklahoma-based multi-site mega-church LifeChurch.tv as an online campus (ibid p. 1124). It resembles evangelical programmes, since it broadcasts religious programmes and songs; in addition, it has a chat room where “hosts” welcome visitors, answer their questions and encourage them to participate. By elaborating on more examples, Hutchings (2011) highlighted that virtual churches tend to act as complementary to offline churches rather than aiming to replace them.

Focusing on religious practices by Muslims, Hirschkind (2012) explores some of the practices around listening to/viewing excerpts on YouTube. He focused on one YouTube sermon excerpt by the Egyptian televangelist Mohamed Hassan that has around three million views; he categorizes the YouTube excerpt by Hassan as part of a genre conceived of as being “mu'ather”, from the Arabic root “*athara*” which embraces among its meanings “ethical and devotional dispositions as humility, regret, fear, hope, states of the heart that within Islamic ethical traditions may lead one to the experience of pious tranquility and a stillness of the soul” (ibid. p.6). These feelings, he argued, are brought about by the topic of the sermon and the style of Mohamed Hassan. In the YouTube excerpt, Mohammed Hassan speaks in an impassioned voice about death and the Day of Judgment,

reciting Qur'anic verses that feature those themes. The weeping of those gathered in the mosque is another salient acoustic aspect in the YouTube video. In the following, I focus on the patterns of religious practice that Hirschkind (2012) is able to identify, while in the following chapter (Chapter 5), I revisit Hirschkind's (2012) study to reflect on the distinctions between this genre of fear-inspiring sermon by Mohamed Hassan and the sermons of the three televangelists.

One religious practice Hirschkind (2012) identifies is users' offering prayers for and praise of Mohamed Hassan, which he argues, is a simulation of an "offline" practice in which the audiences in mosques show their devotion by uttering prayers and in response to the aesthetic affect brought about by the pious speech of the preacher. Another observation Hirschkind (2012) makes is that norms of polite interaction are kept in the YouTube comments, typical of "pious exhortation"; he remarks "questions asked are almost never left unanswered and are often treated with great solicitude and generosity" (ibid. p. 10). Moreover, many users who link to Hassan's segment have on their personal pages video clips from other genres aimed at emotional exhortation (p.12); for instance, there is a YouTube excerpt entitled "The Tape that Made the Scientists Cry" which features images of space taken by the Hubble Telescope. By presenting these examples, Hirschkind has shown how some YouTube excerpts have become a space for experiencing aesthetic/devotional effects.

Another study on online religious practice is Becker (2011) who examined how sacred spaces are constructed in online forums and chat rooms by *salafiyya* Muslims in Germany and Netherlands. Becker (2011) defines *salafiyya* as a

revivalist trend within Islam that attempts to “purify religious practices from corruption and heretical innovations (*bida'*) by referring to the revelation, the Qur'an and the Sunna, which are both understood to be essentially pure and to carry information over the perfect model of a Muslim life (ibid. p. 1188)”. As Becker (2011, 1187) states, *salafiyya* has played an important role within Muslim life in Germany and the Netherlands since the 1990s and their members have achieved visibility in public discussions about integration, Islamism and terrorism; and national security. Becker delineates common practices and strategies used by *salafiyya* Muslim members to construct a sacred place. One practice is making *dua*, prayers to fellow members, invoking God to intervene in a situation or give his blessings. Giving religious advice (or in Arabic *nasiha*) is another strategy used to create an Islamic space and discipline the discussion among its members; in one forum, for instance, one user has given religious advice, which ensures what Becker (2011:1191) terms the “Islamicity” of the environment: “people, please, either talk good or remain silent. Silence is effortless worship” (ibid.). Other strategies used by *salafiyya* members include using names which draw on the tradition of *salafiyya*, for example, *ahl al-sunna wal-jamaa* (followers of the Prophet's creed and the community and *Qur'an wa sunna* (Qur'an and Prophet's legacy). In addition, sacred symbols are used to create an Islamic space, for instance, through icons of the Qur'an, mosques and female and male Muslim figures in devout positions, for instance praying or reading the Qur'an.

Thus, we can conclude that the Internet and Web 2.0 affordances have shaped the religious sphere online. First, as a site of religious and political expression, the Internet has widened the scope of expression and participation, to

include more users/citizens (e.g. Mosemghvdlshvili and Jansz, 2013); this relates to earlier remarks made in this study about the fragmentation of religious authority.

Another important outcome of the interaction between religion and new media is the emergence of new forms and genres for religious mediation including Second Life, where users can choose to be avatars, and the stand-up comedy genre in which Muslims are able to express their views, for instance, on the misrepresentation of Islam (van Zoonen et al 2010).

Religious practice- in addition- can be “modified” on the Internet. Two aspects emerge that can differentiate between religious practice online and offline, namely the “flexibility” of users to do religious practice online (for example, by choosing when to listen to a YouTube sermon) and the emergence of novel forms of religious expression (for example, choosing to be a “ghost” while praying).

Thus, an important layer of context that surrounds the phenomenon of televangelism is the rise of digital religion, with its novel forms of expressions and hybrid religious practices. This layer of context appears to have influenced the most the televangelist Baba Ali. In the following chapters, I will demonstrate that Ali's YouTube sermons feed into “vernacular creativity” taking the term to mean "creative practices that emerge from non-elite, specific everyday contexts" (Light et al 2012:433). This shows for example in his use of novel forms of preaching/expression such as creating a dialogue with an imagined viewer about Islam and its misrepresentation in mass media. In the following section, I seek to obtain an understanding of how the selected televangelists have managed to create

their own online spaces and the role of their fans in popularizing their discourses, and granting them more visibility.

4.4. Televangelists online: Media use and practices

One important aspect of televangelists' popularity is their visibility in cyberspace. Besides their websites, their sermons are widely mediated on YouTube and are linked to in their Fan pages on Facebook. In the following, I will provide examples of the online spaces that the three televangelists use; then I will identify practices related to the reception of televangelists' spaces. I draw on these online spaces, again, in Chapter 6 as I examine the self-presentation strategies of the three televangelists.

4.4.1. Use of new media by Yusuf Estes and his fans

Yusuf Estes draws on many online platforms, including Facebook. One of Estes' websites is <http://yusufestes.com/> which introduces biographical information about Estes and has an article about his conversion story; conversion appears to be a predominant element in Estes' self-representation which I will explore further in Chapter 6. Another website <http://www.islamnewsroom.com/> posts general articles about Islam including “pilgrimage”, “the scientific proofs” of the Qur'an and has video excerpts for Estes.

Yusuf Estes is also visible on Facebook. He has two Facebook pages: one links to the website of his channel “Guide US TV” and has about 300, 000

subscribers; the other links to his website <http://www.islamnewsroom.com/> and has about 500,000 subscribers. Both pages advertise Yusuf Estes' forthcoming events and news and link to articles posted on his website or YouTube excerpts for him, again showing the importance of convergence (linking to other related websites) in maintaining the visibility of online spaces (by the three televangelists).

To illustrate, one of the posts on Estes' Facebook page is a YouTube video featuring him and a non-Muslim woman, declaring her belief in Islam. Another post links to an article published in Islam Newsroom, one website he owns, about Stephen Hawking, the English scientist and cosmologist who has helped popularize science and has numerous publications on the origins of the universe (e.g. Hawking 1988; and 2010). The post about Stephen Hawking that is about space, science and Islam is an example of the hybridity of televangelists' discourses, which I will further explore in Chapter 8 of the study. The article refers to a YouTube video by Hawking in which he argues that the universe is expanding. Interestingly, the article links Hawking's statement to a Qur'anic reference that appears to communicate the same meaning about the expansion of the universe. The article claims:

Example 4.1.

Until the 1920s, everyone thought the universe was essentially unchanging in time. Then it was discovered that the universe was expanding.

It was recently discovered the universe is expanding.

“And it is Allah Who has constructed the heaven with power and certainly, it is Allah Who is steadily expanding it.”

- Qur'an, chapter 51, verse 47

Distant galaxies were moving away from us. This meant they must have been closer together in the past. If we extrapolate back, we find we must have all been on top of each other about 15 billion years ago. This was the Big Bang, the beginning of the universe.

“Don't the unbelievers see the heavens and earth were all joined together (as one creation) BEFORE we split them apart? Allah made every living thing from water. Won't they ever believe?”
- *Qur'an, chapter 21, verse 30*

In the above example published on Yusuf Estes' website, comparisons are made between Qur'anic allusions to heaven's expansion and the prevailing cosmological theories such as the expansion of the universe. The article ends on a note that “our future is in space”, supposedly encouraging cosmological inquiry. This, however, is in contradiction to the preface to the article, which rather shuts down exploration since the Qur'an –as the preface put it- provided us with the answers:

Stephen Hawking, famous scientist gives lectures on universe and creation, while looking for answers to his questions. But we already know the answers (in the) Qur'an. Allah created a single thing and then "expanded it" and it is still "expanding" today. Allah brought EVERYTHING OUT OF NOTHING.

YES! Hawking said, "Universe created itself out of NOTHING"

WHAT? HOW?

His understanding (or lack of it) makes anyone wonder why these genius intellectuals still refuse to accept the truth of Islam that came 1,400 years ago in Qur'an?

Amazing video proves scientists are forced to admit facts we know in Qur'an today.

In the above example, scientists referred to as “these genius intellectuals” are-fallaciously- represented as being at odds with Islam. This shows in the implied predication “still refuse...Islam” and “forced to admit” in which “scientists”-referred to in generic terms- are represented as denying the truth and antagonistic to Islam, creating a false dichotomy between Islam and scientific inquiry. In fact, this is not the only example of logical leaps or fallacies in Estes' discourse. As I will demonstrate in the following analytical chapters (Chapter 7 and Chapter 8), Estes draws on many other fallacies and manipulative devices such as the conflation between past and present and the fallacious homogenization of the West, represented as an entity attacking Islam/Muslims.

In terms of the importance of Estes' online spaces, we can observe that it is a space for interactivity (see below). The large number of users on Yusuf Estes's Facebook pages invites an examination of the practices that surround the consumption of Estes' updates and posts. One common practice is the devotional expression of glorification of God and giving prayers for Yusuf Estes. For instance, on the topic about the conversion of a girl from Texas to Islam, recurrent comments are “Mashallah” and “Allahu Akbar”, phrases that are used as a

reminder of God's glory and will. One user has written “Mashallah, Allah Akbar”; followed by an emoticon, a heart symbol.

Example 4.2.

Timo Dx  Mashallah, Allah Akbar ❤️

Another practice featured on users' comments is tagging other Facebook pages to advertise them. For instance, on the topic of Stephen Hawking's statement on universe expansion, one user has commented:

Example 4.3.

we don't need that proof as much they do, why don't you give him this message ? you can reach people like this better than us. Just like Mission Dawah with Snoop Dogg :), may allah bless you our sheikh

Like (8) 29 August at 20:12

While the first sentence “we don't...than us” is presumably addressed to Yusuf Estes who can, from the perspective of the commenter, invite non-believers to Islam, the second sentence sounds like an advertisement in which the user requests the reader to “like” two Facebook pages. One Facebook page is “Snoop Dogg”, an American rapper, singer-songwriter (who converted to Islam); the other is “Mission Dawah”⁴⁵ aimed –according to its website- at “mobilising a network of *duaat* across the world to convey the message of Islam”.

⁴⁵ Link to Mission Dawah: <https://www.facebook.com/MissionDawah?ref=ts> Last accessed: 11th June 2015.

Another example of users advertising their Facebook pages can be found below; the user “Forsan Al-Islam” (literally meaning, the knight of Islam) also asks readers to “like” his/her Facebook page:

Example 4.4.

Assalamu Alikum (Hello) , my brothers and sisters, with your permission, help me and click on the Like in Islamic page ,, and if you are a Muslim and you love Islam and want to spread Islam among the people ? if Press Like / Thank you Peace ^^

In the above example, the user drew on the advertisement genre through using the directives “help me” and “click on” and the hypothetical statement/question “if you are...people” that is common in advertisements (e.g. see Myers, 2010, p. 82 on the use of questions in advertisements). Clicking the link the user provided leads to a Facebook page with a profile picture of a Sheikh kissing the Qur'an; the cover photo is an iconic image of Venice; the moon falls down the sky as the river glitters, the use of color and icons reveal that aestheticization appears to be a salient aspect of the Facebook page (see Figure 3).

The application has 155 reviews on Google Play, including a comment by Estes himself mentioning that he likes the application. Most of the comments are an expression of devotion (e.g. glorifying God and giving prayers to the developer of the application). A few comments, however, are suggestions which indicate that some Muslims are imagining a (global) Muslim community.

Example 4.5.

A Google User- 5 October 2012

Mashallah This is the BEST app. I just wish that you could actually see the shiekh while talking becoss it does get tiring just staring at a black box with a "Pause" button. I'd prefer watching him (looking at him) But alhamdulillah i am an 11 yr old sister & this has TOTALLY gained my knowledge in Islam. Plus: I love the accent mashallah shiekh !!!

Another reviewer points out:

Example 4.6.

A Google User 24 November 2012

Ma Sha Allah Realy This App Is Very Use Full And It Will More Better If U can Ad 1More Option To share It To Any Network May Allah Bless U All Aameen

The above two comments suggests an appeal to a wider community of faith through the act of praying (i.e. May Allah bless U All) and through the recurrent practice of thanking and glorifying God (e.g. “Mashallah” and “alhamduallah”). This seems in line with research (e.g. El Nawawy and Khamis, 2009; Mandaville 2001a) that has pointed out that the Internet has enabled users to imagine or re-

imagine an *umma*, a global Muslim community. As is the case with Yusuf Estes, new media has helped popularize Hamza Yusuf's discourse.

4.4.2. Use of new media by Hamza Yusuf and his fans

Like Yusuf Estes, Hamza Yusuf has many online spaces, including his websites and his fan pages on Facebook. His website sandala.org includes the biography of Hamza Yusuf and a multi-media section that has audio files of sermons by Yusuf, news and events section that announces Hamza Yusuf forthcoming events and updates (e.g. new application offering free access to his sermons on mobiles). The web site also has a link to Hamza Yusuf's online store where users can buy his books and DVDS. This relates to an earlier discussion on commercialization being a characteristic feature of televangelism (Chapter 2).

The website also links to a blog which has some sermon notes and articles for Hamza Yusuf. Some articles touch upon topics Hamza Yusuf has previously discussed in his sermons; for instance, in one article "Ten Years Later: Reflections on my Post 9-11 Interview with Richard Scheinin in the San Jose Mercury", Hamza Yusuf argues that criticism of U.S. policies does not imply sympathy for terrorists and that "almost all (Muslims) are disgusted to see the devastation unjustly wrought in Islam's name"⁴⁶.

⁴⁶ <https://www.sandala.org/blog/ten-years-later-reflections-on-my-post-9-11-interview-with-richard-scheinin-in-the-san-jose-mercury-> Last accessed: 10th August 2015.

Besides his website, Hamza Yusuf has an “official” Facebook page and other Facebook pages created by his fans (see Figure 4 of his official Facebook page).



Figure 4.5. The “official” Facebook page of Hamza Yusuf

The Facebook page links to his website Sandala.org; in his profile picture, he poses, as he smiles, facing the viewer; the “cover page” is an image of the sea, the mountain, and the sky, which seem to evoke tranquility and spirituality.

Moreover, he has two other fan pages on Facebook; “Shaykh Hamza Yusuf in Malaysia” which re-mediate YouTube sermons by Hamza Yusuf and/or follow Yusuf events and updates (e.g. his visit to Malaysia held from 28th August to 4th

September 2014) and “Hamza Yusuf, Birmingham Wants You”⁴⁷ that rather has a cause: “to bring this great scholar to us Muslims in the UK” and is dedicated to him and “all those who have benefited from Shaykh Hamza Yusuf”. It is interesting to note that while the Facebook page “Birmingham Wants You” carries the name of Hamza Yusuf, it posts quotations by other preachers and scholars. One post, for example, is a poem by Rumi:

Example 4.7.



Shaykh Hamza Yusuf- Birmingham Wants You

Your calling of my name is My reply
Your longing for Me is My message to you.
All your attempts to reach Me
Are in reality My attempts to reach you.
Your fear and love is a noose to catch Me.
In the silence surrounding every call of 'Allah'
Waits a thousand replies of 'Here I am'
Mevlana Jalaludin Rumi

⁴⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/ShaykhHamzaYusuf?fref=ts#!/pages/Shaykh-Hamza-Yusuf-Birmingham-Wants-You/376831339087567?fref=ts>
Last accessed: 6th June 2015

The use of a quotation by Rumi, the famous Sufi poet, indicates that to some users, Hamza Yusuf relates to spirituality and Sufism. This relates to the theoretical framework of “space-time” distanciation discussed earlier (2.3. Media power) in which media outputs can be taken up and appropriated differently by different users or groups of people (p.30-33). In other words, the fan page of Yusuf or its administrator has actively engaged in attributing the dimension of spirituality to Hamza Yusuf through relating him to Rumi.

Blogspots are another space used by Hamza Yusuf's fans. One blogger, Noora Deen, for instance, has dedicated a blog for Hamza Yusuf. The banner of her blog reads “How my sister and I rediscovered the traditional Islamic Knowledge our forefathers used to teach thanks to the lectures and writings of Shaykh Hamza Yusuf and how this journey changed our lives”. In her first post to the blog, published in December 26, 2012, Noora Deen explains why she has started this blog:

Example 4.8.

In this blog I will introduce you to Mauritania (my home land) and speak to you about people who share inspirational verses of the Kuran, Hadiths and stories of the Sunnah and swap Hamza Yusuf lectures in order to keep trying to better themselves and be closer to Allah Almighty. I will also speak about the encounters I have had with many muslims, muslims to be and non-muslims who have changed my life, if my journey carries any interest for you please feel welcome to join and to share with me your thoughts.

A remarkable aspect in the above example is that the user imagines a global audience not only of Muslims but also of non-Muslims, i.e. “I will speak about the encounters I have had with many Muslims... and non-Muslims who have changed my life”. This relates to the conceptualization of the *umma* discussed earlier (see 3.6.1. The meanings of umma) which in one of its meanings is not enclosed upon the Muslim communities but refers to humanity by large, as can be seen in the religious pluralism of Medina that encompassed not only Jews and Muslims but also non-believers. As the analytical chapters will further demonstrate, each of the three televangelists creates a distinct representation of the Muslim community or the *umma*.



Figure 4.6. One blogger, Noora Deen, from Mauritania, dedicates her blog to Hamza Yusuf

In her blog, Noora Deen links to Hamza Yusuf's blog and another blog entitled "Shaykhy notes"⁴⁸ (i.e. the notes of my preacher) which publishes excerpts for Muslim preachers; the user "Arfan Shah", from the United Kingdom, introduces his blog as a "unique blog that features videos and notes given by top traditional Muslim scholars". In the following, I move on to address the use of new media by Baba Ali.

4.4.3. Use of new media by Baba Ali

Like Hamza Yusuf and Yusuf Estes, Baba Ali uses new media including Facebook and YouTube to maintain an online visibility. His Facebook page has 19,689 likes and defines Baba Ali as an "artist" and "arguably ...the Muslim world's first Internet celebrity with his edgy video blogs, which has been watched by millions world wide". It links to his website Half Our Deen, a dating website he created to help Muslims find their partners. Baba Ali's YouTube channel "Umma films" is another important medium; his YouTube channel has up to date 74,251 subscribers and 15,241,802 views.

Characteristic of his Facebook page is the use of graphics and images which relates to aestheticisation, as a feature of infotainment. In the figure below, broadcast on 5th September 2013, advice about marriage is given where a man and a woman stand on one side of a road. The comment on the picture serves as an

⁴⁸ <http://sheikhynotes.blogspot.co.uk/> Last accessed 6th June 2015.

“anchorage” allowing the reader to “choose between what could be a confusing number of possible denotative meanings” (Rose 2007: 87), i.e. an advice to married couples on the importance of “being together”. An interesting feature of the image is that it carries the logo of Baba Ali's dating website, “Half Our Deen” which is being linked to in the comment section on the right hand side.

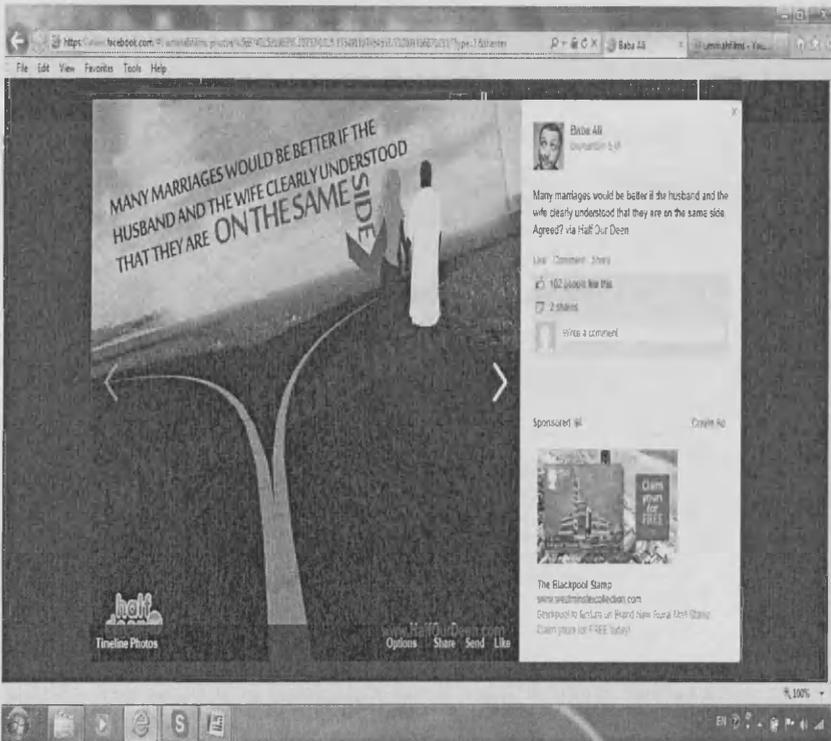


Figure 4.7. Marriage advice on the Facebook page of Baba Ali, linking to Baba Ali's dating websites

Another online space of Baba Ali is a website for acting and stand-up comedy, <http://alilandup.com/>; through which Baba Ali presents himself as “a stand-up comedian” and advertises his coming “tour dates”.

Interestingly, Baba Ali has a page on “kick-starter”, the crowd-funding platform, in which Ali, together with another actor, Omar Regan, raise funds to establish “Halal y wood” movies that aim to educate “the masses about Islam”. The web page features a trailer by Baba Ali and Omar Morgan entitled “American Sharia” a movie that will be produced in 2015. The brief plot summary of “American Sharia” on IMDB⁴⁹ suggests that the movie takes place against a background of profiling every Muslim as “a terrorist”. On kick-starter, the project has secured 122, 102 thousand dollar out of a target of 115,000.



Figure 4.8. The trailer of “American Sharia” on Kick Starter, securing \$122.102

4.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have sought to gain an understanding of the dynamics of religion online and what changes occur to religious understanding and practice

49 http://www.imdb.com/title/tt3889450/plotsummary?ref=tt_ov_pl Last accessed: 6th June 2015

when it meets new media. One aspect that I was able to demonstrate is that the Internet has become a scope for extending the visibility of different voices on religion online. I have drawn upon two up-to-date examples: the Facebook page of the Vatican that mirrors in its interests, its website; and the Facebook page, Jewish Voice for Peace that emerged as an important independent source of information and expression of political/religious views during the recent conflict in Gaza (2014).

Another important aspect that the Internet has given rise to is the creation of a hybrid form of religious practice where users can experience traditional aspects of religious rituals (e.g. praying, singing hymns in a choir) and online culture; for instance, users can practice online rituals in the time they choose, and can leave without offending the pastor.

When the Internet has widened the scope of religious expression, one aspect I have demonstrated is how televangelists' fans appear to play an active role in disseminating televangelists' discourses; this shows, for instance, in the example of the user creating an application for Yusuf Estes and users linking to Hamza Yusuf's sermons in their blogs. As I will elaborate in Chapter 8 of the thesis, the YouTube comments following Baba Ali's videos demonstrate that users are actively engaging in interpreting and negotiating some of his views, for example, on the conflation between cultural practices and Islam.

Another aspect this chapter has exemplified is that the mediation of televangelists' sermons and updates benefits from the infrastructure of Web 2.0

communication, convergence being one aspect of it. As Barton and Lee (2013:7) comment, the convergence of writing spaces in social media present “new opportunities for easy creation, posting, and sharing of multimodal texts such as sharing a video from YouTube with a self-generated written description posted on Facebook” (p. 7). This accounts for the fact that televangelists' followers/fans play an active role in their popularity, through re-mediating or re-creating their content or linking to them among their networks. This shows for instance, in the example of a user creating an android application to further popularize Yusuf Estes' sermons or Noora Deen linking to another blogger from the UK who follows Yusuf's sermons. In addition, the convergence between different media forms has helped televangelists “link” to their websites and online spaces; for instance, in his website, Hamza Yusuf has a link to his online store and Baba Ali's Facebook page links to his website “Half Our Deen”.

The chapter has also identified two practices related to the reception and consumption of televangelists' online discourses (e.g. Facebook posts). First, some users seek televangelists' Facebook pages as as a devotional space, for example, to glorify God. Second, other users approach televangelists' Facebook pages as a platform for advertising their own Islamic pages on Facebook. This testifies to the widening of the scope of religious authority by giving individuals the opportunity to claim authority and speak for/to Muslims, through the use of new media. Another salient aspect is the imagination of a global community of Muslims, as shown in the introductory comment by the blogger Noora Deen and in the comments following Yusuf Estes' android application, created by one of his fans.

The examination of the online spaces of the selected televangelists suggests- in addition- that users give meanings to televangelism. To illustrate, to the administrator of the Facebook page “Hamza Yusuf: Birmingham Wants You”, Hamza Yusuf seems to be linked to the realm of spirituality. The self-presentation strategies of the three televangelists will be further discussed in Chapter 6 of the thesis. In the following chapter, I present the methodological frameworks I have employed in the PhD thesis.

Chapter 5: Methodologies

This study is situated in the discipline of Critical Discourse Studies which explores the relationship between language, power and ideology. According to CDS, “language is not powerful on its own- it gains power by the use people make of it and by people who have access to language means and public fora” (Baker et al 2008: 280). Therefore, the popularity that the three televangelists have acquired raises an important question about the many and manifold reasons that might have contributed to televangelists' popularity and the discursive strategies they draw upon in their self-representation and Muslim identities' construction.

More specifically, this study draws on a synergy of two approaches to CDS, namely the Discourse Historical Approach (e.g. Wodak 2011) and the theory of Visual Grammar (e.g. Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996). It is thus important at this point to give a brief synopsis of these two approaches. As I will explain below, the DHA is an approach to language analysis that pays particular attention to the socio-political and historical contexts surrounding discourse (e.g. the situational contexts surrounding the speech event and the broader historical contexts of the discourse/phenomena in question) apart from analyzing the linguistic, pragmatic and rhetorical-argumentative details of text and talk (see Angouri and Wodak, 2014). The Theory of Visual Grammar focuses on examining the communicative potential of images and their ideological effects (see Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996: 12).

The aim of this chapter is twofold: first, to justify the use of the DHA and the Theory of Visual Grammar as an analytical framework and second, to explain the theoretical underpinnings of these two approaches. Thematically, the chapter is divided into three main sections. First, I will elaborate on the genre of religious preaching and televangelism, which will enable me to explain how the DHA, with its interest in the socio-historical contexts of discourse, is a suitable framework for examining televangelists' sermons, both as a hybrid and novel genre. Second, having traced the development of religious preaching, I will elaborate on the theoretical underpinnings of the DHA and the theory of Visual Grammar. Important concepts I will draw upon are "ideology", "power" and "critique". In the last section, I will explain the analytical categories I will employ in the analytical chapters of the thesis.

5.1. The genre of religious preaching

In order to justify the choice of the DHA as a theoretical framework, it is important to obtain an understanding of the genre of religious preaching, its main characteristic features and its development, and to contextualize televangelism within the broad genre of religious preaching. While there have been a few studies that have focused on the genre of religious preaching and its development (e.g. Gaffney, 2004; Swartz, 1999), these studies have focused on different eras of Islamic histories, which gives us insights into the developments of Islamic religious preaching.

Gaffney (2004) focuses on the *khutba*, a generic Arabic term used for the sermon genre. Historically speaking, the *khutba* goes back to the life of the Prophet Mohamed and has occurred on many occasions including Friday prayers, festival days or in response to natural phenomena such as drought or eclipse (Gaffney, 2004). Gaffney (2004) describes the *khutba* as an “authoritative” genre since it was first limited to the caliph himself or his official representatives (ibid. p. 1). As the author informs us, performance (e.g. as manifest in staging and dress code) has been integral to the sermon. Traditionally, the sermon was staged in a distinct physical setting such as a grand or “cathedral” mosque “distinguished by its central location, extraordinary dimensions and monumental architecture” (ibid. p. 1). The preacher stood on a pulpit or *minbar* “several meters high and frequently impressively built and adorned” (Gaffney ibid.). There were fixed rubrics that accompanied the sermon, for example, the preacher gave the sermon “while leaning on a bow, a sword or a staff” (ibid. p. 2).

While Gaffney (2004) appears to focus on religious preaching in the early stages of Islamic history, Swartz (1999) addresses religious preaching in medieval Islam. The author gives particular attention to work by a twelfth century scholar from Baghdad named Ibn al-Jawzi; he was a prolific writer of more than a hundred homiletical works. The study discusses and analyzes two books for the author, namely *Ruus al-Qawarir* and *Kitab al-Mudhish* (ibid. p.38). The author points out that *Ruus al-Qawarir* is particularly important since it appears to have been written at a later stage of Ibn al-Jawzi scholarship and as such “it expresses views and perspectives that had been tested over many years in the public arena” (ibid. p. 39). This is because Ibn al-Jawzi was a prolific writer and a leading scholar of

homiletical work and as such the author assumes that Ibn al-Jawzi's style was popular in the domain of preaching in twelfth century Baghdad. In fact, the book is intended "as manuals to be studied by those who wished to become masters of the art of preaching" (ibid. p. 38); hence its relevance in throwing light on the art of Islamic preaching in medieval Islam. The author points out that the homily was a highly stylized genre that consisted of elements such as rhyme scheme, metaphors and figures of speech and included lines of poetry, which were introduced in the homily in a very structured and systematic manner (see below). Thus, reviewing the sub-genres of the homily gains significance, since this will enable us to assess the novelty of televangelism as a genre, and the relevance of the DHA to sermon analysis.

One sub-genre in Ibn al-Jawzi's homily is the *Khutba* (sermon), which serves as an introductory element. It starts with the "exaltation and praise of God" and concludes with a verse fragment from the Qur'an that matches the "*khutba*'s rhyme scheme" (ibid. pp. 41-42). Unlike the sermon in contemporary times (see below), a characteristic feature of the Jawzian *khutba* is that "it does intend primarily to admonish, instruct, censure or reprove". It is "an invitation to worship and a celebration of God's greatness" (ibid. p. 42). Moreover, the *khutba* draws heavily on metaphors and figures of speech (ibid.). The following excerpt from a Jawzian *Khutba* is an illustration:

Praise to God who raised aloft the heaven...who preserves them from fissure (*futur*) and deviation (*fujur*) and who adorns them with stars like a necklace (*iqd*)...more beautiful than a gilded fabric studded with pearls. He is who

placed the earth upon turbulent waters, who established it firmly with mountains as a place of refuge (ibid. p.43).

The use of figures of speech in the above excerpt, for example, the comparison of the beauty of stars to a necklace points to one feature Swartz (1999) emphasized, namely that the *khutba* was a stylized genre (ibid.). He remarks that the figures of speech in the Jawzian homily were taken “from nature or have to do in some way with natural phenomena” (ibid. p. 42); for example, in one piece of his homily, Ibn al-Jawzi speaks of spring as a time “when gardens smile like the smiling of the beloved when the absent lover returns” (ibid.).

The second sub-genre of the homily is the *qissa* (or story) in which Ibn al-Jawzi relates to “events of the past of special religious significance, particularly those events having to do with the lives of the prophets and the history of the revelation” (p. 43). Swartz (1999: 43) observes that unlike the *khutba*, the *qissa* is “composed in a relatively straightforward prose style, frequently interspersed with lines of poetry”.

Another important genre of medieval homily is *waaz* or admonition, which remains an important genre in contemporary religious discourse (see below). Characteristic of admonition is the use of fear as a discursive strategy. This can be seen in the themes that Ibn al-Jawzi addressed which tackled “the transient nature of human existence, the illusory character of material possessions and the emptiness of life devoted to the pursuit of pleasure” (p. 44). Unlike other sub-genres of the homily, the admonition includes direct address to the audience,

through the use of formulaic expressions such as *ya ikhwani* (O my brothers) and *ya nas* (O people!). The fourth aspect of the homily is *khawatim* (conclusions) which represents the concluding section of the homily and “consisted of the recitation of verses of poetry” (p. 45).

The comparison of the Jawzian homily to contemporary Islamic preaching leads to a comparison of two genres of religious preaching that have gained visibility: *waaz* (admonition) and televangelism. In the following, I will review studies on the contemporary *waaz* genre (e.g. Hirschkind 2001; 2012) and compare it to televangelism.

A study that has explored contemporary religious preaching is Hirschkind (2001) who identifies the rise of the cassette sermon in Egypt since the 1970s and till now; it has become "one of the most widely consumed media forms among lower-middle and middle-class Egyptians" (ibid. p. 625). Hirschkind interviewed some audiences of cassette sermons as well as preachers to gain an insight into the characteristics of the contemporary sermon genre. One aspect that the participants in the study underscore is that fear is used as a main discursive strategy in contemporary *khutba*. In the following excerpt, Hirschkind (2012) explains the role of a preacher (*khatib*) in this genre of fear-inspiring *khutba* as he comments on one of his informants, Sheikh Subhi:

For the *khatib*, the challenge of enabling the listener to attain the proper affective disposition must be addressed in terms of rhetorical technique...The *khatib* (preacher) must shake listeners from their state of

lassitude (*futur*), stillness (*sukun*) and fatigue (*humud*). Death is the subject most capable of achieving this. What is needed, according to Subhi, are images of death that are “full of fear and terror, that startle and frighten people out of their slackness and immobility” (ibid. p. 631).

Another feature of *waaz* (admonition) in contemporary religious discourse is that it draws heavily on the use of Qur'anic recitations and Qur'anic narratives. To illustrate, in another study, Hirschkind (2012) analyses YouTube *khutba* and explores one sermon by the Egyptian preacher Mohamed Hassan; the sermon was video-recorded in a mosque and re-mediated on YouTube. True to the *waaz* genre, Hassan invokes the theme of death and Judgment and the sermon primarily consists of Hassan's recitation of Qur'anic verses that deal with these themes (ibid. p.8). I would like to juxtapose the genre of *waaz* and televangelists' sermons. While the sermons of the three televangelists examined in the study included Qur'anic references and allusions, they primarily touched upon topics that have relevance to Muslims in the West, for example, the misrepresentation of Islam in media and how Muslims should deal with non-Muslims. Baba Ali tackled topics that can squarely fall into the domain of social counseling, including marriage and friendship; these topics fall outside the realm of the *waaz* genre aimed at invoking fear through addressing topics such as death and the perils facing a believer on the Day of Judgment. As I will demonstrate in the following chapters, one aspect that characterizes televangelists' sermons is that they are open to many discourse topics on religion, society and politics (see Chapter 8). For example, in his sermon “Why the West needs Islam”, Yusuf Estes invokes topics and sub-topics on the

misunderstanding of Islam, black/white racism and the presidential elections of 2008 in the US.

Another element that differentiates televangelism from the fear-inspiring *khutba* is that in the latter, little attention is given to the visual aesthetic element. As Hirschkind (2012) rightly comments, the fear-inspiring sermon tends to be "visually quite basic". Hirschkind cites an example of a YouTube excerpt by the preacher Muhammad Hassan; the sermon "was filmed with a hand-held camera by a member of the mosque congregation during a Friday sermon and the image is jerky and at times out of focus" (ibid. p. 12). This can be juxtaposed with the sermons of the three televangelists in which visual aesthetics are manifest either in their self-representation and performance (Chapter 6) and sometimes in how these televangelists are represented by their audiences (Chapter 4).

Despite the apparent differences between televangelism and *waaz*, both are rather aimed at entertainment (e.g. Howell, 2008; Lotfy, 2009). As Hirschkind (2001) comments, "many cassette sermon listeners were engaging in the practice as a form of entertainment, for the pleasure of the emotional experience produced through audition" (ibid. p. 630).

In terms of style, televangelists also appear to be different from the preachers of the *waaz* genre. For example, if Mohamed Hassan, the preacher discussed above wears a traditional garb or *jilbab*, the three televangelists wear- in many performances- modern attire: a jacket in the case of Yusuf Estes, a suit in the case of Hamza Yusuf and a t-shirt in the example of Baba Ali (see Chapter 6). In

addition, the three televangelists use informal non-literary language. This can be differentiated from the highly stylized tradition of the *waaz* genre abundant with metaphors and figures of speech.

As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, the three televangelists have online visibility on Facebook, blogspots and websites. This has implications for the data selected for analysis. In exploring the self-representation strategies of the three televangelists, I have explored a repertoire of data that are relevant to the self-representation of each televangelist, including excerpts/sermons by televangelists on YouTube, posts on televangelists' websites and YouTube comments by users (see Chapter 6). For example, the observation of Estes' online visibility indicates that one salient aspect in his self-representation is his ability to convert (attract?) non-Muslims to Islam. His interest in conversion is evident not only in his website (where the main post is about his conversion to Islam) but also in some of his excerpts on YouTube in which he guides non-Muslims to utter *shahada* (the belief in Islam) (see section 6.1.4.). The observation of Baba Ali's performance indicates that he represents himself as a “funny guy”. This self-representation can be demonstrated not only in the unreal scenarios he creates in his sermons, for example, singing in front of airport security but also in the YouTube comments that follow his sermons, endorsing his identity as a comedian and funny guy (see 6.3.3). In other words, I have supported my observations on the performance of the three televangelists with as much information as possible to confirm the results. In doing so, I have relied on two main criteria for data collection: a) the representativeness of the data collected i.e. being a salient pattern in the performance of the televangelist and b) where relevant, the visibility of the

YouTube excerpts selected for analysis, judging by the number of views it has scored (e.g. see Angouri and Wodak, 2014: 546-548).

Having elaborated on the development of religious preaching, the differences between televangelism and *waaz* or admonition and the relevance of new media to televangelism, I would like to focus on the choice of the DHA and the theory of Visual Grammar as an analytical framework. First, the DHA with its multi-layered analysis of the “context” of discourse (see below) enables us to grasp the complexity of televangelists' sermons as a highly (hybrid) genre that weaves historical/religious references with contemporary topics in its fabric. This is because the DHA has focused on concepts such as interdiscursivity and intertextuality which are highly relevant to televangelists' sermons (see below). Second, over the past few decades, the DHA has deconstructed the practices of power, inclusion and exclusion (e.g. Baker et al 2008 on the representation of migrants; Wodak and Forchtner, 2014 on right-wing discourses in Austria as well as Angouri and Wodak, 2014 on the rise of the far-right in Greece and Wodak, 2015). The DHA has also focused on the question of identities' construction (e.g. Wodak et al 2009; Unger, 2013), hence its relevance to the topic of the PhD thesis which is about Muslim televangelists' self-representation, their performance and their representation of Muslim identities (Wagner and Wodak, 2006; Wodak, 2011; 2014; 2015). In fact, one contribution of the present study is that it further extends the application of the DHA to religious discourse which is little examined in Critical Discourse Studies (Chilton 2004: xii).

In addition to the DHA, I integrate the Framework of Visual Grammar to examine the performance of the three televangelists. As I pointed out above, performance has always been integral to the sermon genre; thus, it is worth clarifying this concept in the light of recent research. One of the pioneering scholars who put forth the concept of identity as “performance” is Goffman (1959). According to the author, life and social reality (e.g. how individuals interact in the world) can be conceived of as "a theater in which a show is staged on" (Messinger et al, 1975: 32). Another important scholar who popularized the concept of performance is Judith Butler. She drew on J. L. Austin's speech act theory and his differentiation between *constative utterances* which describe a situation (e.g. “It's a sunny day) and *performative utterances* (e.g. I name this ship Normandy) through which an action is performed. Butler (1990) suggests that -in a similar way to performing actions through uttering verbs- we “perform” identities, for example gender, through “a stylized set of acts”, norms and rituals (Butler, 1990: xv).

If identity is also performance -as Erving Goffman and Judith Butler inform us-then it is important to examine both verbal language and the visual features relevant to televangelists' self-representation (e.g. Wodak, 2011; 2015). This takes me to the following section in which I throw light on the theoretical underpinnings of the DHA and the Theory of Visual Grammar, before moving on to explain the analytical categories I will employ in the following chapters.

5.2. The DHA and the Theory of Visual Grammar

The DHA and the framework of Visual Grammar fall under the umbrella of CDS. CDS perceives discourse (language in use) as “social practice”. The following quotation by Wodak and Fairclough (1997) can serve as an illustration:

CDA sees discourse-language use in speech and writing – as a form of “social practice”. Describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s), and social structure (s), which frame it. The discursive event is shaped by them but it also shapes them. That is, discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned- it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people” (Wodak and Fairclough 1997: 258).

Important concepts in CDS are “ideology”, “power” and “critique”. Ideology can be defined as “representations of aspects of the world which contribute to establishing and maintaining relations of power, domination and exploitation” (Fairclough 2003: 218). Ideology is enacted through linguistic realizations, conveying attitudes and mental representations that shape and/or re-shape social practice. As Wodak and Meyer (2009) put it, ideologies “hold on to assumptions”; for example, gendered discourse may assume men and women speak differently (Harrington et al 2008: 10). Another important concept in CDS is “power” which refers to “an asymmetric relationship among social actors who assume different

social positions" (Reisigl and Wodak, 2009: 88). One aim of CDS is to explore how power is legitimised (or de-legitimised) through discourse and how unequal power relations are produced and reproduced (Reisigl and Wodak, *ibid.* 88–89). Therefore, CDS is aimed at “critique” through “produc(ing) and convey(ing) critical knowledge that enables human beings to emancipate themselves from forms of domination through self-reflection” (Wodak and Meyer 2009: 7).

In the present study, “critique” entails exploring how televangelists' sermons relate to the broader contexts in which their discourses are produced and re-produced (e.g. the use of new media technologies and the rise of anti-Muslim discourse in the West). It also entails adopting a critical approach to the phenomenon of televangelism by exploring: a) how the three televangelists legitimize their authorities, *inter alia*, as media celebrities (Chapter 6) and b) what sort of discourses (e.g. topics, themes, arguments) they produce to represent and construct Muslim identities (Chapter 7 to 9). It is worth noting that the DHA considers discourse to be a) socially constituted and socially constitutive b) related to a macro-topic and c) linked to argumentation (Reisigl and Wodak, 2009: 89). Hence, argumentation strategies or *topoi* are addressed in the theoretical framework of the DHA (see below).

Another relevant aspect of the DHA is that it pays particular attention to the context of discourse. The DHA conceives of context as a multi-layered concept that takes into account four levels (Wodak, 2001: 67):

- 1- The immediate language or text-internal co-text and co-discourse
- 2- The intertextual and interdiscursive relationship between utterances, texts, genres and discourses

- 3- The extralinguistic social variables and institutional frames of a specific "context of situation"
- 4- The broader sociopolitical and historical context, (in) which (the) discursive practices are embedded and related to.

To illustrate the above, one level of context is the immediate language, which can include an analysis of the use of nomination, predication, and argumentation strategies, among others (see below for further elaboration). The second level of context is the intertextual and interdiscursive relationships between texts/genres. Interdiscursivity indicates that discourses can be linked to discourses on other topics or sub-topics; intertextuality refers to the link to other texts through invoking a topic, an event or a main actor; for instance, discourse on climate change may contain discourses on finance and health and discourse on exclusion can possibly link to discourses on education and employment (e.g. Reisigl and Wodak, 2009: 90–93; Richardson and Wodak, 2009: 46). A “genre” may be described as “a socially ratified way of using language in connection with a particular type of social activity” (Fairclough 1995: 14) and a “text” may be characterised as “a specific and unique realization of a discourse” (Richardson and Wodak, 2009: 46). The third level of context is the extralinguistic social/institutional context; it refers to all aspects of a situation (in which the discursive event is embedded), for instance whether it is a formal/informal event, the place and date in which the speech event occurred, the recipients of discourse and their social and political background/context (cf. Blackledge, 2005: 18). In the case of televangelism, this entails an investigation of elements such as staging,

gestures and the video-edition of the speech, which I investigate using the theory of Visual Grammar, hence integrating the two approaches.

In exploring the immediate language, the DHA pays attention to particular discursive strategies addressed in the following questions (Wodak 2001: 72):

- How are persons, objects, phenomena/events, processes and actions named and referred to linguistically?
- What characteristics, qualities and features are attributed to social actors, objects, phenomena/events and processes?
- What arguments are employed in the discourse in question?
- From what perspective are these nominations, attributions and arguments expressed?
- Are the respective utterances articulated overtly; are they intensified or mitigated?

The above questions serve as discourse analytical tools to explore the discursive strategies of nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivisation, intensification, and mitigation. A strategy refers to “a more or less accurate and more or less intentional plan of practices (including discursive practices) adopted to achieve a particular social, political, psychological or linguistic aim” (Wodak, 2001: 73).

In the DHA – as in CDS broadly speaking – discourse refers to a “semiotic” entity that can include verbal and visual features (e.g. Reisigl and Wodak, 2009:

89). This gives way to the analysis of the visual features of televangelists' sermons. This takes me to addressing the main theoretical prisms of the theory of Visual Grammar.

Drawing on Systemic-Functional Linguistics, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996: 2) proposed that images – in a similar way to verbal language – can denote action in what they termed “visual structure”, i.e. “interpretations of experience and forms of social interaction”. To exemplify, in a narrative visual structure, participants (things/persons) are represented as being involved in an action through a line of directionality or “vector” linking the “Actor” (the doer of the action) to the “Goal” (the affected participant) (see figure 5.1. below).

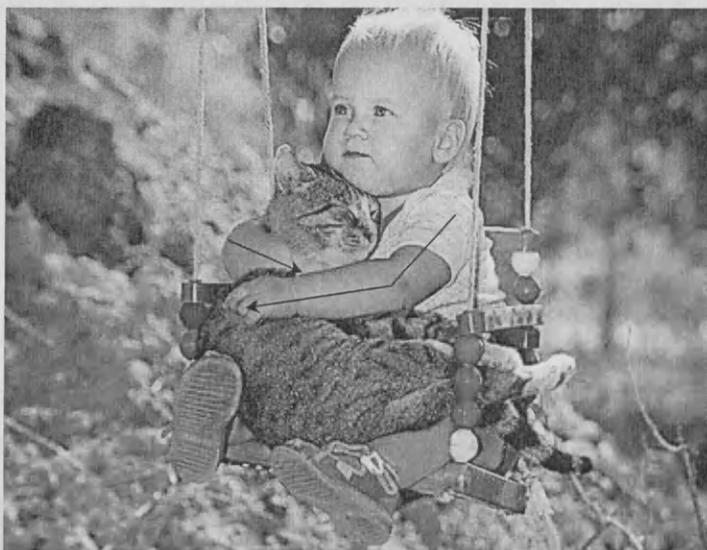


Figure 5.1. Illustrating vectors or the lines of directionality⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Source of the photo: <http://www.fanpop.com/clubs/cats/images/37043536/title/awwww-how-cute-photo>
Last accessed 6th June 2015.

As can be seen in the above image, the Child (Actor) is hugging the cat (Affected Participant); the arrows represent the line of directionality or vectors in which the child is surrounding the cat with his arms.

Having explained the theoretical underpinnings of the DHA and the theory of Visual Grammar, below I expand on the analytical categories I employ in the thesis.

5.2.1. Nomination and predication strategies

As I indicated earlier (Chapter 3), an important discursive strategy related to identities' construction is the creation of in-groups and out-groups; hence the relevance of nomination (how objects are named) and predication (how objects are described). As Reisigl and Wodak (2001: 45) assert, the way particular groups or persons are linguistically named can carry ideological meaning. One extreme example is the use of the word “nigger” to refer to blacks, which is a racist term. In-groups and out-groups can be constructed through explicit and implicit evaluative attributions of negative or positive traits (Reisigl and Wodak, 2009, p. 95). To illustrate the above, in their study on the representation of Muslims in the British press, Baker et al (2013) pointed out that Muslims in British press are treated as a monolithic entity that is fallaciously homogenized. For instance, one recurrent term used in relation to Muslims is “Muslim community” prefaced by the definite article “the”, constructing Muslims “as a single, homogeneous mass” (ibid. p. 124). Moreover, the term Muslim community occurs with collocates such as “antagonize”, “offensive” and “upset”, which represent “the Muslim community as

having the potential to be offended” (ibid. p. 126), negatively predicating them. Baker et al (2013) showed how Muslims are represented as “the Other”. Their findings are in line with earlier research (e.g. Richardson 2004 and 2006) which pointed out that the terms “Islam” and “West”; and “Muslim” and “Westerner” are represented as two different “cultural camps” in the British press (Richardson, 2004, p.113).

One question this study explores is how the categories Islam/Muslims and the West/Westerners are named and predicated (see Chapter 7). The focus on these two categories, namely Islam and West is predicated on the post 9-11 context in which Islam and the West are frequently homogenized and represented as antithetic entities (see Richardson, 2004; Baker et al 2008), hence it is important to examine how the three televangelists represent Islam/Muslims and West/Westerners against this background.

As I will elaborate in Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 of the thesis, the three televangelists adopt different ideological positions towards the West. While Hamza Yusuf, for example, fallaciously represents Islam and the West as two “different worlds”, he also represents them as two entities that could come closer. The following excerpt illustrates this. It occurs within a context of Yusuf's criticism of George Bush's government.

Example 5.1.

They (Americans) will stand up in one voice and I believe this in my heart and they would condemn and reject what is happening in their name...In the heart of the Americans is a love of truth, a love of justice and a love of

liberty and they believe these should be values and virtues that are promoted throughout the world.

In the first example, the clause “I believe this in my heart” intensifies the claim made by the speaker; the clause also makes “they” (Americans) a close entity whom the speaker has an insight into. Positive representation of Americans is communicated through the repetition of the affective word “love” (he could have said love of truth, justice and liberty) and the use of the nouns “values” and “virtues”, themselves positive implicit predicates. In other words, one macro-strategy with reference to the representation of Muslims and Americans in the above text seems to be an intentional choice to refrain from the dichotomy of Us/Them.

5.2.2 Interdiscursivity, intertextuality and fields of actions

Two other questions I explore in the thesis are: a) the topics, texts and discourses the selected televangelists draw upon and to what effect; and b) the historical references (religious and non-religious) the three televangelists invoke in their sermons. The aim here is twofold: a) to identify the discourse topics that each televangelist regards as salient in his representation of Islam and Muslims and b) to underscore the historical eras and the religious texts each televangelist positively represents as part of the Muslim histories.

Analytical categories that are relevant here are “interdiscursivity”, “intertextuality” and “fields of actions”. Interdiscursivity indicates that discourses can be linked to other genres and discourses (e.g. see Reisigl and Wodak, 2009a:

90-93). Intertextuality refers to the link to other texts through invoking a topic, an event or a main actor (e.g. Richardson and Wodak 2009b, p. 46). Taking an element from its context is de-contextualization, while inserting it into a new context is re-contextualization (e.g. see Reisigl and Wodak, 2009: 90). As a result of this process of taking an element from one context (i.e. de-contextualization) and inserting it into a new context (i.e. recontextualization), the re-contextualized elements can partly acquire new meanings (e.g. Reisigl and Wodak, 2009: 90-93 and Richardson and Wodak, 2009b: 46). As for fields of actions, this can be defined as “a segment of social reality which constitutes the frame of a discourse” (Reisigl and Wodak, 2009: 90). Examples of fields of action include the formation of public opinion and attitudes, for instance, through speeches and press releases (Reisigl and Wodak *ibid.* p. 91). In addition, by linking to new sub-topics, new “fields of actions” can be created (e.g. Reisigl and Wodak, 2009: 90).

Fields of actions are deemed relevant to televangelists' representation of Islam/Muslims. In Chapter 9 of the thesis, I will demonstrate that there are fields of actions that are specific to each televangelist. For instance, whereas Yusuf Estes appears to focus on proselytization, Hamza Yusuf invokes change of political attitudes towards Bush's policies as a field of action. As for Baba Ali, he invokes change of attitude in the domain of personal relationships and family. One topic he criticises is the conflation of culture and Islam manifest in forced marriage.

5.2.3. Argumentation strategies

Another important discursive strategy relevant to televangelists' representation of Islam/Muslims is argumentation. Broadly speaking, *topoi* or

argumentation strategies in televangelists' sermons serve two functions: a) to construct a coherent representation of Islam and Muslims and b) to legitimize Islam/Muslims in the West. For example, one warrant employed by the three televangelists is that Muslims are in the West in large numbers, which leads to the conclusion rule that Muslims have the right to live in the West, hence employing numbers as *topos* (see below).

Since *topoi* is a debatable concept (e.g. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969 and Kienpointner 1996), in the following, I will start by defining the term, moving on to focus on the specific conception of *topoi* in the DHA.

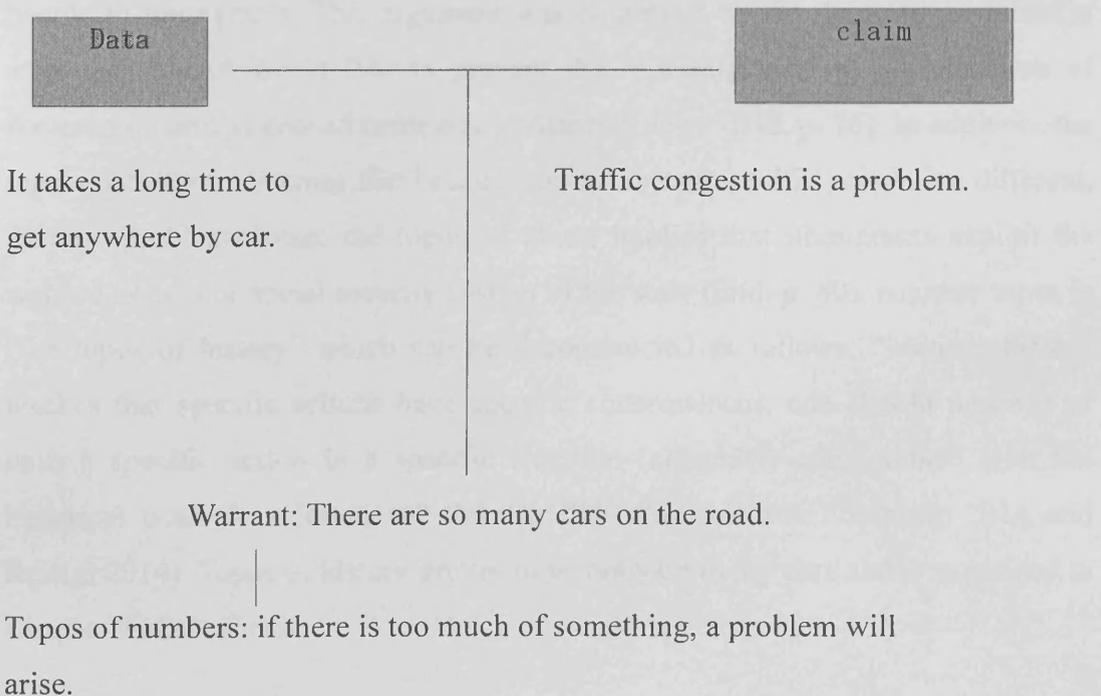
In one broad definition, *topoi* are "loci", i.e. "headings under which arguments can be classified (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969) or "search criteria for locating arguments" Kienpointner (1996: 226). From the point of view of pragma-dialectics, *topoi* are "argumentation tactics" used to advance an argument over one's opponent (Van Eemeren et al 1996: 38).

There are two types of *topoi*: formal and content related (e.g. Walton et al 2008). Formal *topoi* represent common types of inference structures that are used in everyday discourse (Walton et al, 2008: 1); for instance, argument from analogy and cause and effect. The premise in argument from analogy is that "case C1 is similar to case C2", then what is true/false in Case C1 is true false in Case C2 (Walton et al, 2008, p. 315). An example of argument from analogy is when we attempt to persuade a friend, for instance, to buy a particular brand of car in light of reports from other friends that this is a good car, hence employing analogy as

the warrant leading to the conclusion rule that “if friends have reported that this car is good, then by analogy the car you will buy must be good” (ibid.).

In the DHA, topoi are defined as “the formal or content-related warrants or conclusion rules which connect the argument (s) with the conclusion, the claim” (Keinpointner 1996: 75). More specifically, the DHA adopts the framework put forth by Toulmin (2003). According to the author, a warrant “is part of an argument structure that enables a transition to be made from evidence or data to a conclusion or claim” (Charteris-Black 2014:133; Toulmin ibid. pp. 89-91). The following figure, adapted from Charteris-Black (2014: 137), illustrates the argumentation structure in the DHA:

Figure 5.2. : Topos in the DHA



To clarify the above, in putting forth an evidence that “it takes a long time to get anywhere by car”, the topos of numbers can be inferred as we reach the claim/conclusion that “traffic congestion is a problem” (Charteris-Black, 2014:137). In other words, topoi in the DHA serve as warrants, i.e. “part of an argument structure that enables a transition to be made from evidence or data to the claim” (ibid. p. 133).

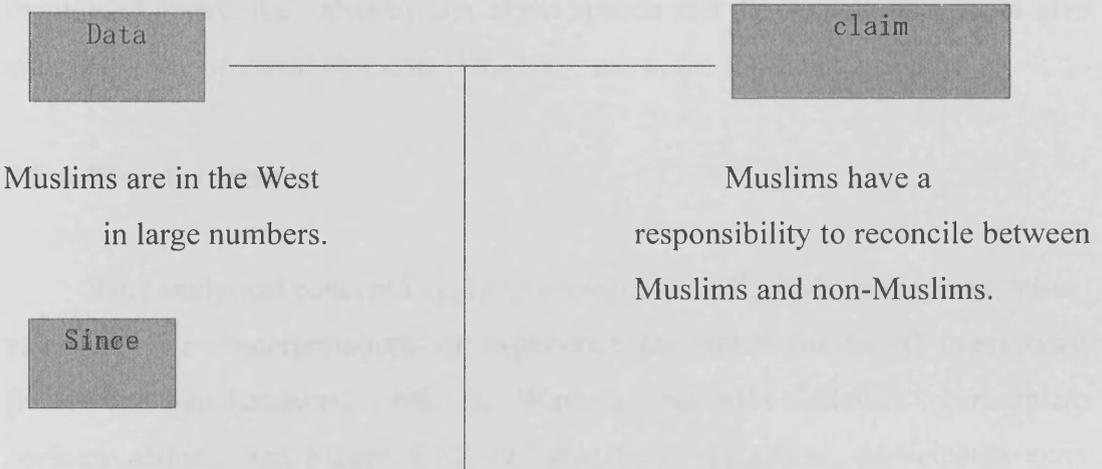
One important contribution of the DHA is that it has examined both content-related topoi and formal topoi. Thus, Reisigl and Wodak (2001: 72-78) have investigated salient discriminatory topoi used in discourses about migrants in Austria. For instance, the "topos of threat of racism" implies that the native population will not be able to cope with too many immigrants and will therefore be hostile to immigrants. This argument was employed by the Austrian government after the Second World War to prevent the re-immigration of or reparation of Aryanized (stolen) goods/businesses to Austrian Jews (ibid. p. 76). In addition, the topos of culture presumes that because the culture of specific people are different, specific problems arise; the topos of abuse implies that immigrants exploit the welfare system or social security system of the state (ibid. p. 80). Another topos is “the topos of history” which can be deconstructed as follows: “because history teaches that specific actions have specific consequences, one should perform or omit a specific action in a specific situation (allegedly) comparable with the historical example referred to” (Wodak 2001:76; also see Forchtner 2014 and Reisigl 2014). Topos of history proves to be relevant to my data and is examined in Chapter 9 of the thesis.

I cannot discuss argumentation structure without throwing light on the concept of “fallacy”, since it is related to the meaning-making process of the argumentation structure and its evaluation. Fallacies refer to “technique(s) of argumentation that (have) been used wrongly (abused) in such a way that it goes strongly against the legitimate goals of a dialogue” (Walton, 1992:77). For example, in order for an argument from an analogy to be valid the “two terms of an analogy must share the highest number of characteristics in order for the argument to be strong...If not the argument may default and thus prove to be fallacious” (Walton and Macagno, 2008: 49). This means that the context is important in determining whether or not a particular argument is fallacious. Walton (1992) argues that in an appeal to pity or argument *ad misericordiam*, the context of the dialogue can determine if the appeal to pity is used fallaciously (p.60). For example, in charity causes, it is legitimate to appeal to pity and what will trigger action is not the appeal to pity itself but other factors such as the credibility and reliability of the charity organization (p. 116). Similarly, in giving excuses, appeal to pity can either be put forward for consideration or be rejected as fallacious (p. 116-119).

One contribution of this PhD thesis is that it challenges one common assumption about religious discourse as problematic and irrational (see Davie 2007: 53 on the secularization thesis); and extends the application of argumentation analysis to religious discourse. I identify the argumentation strategies (topoi) used to represent Islam/Muslims (and West/Western). As I will demonstrate in the following chapters, although the three televangelists have different styles, there are recurrent arguments permeating their discourse, for

example, that Muslims are in the West in large numbers and that Muslims have contributed to (Western) civilization. I will clarify below with an example from my data by deconstructing the topos of numbers, for example, as used by Hamza Yusuf.

Figure 5.3. Use of topos of numbers by Hamza Yusuf



(Topos of numbers) If there is an abundance of a particular group, they can play an active role in the community in which they reside.

In the above figure, the topos of number is employed as a content-related warrant leading to the conclusion rule that since Muslims are in Europe and the US in large numbers, they carry responsibility to correct misconceptions about Islam (through assimilation with non-Muslims).

Another variation of the “topos of numbers”, as employed by Hamza Yusuf is that since Muslims are in the West in large numbers, they have the right to live and co-exist in the West.

While the above analytical categories focus on verbal language, as I mentioned above, the video-edition of the speech and the sermon as a genre give way to the use of visual elements. This takes me to the following sections.

5.2.4. Visual structure

One analytical concept I apply to televangelists' YouTube excerpts is “visual structure”, i.e. “interpretations of experience and forms of social interaction” (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996: 2). While in “narrative structure”, participants perform actions (see Figure 5.1.), in “analytical” structures, participants carry attributes rather than perform an action. A profile photo of a young girl may serve as an example. She will be the carrier of attributes, for example, the color of her hair, her pony tails and her complexion (cf. Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996: 45–87).

Other concepts that are relevant to the video-edition of televangelists' sermons are distance, angle and gaze. Distance refers to whether the shot is a long one or a close-up; a "long shot" represents people as if they are strangers; whereas people depicted in a "close-up shot" are shown as if they are "one of us" (Van Leeuwen, 2008:138). In addition, the angle through which the viewer sees the represented participants can reveal their power relation; while looking at someone from eye level signals equality, looking down on someone can indicate an

imaginary symbolic power over that person (ibid. p. 139). In the same vein, participants can be represented as directly addressing the viewer with their gaze or can be represented as objects for our scrutiny (Van Leeuwen, 2008: 140).

5.2.5. Dress code

Another element I examine in televangelists' performance is the use of dress code. According to Van Leeuwen (2005: 58-61), dress code has an important social meaning. Adopting an anthropological view, Van Leeuwen (ibid.) compared the social meanings of dress codes in some religious communities in the United States to some of the contemporary meanings of dress code in Western societies. Whereas in the Mennonite community in North Carolina and Pennsylvania, young girls have more freedom than married women in choosing what to wear, in contemporary Western consumer culture, dress codes “are certain accessories that signify change” in which “aspects of identity” signified by clothes are not related to constructs such as gender and age but seem to be rather related to “personality traits” such as “adventurous” and “calm” (ibid. p.62). For example, the following advertisement is taken from the website of New Look, a fashion store popular among youth, in which the t-shirt is commodified as being most suitable to those who love adventure.

White Love Adventure T-Shirt
 Now £3.00 Was £7.99

Sorry, this product is out of stock

✓ Free UK Delivery over £45
 📦 Free Click & Collect over £19.99

PRODUCT INFO	DELIVERY	FREE R
Product Code: 320701810 Stay stylish on dressed down days with this relaxed slogan tee. * Look with ripped skinnyies.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Simple short sleeves - Classic crew neckline - Slim fit - Soft cotton fabric - Model is 5'6"/176cm and wears UK 10/EU 38/US 6 		

ROLLOVER TO ZOOM Q FULL SIZE +

Figure 5.4. Love Adventure T-shirt on New Look

5.2.6. Gestures

Another element I examine is the use of gestures. Krauss, Chen and Gottesman (2000) provide a categorization of gesture types. Motor gestures are “simple repetitive rhythmic movements that bear no obvious relation to the semantic content of the accompanying speech” (ibid.) and tend to accompany speech prosody. Symbolic gestures have conventionalized meanings; examples of symbolic gestures would be holding finger to lips indicating “be quiet”. In addition, deictic gestures “consist of indicative or pointing movements, typically formed with the index finger extended and the remaining fingers closed”. The meaning of a deictic gesture is to indicate the things pointed to (ibid. 263). As for metaphorical gestures, they are visual representation of abstract ideas and

categories, e.g. displaying an empty palm hand may indicate "presenting a problem".

As I will illustrate in the following chapter, the use of gestures is a salient element in televangelists' performance. For example, both Hamza Yusuf and Yusuf Estes make use of the index finger to give emphasis to their claims and adopt the footing of authority. The following image for example is a Print Screen shot from a YouTube video in which Yusuf Estes converts a young man to Islam. Estes explains -to him- what Islam means; the use of the index finger together with the clutching of his right hand serve to position him as a figure of authority, which acts as an "anchorage" to the banner that reads "Sheikh Yusuf Estes", presenting Estes as a revered preacher .

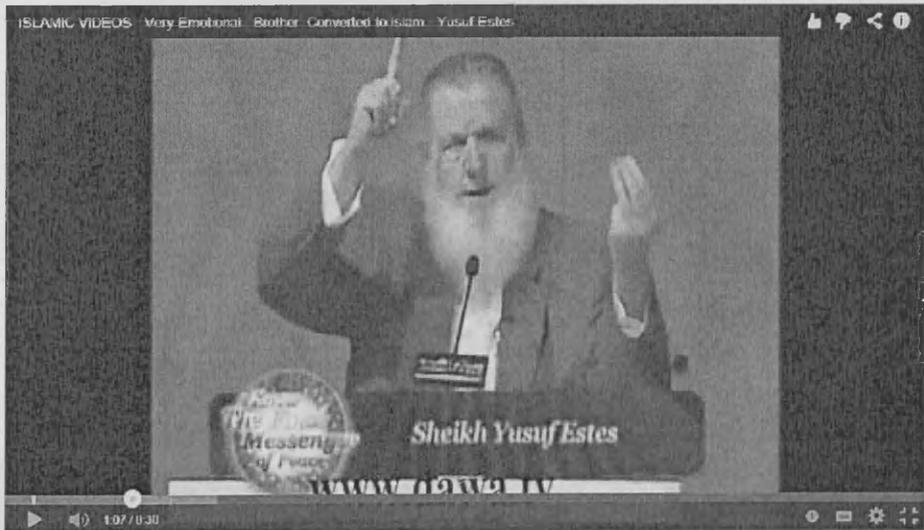


Figure 5.5. Estes' footing of authority

5.2.7. Frames

Following Goffman (1974: 10), I define frame as “principles of organization which govern events and our subjective involvement with them”. According to Riberio and Hoyle (2009), many contextualization cues can indicate change in frame, for example, choice of topic, voice quality and postural shifts. In Chapter 6, I examine an excerpt for Yusuf Estes in which he converts a young man to Islam. The use of frame serves to give a dramatic effect to Estes' performance (see 6.1.4. Estes, the proselytizer). To illustrate, in the YouTube video I will examine in Chapter 6 in which Estes proselytizes a young man, two frames occur in the video: 1) Estes stands at a podium talking to a young man (among the audience) explaining Islam to him and 2) Estes walking down the stage towards the young man, hugging him as he utters his belief in Islam. The contextualization cues that signal the transition between frames include Estes' movement towards the audience accompanied by the use of music indicating the shift to new action.

5.3. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have started by situating this study in the discipline of Critical Discourse Studies, pointing out that the study employs a synergy of the DHA and the theory of Visual Grammar. The first section of the chapter elaborated on the genre of religious preaching and televangelism. First, I have noted differences between the admonition genre which focuses on death and the Day of Judgment and televangelists' sermons that are relevant to the everyday life of Muslims. Second, the sermons of the three televangelists appear to be aimed at visual aesthetics unlike the *waaz* genre that is visually basic and focus instead on

the acoustic performance (e.g. weeping). This indicates the hybridity and complexity of televangelists' sermons which have become a multi-modal field. Moreover, the fact that the three televangelists have online visibility has implications for the development of the study as I draw on various data to investigate how the three televangelists construct their identities, including YouTube sermons, posts published in their online spaces and YouTube comments.

In the second section of this chapter, I discussed the relevance of the DHA to televangelists' sermons as it allows for the deconstruction of the layers of context surrounding televangelists' sermons, including verbal language and performance-related elements such as dress code and staging. Using DHA as an analytical framework also allows for the deconstruction of other discursive (and rhetorical) strategies such as the construction of in-groups and out-groups, the discourse topics and the fields of action each televangelist creates and televangelists' use of religious and historical references, among other aspects. Related to the above is that the DHA has particularly addressed the discursive construction of collective identities, hence its relevance to the topic of the study. Following on from this explanation, I have elaborated on the main analytical categories I employ in analyzing televangelists' sermons and their performance. In the following chapter, I move on to investigate the first research question of the study: How do the three televangelists self-represent their identities?

Chapter 6

Televangelists' self-representation strategies: Constructing multiple identities

One question I explore in the study is how the three televangelists self-represent their identities. However, I cannot examine the above question without contextualizing it in the complexity of televangelists' sermons being a hybrid genre that embeds many discourses, genres and sub-genres. As a discourse genre, televangelists' sermons are a highly interdiscursive fabric in which televangelists in many ways invoke discourse topics on religion, society and politics (see Chapter 8).

To illustrate the above, whereas politics is an anchor point for sermons by Hamza Yusuf, society or rather the criticism of Muslim societies is a main topic in Baba Ali's YouTube video-blogs. In addition, while personal narratives are featured in the performances of the three televangelists, it is heavily drawn upon by Yusuf Estes; for instance, in his sermon "Why the West needs Islam", Estes narrates stories about his childhood, employing discourse topics on racism in the 1940s to the 1960s in the United States, which serves his discursive strategy of the positive representation of US (Muslims) and the negative representation of Them (Americans) (see Chapter 8). In the same vein, the three televangelists draw- in varied ways- on entertainment-related features such as dramatization, music and sound effects.

If we use a metaphor here, a cooking one, we can compare televangelists' use of modes and genres to baking ingredients; the same ingredients (discursive and multi-modal) are drawn upon by the three televangelists; however, their performance and identities are different because they make use of different clusters of discourses and sub-genres that create for each televangelist a distinct representation.

To illustrate the above, the discourse topics Hamza Yusuf addresses contributes to his presentation as an intellectual, taking the latter to mean "a person of recognized intellectual attainments who speaks out in the public arena, generally in ways that call established society or dominant ideologies to account in the name of principle or on behalf of the oppressed" (Hewitt, 2003:145). One topic he invokes, for instance, is the unity of Abrahamic faith (e.g. The Unity Talk, Washington, September 2011⁵¹); he mentions that the word "merciful" (Rahman in Arabic) is related to the Hebrew word "Rakhm". In the same sermon, he argues that "Jews and the Muslims have a shared destiny as a people" and that "when the Jews were threatened by extinction in Andalusia, it was the Moroccans and Ottomans that said "come, come to us and the Jews in Morocco to this day, acknowledge that". Thus, he seeks to assert the unity of Muslims and Jews and to defy anti-semitic rhetoric by some Muslims (see KhosraviNik, 2010 on the anti-semitic rhetoric of Ahmadinejad). On another occasion, Yusuf argues that Holocaust denial undermines Islam and that "in acknowledging the pain of

⁵¹ Link to Hamza Yusuf's talk: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-LTW7Pz7N_RE Last accessed 17th May 2015

others... we achieve fully our humanity"⁵². By positioning Muslims and Jews in the same community of fate, Yusuf is taking a normative position of rejecting anti-Muslim discourses and, equally important, anti-semitic ones (e.g. see Reisiql and Wodak, 2001; KhosraviNik, 2010).

Moving on to Baba Ali's performance, unlike Hamza Yusuf, he makes more use of entertainment features and in part represents himself as an entrepreneur. His recent YouTube video-blogs start with a song that advertises a dating website he created "Half our Deen"; it draws its name from a religious saying "marriage is half our faith, *deen*". In a similar way to Estes and Yusuf, Ali invokes many discourses; for example, religious advice and social counseling/criticism. While in one video-blog, he warns against arrogance ("Arrogant People", broadcast January 2007⁵³), in another video blog, he offers a comedic sketch of idiosyncrasies he sees during Friday praying. In a boring sermon, one character falls asleep, another circulates photos, and a third reads the newspaper ("Funny Things You See During Jumma, broadcast June 2006⁵⁴).

Whereas Yusuf Estes and Hamza Yusuf construct their authorities, inter alia, as preachers, Baba Ali frequently repeats "I am just an ordinary brother reminding people and reminding myself", enacting his "ordinariness" and claiming a different type of authority (see below). However, while being a different profile from

⁵² Link to the article: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LTW7Pz7N_RE Last accessed 17th May 2015.

⁵³ Link to the video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9fka3Lu_pr0 Last accessed 17th May 2015.

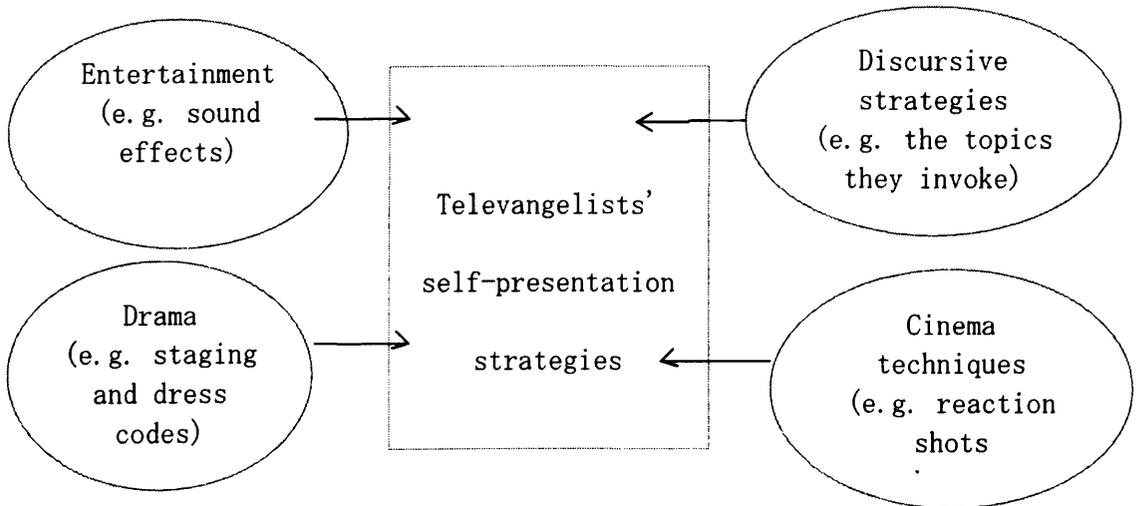
⁵⁴ Link to the video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3o6kpCLDMVg&index=1&list=PL409C23E2F903F8D3> Last accessed 17th May 2015.

Hamza Yusuf, for instance, he uses slang unlike Yusuf, he shares with him a call on an intellectual approach to Islam –yet he does not exactly specify what this entails. For instance, he argues that the Qur'an asks Muslims to think and reflect ("Why Islam", broadcast July 2007). In a similar way to Yusuf Estes and Hamza Yusuf, Baba Ali performs multiple identities- he is a comedian, an entrepreneur and a religiously-oriented speaker.

From the same perspective, we can examine Yusuf Estes' performance. In a similar way to Hamza Yusuf, he represents himself as a media celebrity. His speeches feature professional cameras capturing large theater halls and massive turnout of audiences. Like the other two televangelists, he seems aware of the importance of dress codes and gestures in staging his identities: as a preacher, proselytizer and media celebrity. In this way, the three televangelists draw upon the same modes. This can be summarized in Figure 1 below.

Figure 6.1. The modes that shape televangelists' performance



As can be shown in the above figure, the three televangelists draw on multiple modes and resources. One mode they draw upon is verbal language, for instance, through invoking particular discourse topics and argumentation strategies. As I will explain in this chapter, gestures, staging and dress codes are integral to the process of meaning-making by each televangelist. Entertainment effects are used; songs and sound effects are employed in Yusuf Estes' and Baba Ali's programs. The video-edition of the sermon also gives rise to the use of camera movement techniques, as the camera pans between the audience and the speaker in the case of Yusuf Estes and Hamza Yusuf or the alternation between medium and close-up shots in the case of Baba Ali. In the following, I will explore how the modes, genres and sub-genres employed by the three televangelists contribute to representation of multi-faceted identities. I start by exploring Yusuf Estes' performance, moving on to Hamza Yusuf's and Baba Ali's performances.

6.1. Yusuf Estes: A Preacher, a Media Celebrity and a Proselytizer

One characteristic aspect of Yusuf Estes' performance is his self-representation as a preacher, a media celebrity and a proselytizer. Salient modes in Yusuf Estes' self-representation are dress code, staging and camera movement. In the following, I examine Estes' use of dress code and its functions.

6.1.1. Estes' dress code, the preacher

As I pointed out earlier (section 5.2.5. Dress code), dress code has a social meaning. According to Van Leeuwen (2005: 58-61), in contemporary Western consumer culture the meanings of dress codes have veered away from being related to fixed constructs such as "age" and "gender" to becoming related to "personality traits" such as "adventurous" and "calm" (ibid. p.62).

The dress code of Yusuf Estes varies from the traditional attire worn by religious scholars/preachers to a hybrid dress code of modern garments (e.g. a jacket and/or a cap) together with *jilbab* (long dress); thus creating a new form of a hybrid modern-traditional attire. Figure 1 below represents Yusuf Estes' dress code in the sermon "Islam tomorrow"⁵⁵ uploaded on YouTube in January 2012 by the Islamic Centre in Qatar. In the sermon, Yusuf Estes wears the "power dress code" that has been traditionally associated with preachers and scholars (e.g. see Gaffney 2004 on the sermon as an authoritative genre).

⁵⁵ Link to Estes' sermon: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8H-xuMCOoC8> Last accessed: 17th May 2015.

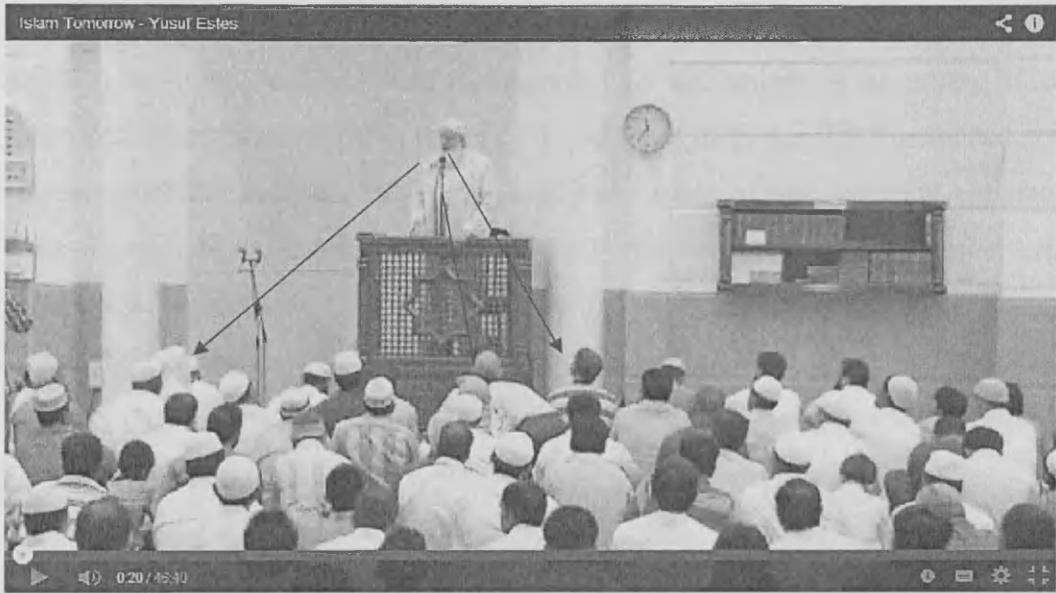


Figure 6.2. Estes at a podium, giving a sermon

While the sermon, referred to above, could have started by the camera surveying the faces of mosque attendees, what we first get is a distant shot showing audiences (in a typical mosque environment) sitting on the ground, followed by the camera panning to Estes who then occupies the screen. The aim of the shot is not to show individual faces of the audiences (showing their ethnic inclusivity, for instance, or individuating them) but rather to capture the setting where the event is staged. Here is Estes standing at a podium that has Islamic ornaments on its front. There are audiences; all of them are men, sitting on the ground.

If not by virtue of the historical authority conferred upon the sermon as a genre as it was first limited to Caliphs and rulers (Gaffney, 2014:2), the authority

of Estes is established through multi-modal means. Estes occupies an elevated position than his audience and is presented as the object of attention. If one examines the above sermon in terms of its "lines of directionality" or its "vectors" (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996), one can draw a line of directionality emanating from Estes (who is looking at his audience), and occupies the role of the Actor, directed at the audience, the Goal. The fact that some of the audiences are clearly lifting their heads up is an index that their gaze and attention are set at the speaker. One can read the above shot as follows: "Yusuf Estes is giving a sermon and/or his audiences are paying attention to him".

If, as seen above, the aim of the above shot is to present Estes as a "preacher", in other instances, when Estes projects the persona of a "media celebrity", there are reaction shots and there is a focus on individual faces as the camera pans between Estes and the audience. In fact, this informs us about the nature of televangelism and its novelty as a religious genre that draws on a variety of meaning-making resources including, camera movement techniques, graphic elements and staging. In the following section, I investigate Estes' self-representation as a celebrity and an entertainer.

6.1.2. Estes, the celebrity

On many occasions, dress code and camera movement techniques contribute to Estes' representation as a celebrity. One example is his sermon, "Muslim issues in the West"⁵⁶, where he speaks about aspects that are deemed

⁵⁶ Link to the sermon: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=buA_Qg0dbE8 Last accessed 17th May 2015.

conflicting with Islam according to some views (e.g. serving alcohol). The sermon starts by a sound bite in which Estes' voice is heard saying: "Islam tells us about right and tells us about limits". As we hear this sentence, Estes walks out of the stage curtain, surrounded by an aura. He walks down, raising his hand, as if welcoming someone; he hugs the man standing close to the podium and shakes hands with him. Once at the podium, we see Estes face-to-face, gesturing with his hands as if weighing something: "Always in Islam, if there are rights, there are limits to offset". This is followed by a close-up shot on individual faces pondering over what Estes is saying (see figures 2 and 3).

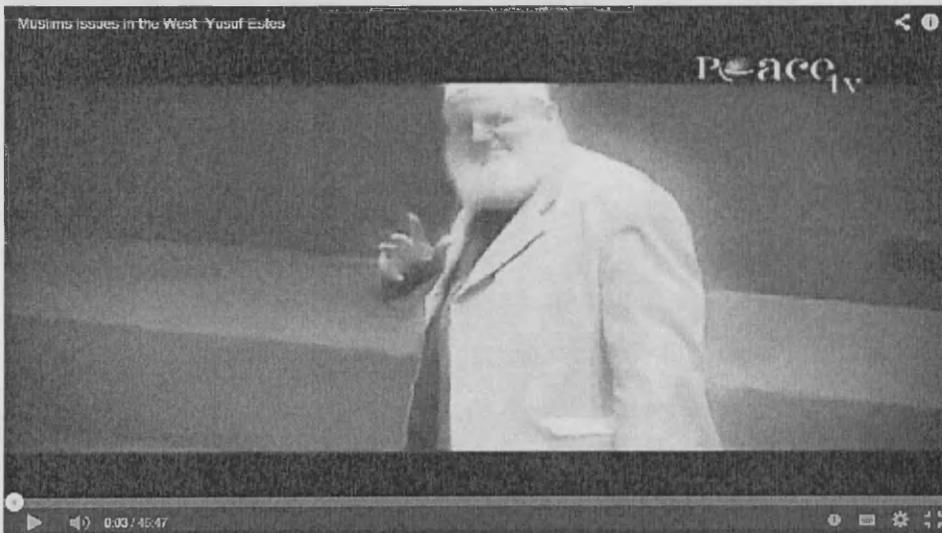


Figure 6.3. Estes appears on stage surrounded by an aura, waving to the audience

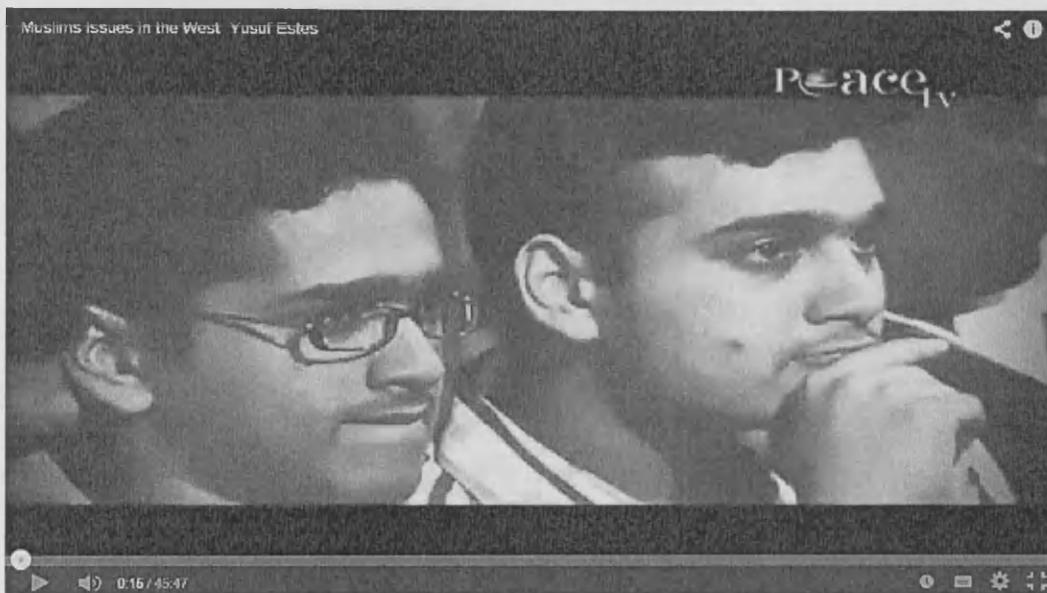


Figure 6.4. A reaction shot featuring two young men pondering over what Estes says.

As can be seen above, in a short time span, Estes is involved in a series of actions from moving down the stage, waving his hands to his audiences, to welcoming his host, which represents Yusuf Estes as an important figure, a "hero". Through the use of sound bites- borrowed from the domain of journalism- Estes is represented as a figure entitled to give concise claims about what Islam means, establishing his authority.

6.1.3. Estes, the entertainer

An aspect relevant to Estes' performance is the use of entertainment features. On the textual level, Yusuf Estes' discourse features interesting narratives in which many voices are represented and characters undergo dramatic upturns.

For instance, in his sermon "Why the west needs Islam", that is being examined in Chapter 8, Estes narrates a story about a white Christian woman who had negative views about Islam yet converted to Islam upon visiting poor villagers in Africa. Many voices appeared on that narrative: a tour guide who accompanied the woman in her visit to Africa, the villagers who offered her food, the woman who was astonished at the hospitality of the villagers and the voice of Estes who animated the characters and gave the coda of the narrative. Moreover, the same sermon, "Why the West needs Islam", starts with a song, lasting approximately for three minutes. The song draws on religious themes, for instance, Abraham building a house for God in Mecca, and the birth of the Prophet Mohamed.

The song that precedes the sermon has multiple functions relevant to the understanding of televangelism and Estes' visual representation of Muslim identities. First, the song serves to add an entertainment aspect to Estes' sermon, to render it more appealing to some viewers, presumably youth who are most attracted to popular culture. Second, the song has references to religious places and figures, serving to construct a religious realm, invoking memories, narratives and feelings about Abraham who is a revered figure for most Muslims, since his mention in the Qur'an (e.g. see van Bruinessen, 2003 and Rosowsky, 2006 and Rosowsky, 2007:314 on the Qur'an as an authoritative source). As the song plays, however, a banner runs on the screen about the Islamic Centre where the sermon is held: "The Islamic Information and Services Network of Australasia is a non-profit organization which is dedicated to sharing sound Islamic Information and Services that will benefit Muslims and non-Muslims in the Australasia region" (ISSNA). We see images that represent services offered at ISSNA; for instance, a gym room,

children playing sports, children sitting on the ground listening to a sermon, and a young woman looking for a book. The images are accompanied by moving text –in clear typography- presenting an anchorage to the images (e.g. see Rose, 2007: 87), i.e. spelling out what these images are about. For instance, the camera shows a group of young men and children gathered round a bearded man as the text comes through in clear Tahoma-style typography "Studying" and "Learning". As such, while evoking religious meanings, the song interestingly draws on the advertisement genre. This relates to an observation I have made earlier (in Chapter 4) on how some users approach televangelists' online spaces as a platform for advertising their own Islamic spaces (e.g. Facebook pages). This, again, reflects the impact of new media on widening the circle of those who can speak for Islam.

Another salient aspect in the song is that it offers a collective representation of Muslims, connoting strength, unity and harmony. There are close-up shots focused on weightlifting equipment. Other shots show young men playing boxing and karate, thereby serving to "empower" the viewer, since these sports are stereotypically associated with power and strength. This is shown in figure 6.4. below.



Figure 6.5. A close-up shot on the hands of the karate players

As can be seen in the above figure, one line of directionality (i.e. the vector) starts from the middle player, visually foregrounded by a white pad surrounding his arm. He is co-joined by the line of directionality of the first player, who is clutching his hand; both vectors are in the same direction, evoking unity and power. Other shots are focused on children, of white and black complexion, symbolizing equality in community building. The image below, for instance, features a young boy taking part in an excursion activity.



Figure 6.6. A child in an excursion

Therefore, the song which precedes Estes' sermon constructs a representation of a Muslim community in unity and harmony. This takes us back to the conception of a global Muslim community in the Islamic tradition that has been discussed in Chapter 3 (section 3.6.1. The meanings of *umma*). I argue that one consequence of the interaction between new media and religion is that it has made it possible for some users to re-imagine a (global) Muslim community. The following chapters will further highlight how the *umma* is imagined or re-imagined by each televangelist.

If entertainment (e.g. songs and music) is integrated in Estes' sermons, on other occasions, Yusuf Estes creates a media spectacle, which testifies to Kellner's (2003) claim on contemporary media culture as an arena for seizing massive audiences. This leads to the following section.

6.1.4. Estes, the proselytizer: the creation of a spectacle

On YouTube, there are many videos for Estes in which he converts non-Muslims to Islam. One video excerpt is interesting in many ways. First, it is uploaded on YouTube by different users with different titles, and has in one version more than one million views⁵⁷ (e.g. "ISLAMIC VIDEOS Very Emotional Brother Converted to Islam"; and "Very Emotional Video new convert To Islam the best scenes Ever"). Second, the fact that the video features a young black man seems in line with Estes' attempt at creating a niche with African Americans. To clarify, in

⁵⁷ Link to the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LQY8naI8g3w>

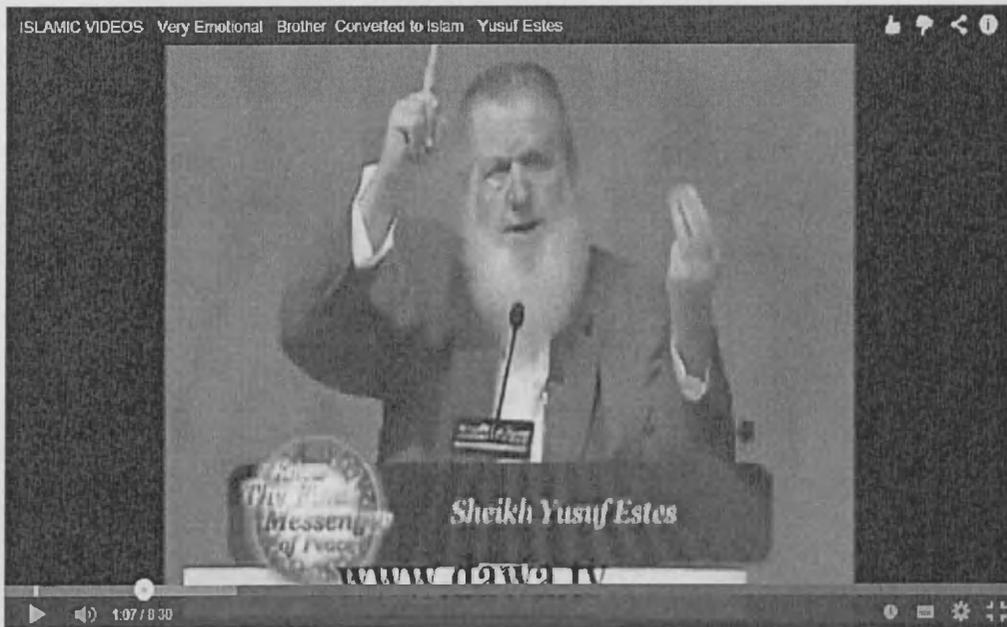
the sermon “Why the West needs Islam”, that is being examined in the study, Estes juxtaposes racial discrimination in the U.S. (1940s- 1960s) with racial equality presupposed in Islam, committing the fallacy of faulty analogy, which occurs “when the types of objects in the premises of an analogical argument are relevantly dissimilar to the object in the conclusion” (Salmon, 2012: 160). In other words, he fallaciously represents Islam (religion) and the West (geographical place) as two comparable entities in which Islam is represented as a “better” entity, hence, creative the discursive dichotomy of Us and Them. The video examined below - of Estes converting a young black man to Islam - demonstrates how Estes uses multi-modal means (e.g. gestures, camera panning to massive audiences) to create his authority.

There are two "frames" in the video, taking the latter to mean "principles of organization which govern events and our subjective involvement in them" (Goffman, 1974: 10). As indicated earlier (section 5.2.7. Frames), many contextualization cues can signal change in a particular frame; for example, choice of topic, voice quality, and postural shifts (Ribiero and Hoyle, 2009). The YouTube excerpt has two frames. In the first frame, Yusuf Estes, at the stage, holds a conversation with the young man who speaks to Estes through a microphone. In the second frame, Estes, moves down the stage towards the man as he leads him to utter his *shahada* or belief in God and Islam.

The first frame starts by Estes saying "they are looking for truth" then cuts to a close-up shot of a young man who is nodding in agreement. This is followed by the camera panning to audiences sitting on chairs, some have crossed their

hands. The camera-again- cuts to Estes as he explains to the young man what Islam means. While raising his right hand, pointing his fingers, he says "I am gonna give you five words in the English language". The camera moves through faces of audiences and cuts back to Estes, who is now holding his left hand in front of him, holding his fingers and asks "Do you want those things in your life?" There is a cut back to the young man who utters "Yes, sir". Estes replies "I do too". He utters the five words he referred to earlier, this time making use of gesture to add a dramatic effect. For approximately nineteen seconds, he poses, clutching the fingers of his left hand, while moving his fingers as he repeats the words "surrender, sincerity, submission and peace". The index of his right hand is positioned upwards; a banner appears on the screen "Sheikh Yusuf Estes" (see Figure 6.7.).

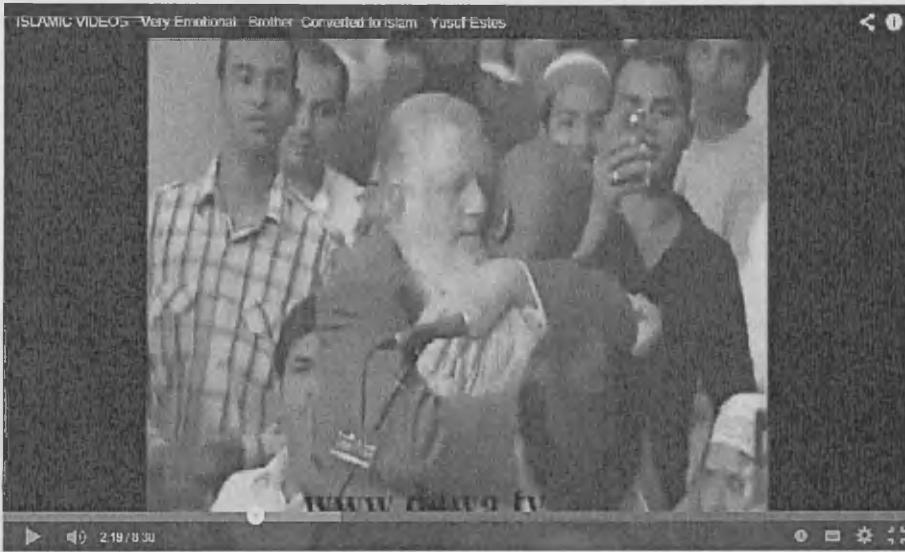
Figure 6.7. Estes poses while explaining what Islam means



As can be seen above, the use of gestures contributes to the construction of Estes' authority. The gesture of his hand (on the right corner of the screen) serves to concretize the abstract words he refers to (e.g. sincerity and peace); as his fingers serve to deictically refer to them. The pointing of the index finger (in an upward direction) –together with the banner on screen- serves to construct Estes' “footing of authority”, of a preacher who “expects to be believed by virtue of his knowledge” (Ribiero and Hoyle, 2009: 83).

A change of frame takes place as music plays, monotonous and melancholic; we see Estes making his way down the stage, towards the audience. He embraces the young man, the two men are surrounded by audiences, creating a spectacle; some are now standing, while holding their mobile phones taking photos. A change of camera angle shows that the young man is crying. Estes talks to the young man, off the microphone, raising the curiosity of the viewer as to what the two men are talking about. A high camera angle shows massive audience, gathered round the two men watching the spectacle. As the music stops, the man utters his belief in God and Prophet Mohamed; Estes embraces the young man and the camera pans again to massive turnout of audiences from different angles.

Figure 6.8. Estes embracing the young man; the camera pans to massive audiences



Thus, in this performance, Estes draws on dramatization, emotionalisation and the creation of the spectacle. With the accompanying music, Estes, like an actor, is engaged in a number of acts; he moves down the podium, embraces the man, talks to him and touches his heart as he utters his belief in Islam. A "media spectacle" is created (Kellner, 2003: vii) in which audiences are seen standing, holding their cameras and clapping.

To summarize, in his self-representation, Estes draws on entertainment-related features such as songs and sound effect. In addition, like public figures, Estes makes use of gestures to alternate "footings"; he is once an "entertaining" preacher telling interesting stories (as will be further elaborated in Chapter 8) and once an "authoritative" preacher who claims he has the truth, drawing on the topos of authority which is based on the conclusion rule: "X is right or X has to be done

or X has to be omitted because A (=an authority) says that it is right or that it has to be done or that it has to be omitted” (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 79).

If Estes represents his identity as a media celebrity, a preacher and a proselytizer, Hamza Yusuf constructs his persona as a public speaker, a scholar and an expert on Islam. This is further illustrated in the following section as I elaborate on Hamza Yusuf's self-representation strategies.

6.2. Hamza Yusuf's multi-faceted identities

Verbal language is one important mode through which Hamza Yusuf legitimizes his representation as a preacher and intellectual. The latter can be defined as “a person of recognized intellectual attainments who speaks out in the public arena, generally in ways that call established society or dominant ideologies to account in the name of principle or on behalf of the oppressed” (Hewitt, 2003: 145). In the following section, I outline some of the legitimation strategies that permeate Yusuf's discourse.

6.2.1. Discursive Strategies: From diagnosing "crises" to reference to travels to the "Muslim world"

One important discursive strategy Hamza Yusuf draws upon is his recurrent reference to "the Muslim world", fallaciously represented as a homogenous body which Yusuf has knowledge of. One example occurs at the beginning of his speech "Islam and the West" in which Yusuf remarks:

Example 6.1.

When I embraced Islam at the age of eighteen...I went to the Muslim world and I immersed myself in another world, for many, many years and gained immense insight and also a modicum of knowledge of this religion and I continued to struggle with that, learning and acquiring more knowledge.

In the above example, Yusuf's positive self-representation is communicated through the use of the implicit predicates "modicum" and "knowledge". In the phrase, "immersed myself in another world", Hamza Yusuf employs a metaphor in which Islam/Muslim world is compared to a sea or a deep container, suggesting the depth of knowledge Yusuf has acquired. Through the use of the predicate "immense" insight, the verbs "struggled" and "continued" and the superlative form "more knowledge", Yusuf positions himself as a learned scholar, obsessed with attaining knowledge.

Another example occurs in an interview, held with him on BBC in 2001 in which Yusuf represents himself as an expert on Islam. One topic the interviewer referred to was the war in Afghanistan. Hamza Yusuf comments:

Example 6.2.

Muslims in the Muslim world and I have lived there for ten years; I have gone back a few times a year; for the last several years and I have made the pilgrimage to Mecca several times, the Muslims really do feel that the West has been relentless in its attacks; that is the perception, whether it is valid or not, that's for people to decide but that's the perception of the man on the street.

The embedded sentence in the above quotation "I have lived there...several times" serves to construct Yusuf's authority as an expert on Islam through his pilgrimage and through inhabiting "the Muslim world" for ten years. As an argumentative scheme, the topos of authority runs as follows: "if source "a" is in a position to know about things in a certain subject", then what "a" asserts is true (Walton et al 2008: 309). The use of nomination strategies realized in the "Muslim world" objectifies Muslims as one monolithic entity which Hamza Yusuf has an insight into, hence positioning himself as an expert who can speak "on behalf of the man on the street".

Another self-legitimation strategy in Yusuf's discourse is the use of the rhetorical structure of problem/solution in which Yusuf consistently delineates problems and presents "action points" and/or attitudes and stances that audiences should adopt (see Chapter 7). I will illustrate this by examining his sermon "Changing the Tide: Islam in America", recorded by Yusuf's company Al-Hambra and given in 2006 in a conference in New Jersey. Yusuf starts the sermon by bringing forth persuasive factual claims about the representation of Islam/Muslims in the post 9-11 context and uses these claims to lead to his argument that Muslims carry a responsibility to educate non-Muslims about Islam. It is important to outline the rhetorical structure of Hamza Yusuf's sermon, since this will enable us to understand how Yusuf constructs his authority. Rhetorically speaking, the sermon can be divided into three main moves:

1: Praise to God and prayer to the Prophet. This reminds us of *the khutba*

component in the Jawzian homily aimed at glorifying God.

Example 6.3.

El salam 3alikom wa rahmatu Allah wa barakato (Peace be Upon you) Allahoma salli 3la saydena Mohamed wa 3la alih wa ashahih wa salam (Prayers to Prophet Mohamed and his followers). Allahuma la 3lim lana illa ma 3almtana (We have the knowledge that you taught us). Allahuma iftah 3alina hekmatok wa anshur alina rahmatok ya za al-galal wal-ikram (Please God, endow us with wisdom and spread your mercy).

2: Outlining problems facing Muslims in the post 9-11 context.

Example 6.4.

It is very important for us to realize we are in a very precarious situation; our community is under siege, and if you don't think there is a siege going on, you are simply out of touch with reality.

In the above example, two metaphors are employed from the semantic domain of war in which mental images of a siege and an attack are created. The use of the possessive plural pronoun in “*our* community” serves to place Yusuf in a position of authority to speak on behalf of “the Muslim community” who are objectified and represented as one community. While delineating the problems facing Muslims, Hamza Yusuf invokes sub-topics on a) Muslims are always defending themselves, explaining what they are not (e.g. terrorists) b) change of attitudes towards Islam after 9/11 and c) rise of anti-Muslim discourse in the US and Western Europe. Outlining “problems/crises” acts as a persuasive device to persuade his audiences to adopt Yusuf’s stance and attitudes of the important role

his Muslim audiences can play in correcting misconceptions about Islam. It is also a strategy through which Yusuf self-legitimizes his representation as an intellectual who can diagnose and analyze social and political problems.

3: Proposing solutions- Muslims have to educate non-Muslims about Islam

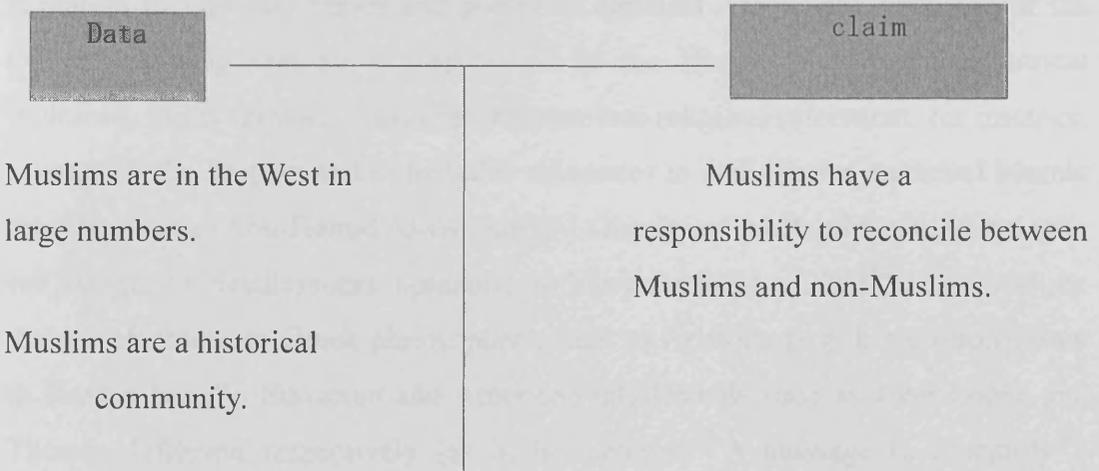
In the following example, Yusuf moves on to suggest that Muslims have a role to play, using the topos of history and the topos of numbers as legitimation strategy.

Example 6.5.

We are a historical community. We are part of a historical process. We are here for a purpose. We are in the United States of America in large numbers. And we should be utilizing that fact. We have a job to do and that job is to reconcile. Because we don't want a planet that disintegrates into more violence, into more hatred, into more human suffering. We don't want that. I don't want that for my children.

One claim made by Hamza Yusuf in the above example is that Muslims carry a responsibility to reconcile between Muslims and non-Muslims. Evidence used to support Yusuf's claim is that: a) Muslims are in the US in large numbers and b) Muslim are a historical community. The latter is developed by means of a historical reference to trade between the ancient Chinese and Muslims. In this way, two content-related topoi (topos of number and topos of history) are employed by Hamza Yusuf in his persuasive claim that Muslims have a responsibility towards their wider communities. This can be illustrated in the following figure.

Figure 6.9. Muslims have a responsibility to reconcile between Muslims and non-Muslims.



Topos of numbers: If there is an abundance of a particular group, they can play an active role in the community in which they reside.

Topos of history: Since Muslims had interactions with other communities in the past, they should have a responsibility/interactions in their wider communities at the present time.

It is worth noting that the rhetorical structure of problem/solution is not only specific to Hamza Yusuf but is also employed by Yusuf Estes and Baba Ali (see Chapter 8). In a similar way, the topos of numbers and the topos of history are employed in the sermons of the three televangelists (see chapter 9 for more elaboration). This suggests that particular arguments and shading of meanings are recurrent in the sermons of the three televangelists despite having different ages and different styles, as I will elaborate in the following chapters.

Other rhetorical strategies Hamza Yusuf uses to construct his authority is the recitation of Qur'anic verses and poetry in classical Arabic, the language of the Qur'an, showing that he is well-versed in the Islamic and Arabic rhetorical traditions. In his sermons, Yusuf recontextualizes religious references, for instance, sayings by the Prophet and/or includes references to well-known medieval Islamic scholars such as Abu-Hamid Al-Ghazali (Al Gazel) and Al-Raghib al-Isfahani (e.g. see *Danger of Heedlessness*, uploaded on YouTube in May 2007⁵⁸). Likewise, he makes references to Greek philosophers, such as Aristotle (e.g. his sermon “How to Read a book”), European and American intellectuals such as John Locke and Thomas Jefferson respectively (as in his sermon, “A message to humanity”), positioning himself as an intellectual who is familiar with non-Muslim intellectual traditions, e.g. Greek and American.

In a similar way to Yusuf Estes and Baba Ali, Hamza Yusuf straddles different spheres. In the following, I will further demonstrate how Hamza Yusuf performs multi-faceted identities as a preacher, an intellectual, and a media celebrity.

6.2.2. Yusuf, the preacher

In some of his sermons, Hamza Yusuf converges towards the *waaz* genre or admonition. His YouTube video, “The danger of heedlessness”, produced by his recording company Al-Hambra Productions is a case in point. It starts by Yusuf

⁵⁸ Link to the sermon: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ejQXZdh-Z4> Last accessed 18th May 2015.

reciting a Qur'anic verse about heedlessness, i.e. inattentiveness to one's action, followed by an elaboration of the meanings of heedlessness in the Qur'an. The following excerpt illustrates this. It is taken from the beginning of the sermon in which Yusuf introduces a Qur'anic verse about heedlessness:

Example 6.6.

Allahu subhano wa tala said in the Qur'an eqtaraba lel naas hesabohom wahom fi ghaflatin mo3redon that people's reckonings are growing nearer and yet people are in heedlessness, not thinking about that, eqtaraba lel nas hesabohom (The Day of Judgment is coming closer). Yawm el hesab. The Day of Judgement. Allah subhano wa t3ala described the state of these people. Wa hom fi ghafla (they are unaware). Ghafla is a word in Arabic. It has a lot of different meanings. Generally, whenever you have a word that begins with ghain (letter ghain), it has a lot of different meanings, it has some kind of covering or something being hidden or veiled like ghab (being absent), ghafar (forgiving) and so the basic meaning of it is that people are in a state of heedlessness.

In the above example, Hamza Yusuf recites a Qur'anic verse that warns people against heedlessness. The above excerpt exemplifies a point I mentioned earlier (section 6.2.1) about Hamza Yusuf's use of Arabic terms to contribute to his representation as a learned scholar who is well-versed in the Arabic language and the Qur'anic meanings.

The examination of the situational context (e.g. staging and dress code) indicates that the sermon draws on multi-modal features including the use of

staging, dress code and camera movement. The video starts by a distant shot showing co-present audiences sitting on the ground listening to Yusuf- in a traditional mosque environment; there is a gradual zoom-in on Hamza Yusuf who stands at an arch, wearing a semi-traditional garb, i.e. a suit, a turban and a cloak. The persona that Yusuf projects—in this instance- is that of a preacher.



Figure 6.10. Dress code in Yusuf's sermon "The danger of heedlessness"

In the sermon, Hamza Yusuf pursues the argument through drawing a comparison between animals' attentiveness and heedlessness in humans. One rhetorical and discursive strategy that relates to the speaker's self-representation is the use of personal narratives or argument from testimony. This refers to the use of first-hand experience to testify that A is true or false (see Walton et al 2008: 310). The following examples illustrates this.

Example 6.7.

People are walking around daydreaming. I was taking my children across the street yesterday; it was at night and I said look, when you go across, you have to be completely aware because these people are sleeping, they are

driving around, they are daydreaming, people are in an automatic pilot and just to prove my point, as I stepped off the curb and pedestrian things had a sign (gesturing with his hand) saying walk 10 9 7 6 and a car swerving coming around almost hit me. And this lady looks at me. She did not even see me. Just to prove the point. That is the state people in.

In the above example, Yusuf paints a picture of people's inattentiveness through many rhetorical strategies. A metaphor is used to compare people to an automatic pilot susceptible to go astray. The meaning is reinforced through the repetition of three phrases that are parallel in structure: "people are sleeping...they are driving around...they are daydreaming".

If "the danger of heedlessness", like other sermons of Yusuf converges towards admonition or *waaz*, other sermons converge towards politics. This is exemplified in the following section, indicating that Yusuf navigates between many discourses.

6.2.3. Hamza Yusuf, the intellectual

On other occasions, Yusuf creates a hybrid fabric of sermon and political rhetoric. In his sermon "Islam and the West", which is examined in detail in Chapter 8, Hamza Yusuf calls on the Muslim community to denounce terrorism which he argues is a modern phenomenon. Discourse topics Yusuf invokes are the contribution of the Muslims to civilization, the unity of the Abrahamic faith (Jews, Christians and Muslims), and the criticism of the U.S. government under George Bush's administration. By introducing these topics, Yusuf not only assumes the role

of a preacher who advises the "Muslim community" but also an intellectual who raises questions about the unjust policies of the former president George Bush in the Middle East and calls for addressing the Palestinian cause; and calls for denouncing indiscriminate killings, "whether it is an Israeli child, Russian child, Palestinian child".

Dress code is an important mode through which Yusuf stages his performance. Unlike the semi-traditional garb he wore in his sermon "the danger of heedlessness", Hamza Yusuf wears a suit, which contributes to his self-representation as a public speaker (figure 6.9.).



Figure 6.11. Hamza Yusuf in "Islam and the West"

Other salient modes are color and staging. The speaker stands at a podium wearing a black suit, a color associated with authority and modernity; for example, it is the color of tuxedos and clothes of policemen (Van Leeuwen, 2011:2). In

addition, one recurrent gesture in the speech is the pointing of the index finger to give emphasis to his claims. As LeBaron and Streek (2000:120) emphasize, gestures serve to create an anchor point for meanings, giving a vivid performance. Pointing the index finger is, interestingly, a gesture used by politicians in their performances; Barack Obama is an obvious example. This suggests the interaction between political rhetoric and religious discourse in the case of Yusuf, which I will further illustrate in Chapter 8 of the thesis.

6.2.4. Hamza Yusuf, the celebrity

As I indicated earlier, televangelists' sermons are a multi-modal field that employs many meaning-making resources. The video-edition of televangelists' sermons is a salient meaning-making resource to explore in relation to televangelists' self-representation.

In a similar way to Yusuf Estes (see section 6.1.4. Estes, the proselytizer: the creation of a spectacle), there is a focus on Yusuf's ability to create a spectacle and seize massive audiences. In the sermon "Islam and the West", that is examined in detail in the following chapters, the camera cuts to distant shots of audiences following Yusuf' sermon in a lecture hall and through a big screen. This is shown in the following figure.



Figure 6.12. The camera pans to a large turnout of audiences

While Hamza Yusuf stands at the podium saying that “we must in one voice condemn and completely reject the concept of indiscriminate killings”, there is a change of camera angle through which we see audiences watching Yusuf on stage as the screen reveals his image (Figure 6.12.). This is followed by a close-up shot on the cameraman video-recording Yusuf on stage, highlighting the mediation of the event (Figure 6.13.).



Figure 6.13. Hamza Yusuf on screen, while a cameraman is video-recording him on stage

As can be seen in the above image (Figure 6.13), a cameraman is featured video-recording Yusuf. The image is composed of three layers: the subtitling (foregrounded through the white/black contrast), the cameraman, and Hamza Yusuf who is shown through the screen and occupies a larger space in the image frame, foregrounding his presence. If one uses Kress and Van Leeuwen's framework (1996), the man who is video-recording Yusuf is involved in a “transactional” action; the camera man occupies the role of Actor and Yusuf occupies the role of the Goal: the cameraman is video-recording Yusuf. The line of directionality (the cameraman holding the camera) is rather dimmed by the Arabic subtitling. If we transform the camera man and its relation to Hamza Yusuf (on screen) into a linguistic form, one reading of the image can be: Hamza Yusuf is giving a sermon and there is a cameraman in front of him. In this way, the mediation of the event is highlighted.

Another salient aspect of the video-edition of the sermon which relates to the self-representation of Yusuf is showing the involvement of the audience through reaction shots. One pattern that emerges is having close-up shots on faces, with a focus on young women who seem to belong to different ethnicities (e.g. Middle Eastern, Indian and Asian), highlighting the ethnic inclusivity of Yusuf's audience.

Figure 6.14. A reaction shot in Yusuf's sermon "Islam and the West"



In the above figure, the contemplative look of the young woman's face serves to show the importance of Yusuf's claim that "Muslims have contributed to civilization". In addition, the sub-titling of Yusuf's sermon in Arabic indicates his attempt to reach to non-English speaking audiences (also see Schmidt, 2005 on Hamza Yusuf as a transnational figure). This points to the importance of (new) media such as satellite television and YouTube in granting the three televangelists a border-crossing popularity (see 3.5. Transnationalism and Islam). This holds true

in the case of Baba Ali who has achieved popularity on YouTube, being a global medium. Unlike Estes and Yusuf, he does not speak to co-present audiences in theater halls or mosques but rather to virtual audiences on YouTube. The fact that Baba Ali mediates his sermons to a virtual audience on YouTube appears to have given way to a style of preaching that is different from that of Hamza Yusuf and Yusuf Estes in terms of playfulness and creativity.

6.3. Baba Ali's performance

If the authority of Hamza Yusuf and Yusuf Estes emanates from their representation, *inter alia*, as preachers or figures of authority (e.g. Gaffney, 2014 on the sermon), Baba Ali's authority emanates not from being different from his audiences but in being similar to them. He frequently reiterates he is neither a scholar nor a preacher (e.g. *Arrogant People*, Season 2): "I am not a scholar; I just an ordinary guy trying to remind people and remind myself". As a disclaimer, this serves to represent his ordinariness. Baba Ali's self-representation of ordinariness is manifest on the visual and textual levels, as I will illustrate below.

6.3.1. Baba Ali: I am an ordinary guy

Unlike Yusuf Estes and Hamza Yusuf, Baba Ali does not give his sermons in lecture halls but rather presents his show, while sitting at an armchair, wearing casual clothes. The ordinariness of his self-representation is represented as a virtue, an aspect he boasts about. In one of his earlier video-blogs "distractions during

salat/praying”⁵⁹” (broadcast July 2006), Baba Ali starts his video-blog by expressing his astonishment that he has got thirty thousand views:

Example 6.8.

Thirty thousand views (camera close-up) Thirty thousand views? That’s crazy hah. Are all these people watching me doing a simple show like this? That’s just me, sitting in a chair, with the camera, and talking about the stuff that’s going through my head. But people seem to be watching (close-up shot) (laughing) some people even laughing. Do you see? I don’t know why some people think I am a comedian. For the record, I am not a comedian, I am not an actor. I am just a brother with a video-camera talking about just random stuff.

The ordinariness of Baba Ali in the above example is discursively constructed through his reference to the staging, i.e. “that’s just me, sitting in a chair, with the camera”, and through the repetition of the adverb “just”, i.e. “that is just me” and “talking about just random stuff”, indicating that he is not different from his audiences. On a linguistic level, the ordinariness of his representation is communicated through the use of conversational language, e.g. expressions of personal feeling and conversational interjections (e.g. That’s crazy hah), which gives the impression that Baba Ali is speaking his own mind. This is a style different from the speeches of Hamza Yusuf or the sermons of Yusuf Estes which

⁵⁹ Link to the YouTube video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MTwh6p1kyRQ&list=PL409C23E2F903F8D3&index=6> Last accessed 20th May 2015.

are staged events where the speakers come across as having thought about and pondered over the topics they are discussing.

The conversational nature of Baba Ali's performance is a strategy he employs to involve his virtual audiences. On the linguistic level, this is achieved through the use of rhetorical questions (e.g. thirty thousand views?), which suggests a shared view of experience (Myers, 2010b: 83). In addition, "Do you see?" is an example of "enacting conversational interaction" (ibid. pp. 84-86) in which Baba Ali is engaged in a dialogue with an imagined viewer. This is further elaborated below.

6.3.2. Involving the audience: "You know what I talking about man"

As I explained above, one salient strategy through which Baba Ali projects "informality" and "ordinariness" is enacting conversational interaction. Recurrent phrases in his video-blogs are "you know what I am talking about man" (e.g. Culture Versus Islam) and "Do you know what I am saying" (e.g. Who hijacked my religion). On the visual level, these phrases are accompanied by extreme close-up shots where Baba Ali comes closer to the camera, and to the viewer (Figure 6.15):



Figure 6.15. Baba Ali (coming closer to the camera): Do you know what I am saying?

Another salient involvement strategy in Baba Ali's video-blogs is the representation of the viewer as one voice/character. In "Distractions during praying", Baba Ali acts the character of an imagined viewer with whom he engages in a dialogue. The excerpt lasts for four minutes; in which Baba Ali engages in a self-mocking debate as to whether he can be labeled a comedian. Most importantly, at the end of the video-blog Baba Ali calls on his audiences to take part in the production of his videos. In the following extract, "Baba Ali 1" represents his persona, whereas "Baba Ali 2" is that of an imagined viewer.

Example 6.9.

Baba Ali (1): Sometimes you have to be serious.

Baba Ali (2) (frowning like a child): I don't like you when you are serious.

Baba Ali (1): What if I am joking around, you would not take me seriously?

Baba Ali (2): Fine, Okay.

Baba Ali (1): Anyway, this whole video-blog was an experiment; it was never meant a weekly show.

Baba Ali (2): But it is a weekly show, right?

Baba Ali (1): Kind of (.) There is only ten episodes and this is the sixth of the tenth, which means that we have four more left.

Baba Ali (2): What?

Baba Ali (1): Yeah. Four more left. After that I will take a break for a while. I have other stuff to do.

Baba Ali (2): What?

Baba Ali (1): I came to this every week. These things take time to do.

Baba Ali (2): COME ON.

Baba Ali (1): You know what? What about you try it?

Baba Ali (2): What do you mean I try it?

Baba Ali (1): How about you guys put the material together and I will do the show.

Baba Ali (2): Are you serious?

Baba Ali (1): Yeah. You will do the show based on what you think. The audience has many suggestions and comments. Yes, I read them. Sure we can come up with something together. You guys put the content together. I have the camera. I have everything. We can do it. We will broadcast it on YouTube. We will broadcast it on Umma Films and it will go there and you will get comments from everyone.

Baba Ali (2): You serious. Aren't you?

Baba Ali (1): Yeah. I am serious.

Baba Ali (2) (touching his chin with his hands): Okay (.) mhm. Let us do it.

In the above example, “you” is used to address “the built-in” audience who – idiosyncratically - spoke like a child (signaled by his frown and the tone of his voice). Towards the end of the dialogue, however, the reference is broadened to “you guys”, a collective reference to the audience as a group, and inclusive “we” that sets Baba Ali and the viewers in the same group, e.g. “sure we can come up with something together”.

A remarkable aspect-in the above extract- is Baba Ali’s call on his audience to “put the content together” and take part in the production of his videos, which reminds us of Jenkins' (2006a:290) argument that YouTube is a site of “a participatory culture” in which “fans and other consumers are invited to actively participate in the creation and circulation of new content” (p. 10).

Indeed, in what seems to be a successful call on interaction, there are approximately one thousand five hundred comments on his video. The comments vary from being suggestions as to what themes and topics Baba Ali can pick up on in his future video-blogs to comments on particular scenes/instances in his video to general comments about his performance. The latter are of particular significance since they indicate the aspects of his self-representation that are commented on by his fans/followers. Here are some of these comments:

Example 6.10.

Zoe Pope

6 months ago

Alhamdulillah for your channel. Just a quick note:

"You're a nutter!!"

A good one, just like the rest of use.

Example 6.11.

Merihan 2010

Omg alii u make mee laugh hysterically you are like the most funniest guy i've ever seen in my life and i loooooooooooooooooooooooooooooove your vids

Example 6.12.

Angell77442

omg! i love this man!!!! loool

Example 6.13.

GeekyGirl1011

30,000 views, now over 300,000 Mash'Allah!

Example 6.14.

progman

Assalamualaikum, Great Job,,,you're funny my brother....even without joking, your face is funny and joyfull....and make me laugh.....^_^...thanks 4 that

As can be seen in the above examples, the ordinariness of Baba Ali is echoed by Zoe Pope above who comments that Baba Ali is a “good nutter”, “just like the rest of us”. In addition, the comedic aspect of his performance and his self-mockery is evident in the comments of the other viewers; Merihan 2000, for instance, perceives Ali “as funniest guy i've ever seen”.

We cannot separate the ordinariness of Ali's performance, from the linguistic expression of his followers, which is rather "conversational" (e.g. Myers 2010; Tolson 2010). This is partly evident in the respondents' use of colloquial language (e.g. You are a nutter), and the use of emoticons and conversational abbreviations (e.g. ^_^...thanks 4 that). In addition, a couple of users have picked up on Baba Ali's opening remark that he has thirty thousand views, updating the number to its actual figure, 300,000 views, echoing the cooperative exchange of conversational turn-taking when a listener, for instance, corrects a piece of information uttered by the speaker (e.g. also see Tolson, 2010: 282).

The above-examined features, i.e. the ordinariness of his appearance, the characterization of the audiences and the conversational nature of Baba Ali's linguistic performance, as well as that of his audience are, therefore, important strategies that have contributed to Baba Ali's self-presentation as an ordinary funny guy. Thus, as it is the case with Yusuf Estes and Hamza Yusuf, there are a variety of modes through which Baba Ali's identities are projected (e.g. discursive and visual). Yet while being a funny guy, he is also a social critic, a counselor and an entrepreneur, as I will explain below.

6.3.3. Baba Ali, projecting multi-faceted personas

In his performance, Baba Ali occupies an ambiguous role of giving social advice, religious advice and in some instances, explaining what Islam is about. In fact, he navigates between two main genres: a) hybrid social counseling/religious genre in which he acts out different "characters" and b) a speech genre.

6.3.3.1. Baba Ali, giving social and personal advice

One role Baba Ali assumes for himself is that of a social critic who gives social and religious advice. One example is his video-blog “25,000 Muslim Weddings” (broadcast June 2006) in which he criticizes parents for asking for expensive weddings for their daughters/sons⁶⁰. In the following excerpt, Baba Ali plays two characters, Baba Ali himself, (referred to as "Baba Ali 1") criticizing that some parents stipulate a fancy wedding in marriage, and an imagined character (also representing an imagined viewer) that is being invited to a fancy wedding (Baba Ali 2):

Example 6.15.

Baba Ali (1) (wearing a white t-shirt): For those who never attended one of those fancy weddings, let me break it down for you so that I can tell what you are missing.

Baba Ali (2) (wearing a suit and a tie): Imagine sitting alone at a table in a fancy hall, wondering where everyone is (Baba Ali seems like he is sweating, his hand touching his forehead), quickly learning that 6 pm on the invitation means 7 pm (looking at his watch), getting dressed up in an uncomfortable clothes, sitting in a huge hall and saying "Wow this must be expensive", getting free refills of soda, eating fancy food (holding a plate while moving his jaws), staring at the wedding program, saying salam to

⁶⁰ Link to the YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rH2nNt1s5pk> Last accessed 20th May 2015.

the people you only see at weddings, funerals and eid, playing with your napkin, taking pictures with the bride and groom, here is pictures by family and friends crying and saying goodbye (Baba Ali clapping).

By the way (2) (looking at the camera with a suit and the tie), why are you saying good bye, they are not dying; they are just getting married.

One important aspect in the above example is the dramatic performance of Baba Ali who performs the actions that is being commented on; for instance, while hearing “imagine sitting at a table in a fancy hall”, Baba Ali rolls his eye upwards to show the character's astonishment of the big fancy hall where the wedding is held (Figure 6.16.).



Figure 6.16. Baba Ali acting out his astonishment of the big fancy hall

Following the rhetorical structure of problem/solution, he gives his personal advice as he proposes an alternative to expensive wedding ceremonies:

Example 6.16.

But there is an alternative. Try this. Google the web to find inexpensive wedding invitations. Well, I can really save some money. How about having your wedding in the best location? The masjid (mosque). The masgiid (we see the photo of a mosque). You will save a group of money and what honor getting married at Allah subhanoho wa taalaha house. Consider the time between Maghrib to Aisha. That is when people get on their time. Can you imagine the reward of having hundred people to the masjid to pray salat. That is what I am talking about man. Contact your local halal restaurant and ask him for a deal (Baba Ali holding the phone, talking in a foreign accent) You Know how they say oki dop, so give me a good deal Hah, I love it I love it mwah". And finally, make dua (praying) to Allah Subhano wa talaha and make it pure intention.

As in advertisements in which questions and directives are used to engage the audience (see Myers, 2010b: 82), Baba Ali, in an example of generic intertextuality, makes use of directives and questions, as if creating an advertisement: "Try this", "Google the web", "How about having your wedding in the best location?".

An interesting aspect here that points to a feature of televangelism is that practical solutions are mixed up with religious motivation; the (moral) benefit of having a hundred people pray in the mosque is mentioned as one reason why the

mosque is a better place for a wedding to take place. In this way, Baba Ali creates a hybrid discourse of the social/personal counseling genre and the sermon genre.

There are other sides to this discursual hybridity (e.g. Fairclough, 1995a: 88-90; Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999: 83; and Wodak et al 2013). One is that many registers are represented in the video blog; including that of a character calling a local restaurant and asking for a good deal in which specific slang expressions are used (e.g. Oki Dop) and "I love it". The use of spontaneous interpolations (e.g. "wow") and informal address terms (e.g. That's what I am talking about man) are also used. These features- in the above extract- render it not only a hybrid fabric of colloquialism and religious themes but also a space for creativity and playfulness, as a polyphony of voices, and discursive features (e.g. ethnic accents; colloquial terms and religious ones) are represented. This lends truth to recent research on YouTube that refers to it as a site of "vernacular creativity" (e.g. see Burgess, 2006; 2007), i.e. "creative practices that emerge from non-elite, specific everyday contexts" (Light et al 2012:433).

Playfulness is - in addition - communicated through the use of cinema and modern vocal techniques. For instance, at the beginning of the video, the phrase "twenty five thousand dollars"- referring to an estimate of wedding expenses - is mentioned twice: once by Baba Ali, and once by adding a "robot voice effect" in a slow motion, foregrounding the number "Twenty Five Thousand Dollars". In addition, images are inserted in the video; for instance, as he utters his directive "Google the web to find inexpensive" wedding invitation; there is a cut to an image of wedding invitations in a pink background (Figure 6.17.)

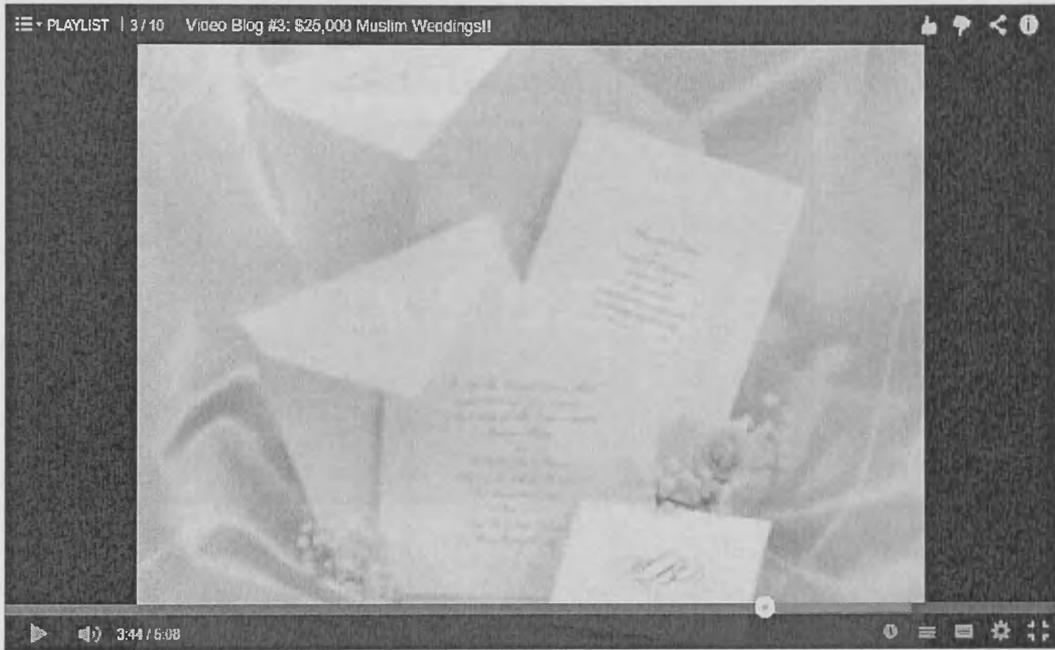


Figure 6.17. Google the web to find inexpensive wedding invitations.

On other occasions, Baba Ali plays the role of an entrepreneur. This is explained below.

6.3.3.2. Baba Ali, the Entrepreneur

Characteristic of Baba Ali's self-representation is that he positions himself as an entrepreneur. In his recent video-series “The Reminder Series by Baba Ali (Half Our Deen)”, he talks about a dating website he created that aims to help Muslims find their partners. Each video blog in the series starts with a short song that advertises the website “Half Our Deen. Com”. The song starts by a question “Do you want to know what makes love grow?”. This is accompanied by a

symbolic image of flowers, in pink, growing as the lyrics continue “It is Half your Deen. Said the Prophet Peace Be Upon him. Half of your Deen” (see Figure 6.18.).



Figure 6.18. Advertising the website "Half Our Deen" in Baba Ali's video-series

The words Half Our Deen. Com appear on the screen in capital, in big letters; the background is blue with small flashing spots, indexing stars and the sky. The videos are aimed at giving social advice as to how a married man should deal with his wife and vice versa. In this way, his series "Half Our Deen" represents a hybrid genre of advertisement and social advice. On other occasions, the entrepreneurial persona of Baba Ali is constructed through his references to characters who would like to have projects with him. In one YouTube video, for instance, Baba Ali acts the character of a "cardiologist" who would like to work with him; the aim of the YouTube video is to criticize some "cultural" Muslims who do things that contradict Islam in the name of their culture, branding it “Islamic”.

Relevant to the above is a blog post, published by Baba Ali, where he advertises one event organized by him to help Muslims create networks and partnerships. The blog post starts with a narrative in which Baba Ali recounts his story of meeting young investors who -like him-had “saved a little money but had nowhere to invest it”. Baba Ali describes himself in the post as “the guy with the idea/project” who made partnership with his friends. Baba Ali then moves to the aim of the post which is to sell tickets for an event “to put together a room full of talented people and ambitious people so they can expand their networks, build connections, and to connect for present or future projects”. Baba Ali ends his post with the claim that “I have learned that it's not always what you know but often time, who you know that opens doors of opportunity”. The creation of business-networking events by Baba Ali relates to Miller's (2004:86) remark about the rise of “therapeutic” religion, which “the middle classes in particular need, to placate their contradictions and to assist them in a social world reconfigured in terms of market competition”.

In the same post, Baba Ali uses the topos of numbers (24 % return profit) and topos of experience (i.e. life has taught me that network is important) to self-represent himself as a successful entrepreneur. He also refers to his travels, positioning himself as a celebrity. This aspect is further emphasized in his “stand-up” comedy website⁶¹, which has a section for Baba Ali's tour dates in the UK, US, Canada and Australia, establishing one aspect of his identity as a “traveling Muslim” and “a media celebrity”.

⁶¹ Link to Baba Ali's stand up comedy website: <http://www.muslimcomedian.com/>

Last accessed 6th June 2015.

6.4. Conclusion

This chapter has aimed at delineating the self-representation strategies of the three televangelists examined in this PhD thesis. One aspect I have highlighted in the thesis is how the sermons of three televangelists represent a multi-modal field in which televangelists draw on multiple modes to represent their identities including verbal language, music, graphic effects and camera movement techniques. Rhetorical strategies used by the three televangelists include the use of comparison (for example, in comparing heedlessness in humans and attentiveness in animals) and use of argument from experience to give legitimacy to the speaker's claim. Most specific to Hamza Yusuf is the use of other legitimation strategies such as his knowledge of the Arabic language and his fallacious representation of the Muslim world as inhabiting a distinct geographical boundary which Yusuf has knowledge of.

Another aspect that this chapter underscored is that televangelists' discourses are open to generic intertextuality and discursal hybridity. Examples include the use of sound-bites from the domain of journalism (Yusuf Estes), advertisement-related features such as the use songs to advertise websites/Islamic serves (Yusuf Estes and Baba Ali) and the use of rhetorical features related to advertisements such as the use of imperatives and rhetorical questions (Baba Ali).

Moreover, the chapter has outlined two types of “religious celebrities”. On the one hand, Hamza Yusuf and Yusuf Estes represent themselves, *inter alia*, as “preachers”, a role that has meanings of respect and reverence to many/most Muslims (see Gaffney, 2004). On the other hand, Baba Ali represents himself as

“ordinary guy”. His authority emanates not from being different from his audiences but in being similar to them. On the visual level, Baba Ali wears an informal attire (i.e. t-shirt) vis-a-vis the garb usually worn by Yusuf Estes or the suit worn by Hamza Yusuf. On the discursive level, Baba Ali's ordinariness is realized through the use of colloquialism, conversational interjections and informal address terms. To add, if the examples analyzed for Hamza Yusuf and Yusuf Estes feature reaction shots on individual faces, Baba Ali does not speak to co-present audiences. Yet, his involvement of the audience is innovative; it draws on many multi-modal means including close-up shots and creating dialogues with an imagined viewer. This is echoed in the comments on Baba Ali's YouTube videos, in which commenters simulate conversational turn-taking by repeating phrases that Baba Ali mentions. From this perspective, Baba Ali is an example of the emergence of “vernacular creativity” (Burgess, 2006; 2007) in the religious sphere as his sermons feature many clusters and fragments of discourses of slang, colloquialism and religious expressions (e.g. *mashallah*).

This chapter, thus, provide further illustration of the phenomenon of televangelism and its novelty. One common aspect among the three televangelists is that they perform multifaceted roles and inhabit many spheres; Yusuf Estes represents himself as a media celebrity, preacher and proselytizer. Baba Ali is a social counselor, an entrepreneur and a comedian. Hamza Yusuf represents himself as a media celebrity, a learned scholar and a public speaker. By broadening the discourses they navigate through, the three televangelists are apparently able to gain a wider circle of audiences that are maybe attracted to contemporary media aesthetics (e.g. use of music, songs and colorful images), celebrity culture,

entrepreneurship, seeking social counseling, criticism of contemporary society/politics, while at the same time, getting the moral benefit of seeking religious advice and ethical improvement, from a religious point of view.

Having explored the self-representation strategies of the three televangelists and their performance, I move on in the forthcoming chapters to analyze the selected sermons of each televangelist. In the following chapter, I focus on one important aspect in Muslim identities' construction in televangelists' sermons. I ask: How does each televangelist represent Islam and Muslims in the post 9-11 context?

Chapter 7: Islam and the West?!

This chapter marks the beginning of the second part of the empirical investigation of this study in which I explore the representation of Muslims' identities in televangelists' sermons. I would like to reiterate here why this question is timely and important. Since 9-11, discourses have reverberated in which Muslims are imagined as the Other, a homogenized entity that is antagonistic to the West (e.g. see Baker et al 2013). Hence, one question that emerges is: within this context, what will the three televangelists instruct Muslims to do and what discursive representations will the three televangelists construct of Islam/Muslims? The question gains further significance in relation to Muslims in the West who have limited access to Islamic knowledge and who rely on the Internet to seek religious advice (Gilliat-Ray, 2010: 162). This calls for an examination of Muslim identities' construction in televangelists' sermons in the light of the popularity they have achieved and in light of their deemed influence on shaping Muslim views and identities.

The examination of Muslim identities' construction also has a historical dimension to it. As I have indicated in Chapter 3 (3.6.1. The meanings of *umma*), inherent in the Muslim tradition is the imagination of an *umma*. The latter can refer to a Muslim community in which Muslims, Jews and non-believers are in solidarity, as was the multi-cultural *umma* of Medina. The term can also be used to refer to a (global) Muslim community, imagined to be innately bound and in solidarity. The study, thus, examines how the contemporary representations of the

Muslim community in televangelists' sermons might compare/juxtapose with meanings of the *umma* in the classical tradition.

I would like to point out how this chapter relates to the previous/forthcoming chapters. In the previous chapter, I have explored the-self-representation strategies and the performance of the three televangelists. In this chapter, I focus on the representation of Islam/Muslims and the West being important social actors in televangelists' sermons; as I indicated earlier, the three televangelists appear to be addressing not only Muslims but also non-Muslims, attempting to bring about change of attitudes in the public perception of Islam. The examination of the intended audience in televangelists' sermons, and their representation of Islam/Muslims leads to the examination of analytical categories such as the use of pronouns, metonymy, nomination, predication and argumentation strategies, which I found to be relevant to televangelists' construction of in-groups and out-groups. The representation of Muslim identities is further examined in Chapter 8 and Chapter 9 of the study. In Chapter 8, I explore the discourse topics invoked by each televangelist and how these topics contribute to constructing distinct representations of Islam/Muslims. In Chapter 9, I move on to investigate how history is employed by each televangelist and to what effects. The focus on these elements, again, points to the discursive hybridity of televangelists' sermons that include many discourse topics and different self-representation strategies.

Thematically speaking, this chapter follows the same organizational pattern. In the first three consecutive sections, I start in each section by providing contextual information about the sermon (where and when it is given) which can

contribute to its interpretation. I then examine the salient discursive strategies used in the sermons of each televangelist in relation to the representation of Islam/Muslims and in relation to the construction of in-groups and out-groups. In the following, I explore Yusuf Estes' sermon "why the West needs Islam?".

7.1. Yusuf Estes: Why the West needs Islam?

The sermon "Why the West needs Islam" was given in Australia on the 15th June 2008 in IISNA (Islam Information and Services Network of Australasia), a non-government organization, "dedicated to sharing sound Islamic information and services that will benefit Muslims and Non-Muslims in Australia"⁶². Using the problem/solution rhetorical mode⁶³, Estes starts by outlining issues which he presented as problems in the West (e.g. racial and gender inequality) putting forth the claim that Islam can solve many problems "if the West understands what Islam is really about". Another claim made by Estes is that not only the West needs Islam but also Muslims.

A salient feature of the sermons is that many social actors are represented including Yusuf Estes, predominantly referred to through the pronoun "I", "people", "people in the West", "Muslims", "Christians" and historical figures such as Malcolm X and Martin Luther King; I elaborate on the representation of

⁶² Link to the organization: <http://mycentre.org.au/about/> Last accessed: 6th June 2015.

⁶³ As its name suggests, in the problem/solution organizational mode, a problem is introduced and a solution is presented; there are four basic elements of the problem/solution organizational mode: situation, problem, solution, and evaluation (e.g. see Hoey 2001: 123-126).

historical figures such as Malcolm X in Chapter 8 in which I analyze the main discourse topics in the sermon.

One macro-strategy in Estes' sermon is the creation of a discursive dichotomy between Us and Them. To gain further insights into the creation of in-groups and out-groups in Estes' sermon, I will investigate: a) who are the audience addressed and included in the sermon and to what effects and b) the nomination, predication and argumentation strategies used in representing Islam/Muslims. Exploring the above-mentioned aspects will help us identify the mechanisms of the creation of in-groups and out-groups in Estes' sermon and their rhetorical and linguistic realizations.

7.1.1. Use of pronouns

An aspect relevant to the sermons of the three televangelists is that they align themselves to other groups, other than Muslims. Yusuf Estes' orientation towards non-Muslims shows at the beginning of the sermon; he raises his hands towards his forehead for 26 seconds; he utters as he smiles: "Is there anybody here who is a Muslim? Who are the Muslims here? If the angels came right now and wanna know who is the Muslim, who would raise their hands? Let us see (turns his head to face more audience) hello?" (See figure 7.1. below).

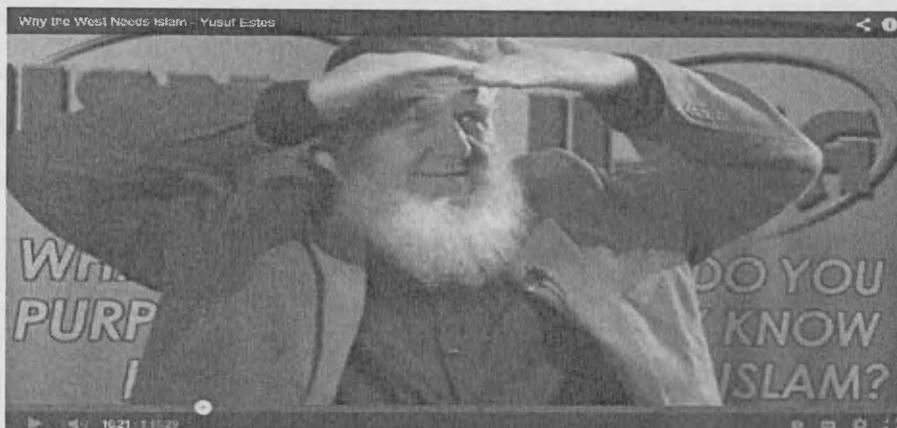


Figure 7.1. Estes gestures to his audiences: "who are the Muslims here"?

Thereafter, Estes makes use of deictic and generic expressions to refer to the West and Islam. Initially, Estes uses the generic reference “people”; from the context, it can be understood that people refers to “people in Australia”; since it is accompanied by the deictic expression “I was wondering what happens when people hear about Islam.. Just the other day *right here* in Australia, I had the chance to interview some people”. Use of pronouns (e.g. we, you and they) is an important aspect we can explore, which will enlighten us about whom Estes imagines as an audience and whom Estes includes as an in-group.

One linguistic pattern in Estes' sermon is the use of the pronoun “we”. It has three meanings:

1) We = Estes + co-present audience

Example: Do we have anybody here who is a Muslim?

2) We= Estes+ co-present audience+ an imagined group of Muslims

Example: Islam is one of the largest religions in the world. We passed them (Christians) up in the last census.

3) We= Estes+ an imagined group of Westerns/Americans

Example:

We have been through a lot (of prejudice) in our countries (US) and we have seen buses taking children from the black area to the white area and from the white area to the black area (during the 1940s-1960s). We spent all of our security money to do it.

Another example is:

You might think it (racism in the US) is over, we don't have that problem?

No. What it does is that it goes deeper, hides its head down low.

The above examples represent a discursive strategy in Estes' sermon in which he imagines himself as both an insider and an outsider to the West which is homogenized and negatively represented as an out-group. To clarify, Estes positions himself as American/Western when he flags up problems, which serves his discursive strategy of the negative representation of the West. The problems he outlines are racial discrimination and gender inequality. This sets him in contrast to Hamza Yusuf who represents Americans/Westerns positively, which serves to represent them as an "in-group" (see below). The pronoun "we" is also used by Estes to refer to the co-present audience and an imagined Muslim community; as can be seen in example 2, in which Estes fallaciously compares Islam to Christianity, employing the topos of number.

Another pronoun used to refer to the audience is the second person pronoun “you”. The use of the expression “you know” is recurrent in Estes' text and relates to his (informal) style, which we will gain more insights into in the following chapter (Chapter 8) as I analyze Estes' narratives. Besides “you know”, Estes uses other patterns to involve the audience and mitigate the (social) distance between him and the viewer/listener; for example, through the use of (rhetorical) questions and the recurrent phrase “you and I” which assumes that Estes and the (imagined) audience have the same view. For example, on the topic of racial equality presupposed to Islam, Estes remarks: “would it be strange if you and I we go to local masjid and find it (only) for Chinese?”. These elements serve as persuasive devices to get the viewers to believe Estes' (fallacious) claims (see below and following chapter).

7.1.2. Creation of in-groups and out-groups

An out-group that Estes constructs is the West/Westerns. Terms used to refer to the West include the third person pronoun “they” and the nominal terms “West”, “people in the West” and the term “so-called people in the West”. In terms of the use of nomination, referential and argumentation strategies, Estes employs a strategy of “calculated ambivalence” in which the West is represented as both “good” and “bad”. “Calculated ambivalence” can be taken to mean: “the fact that one utterance carries at least two more or less contradictory meanings, oriented towards at least two different audiences” (Forchtner and Wodak, 2014: 237). The beginning of the sermon is a case in point. Estes starts by giving an account of non-Muslim characters he met “right here in Australia” and their perception of

Islam. Characteristic of his representation is that he creates different representations of sub-groups of people in the West through which he reveals two attitudes: a more sympathetic attitude towards *them* (Westerns) and a negative attitude towards *them*. The former predicates some people in the West as being ignorant (of what Islam means) and as such cannot be blamed for their misrepresentation of Islam, hence employing the topos of ignorance as an argumentation strategy. The latter objectifies and personifies the West as an “attacker” while Muslims are personified as the victim of its attacks. The following excerpt illustrates this.

Example 7.1.

When people hear stories of what some Muslims do and this of course has to be exaggerated a little bit. Then we find out there are pretty rotten stories that come around. And just the other day↑ right here in Australia, there was a chance for me to interview some people. I like to do that man on the street thing with the camera, and go around and ask people: Have you heard about Islam? What do you know about Muslims? And you listen to people responses (.) Some of them are hysterical. Some of them you will be surprised that a person, non-Muslim tells you “Well, Islam means you have to do *shahada* and pray have times a day”? Wow. But some others will say. I remember one time I was asking someone what do you know about Islam and he kept thinking and thinking and he said, Islam? Is that a salad dressing? But you know, so you have things in-between and you have those who really have a bad notion about Islam. And it is fair because if that's all they know, then that's all they know (.)

As can be seen in the above example, many sub-groups are represented: a) those who have good knowledge of Islam and b) those who misrepresent Islam; these are negatively predicated through the use of the explicit predicates “pretty rotten stories”. A third sub-group is presented who have a “really bad notion” about Islam. The topos of ignorance (i.e. it is fair because if that's all they know, then that's all they know) is used to mitigate the negative representation of this sub-group, rather offering a more sympathetic view on their misrepresentation of Muslims. In this context, the topos of ignorance is premised on the following condition: “since some people are ignorant of what Islam means, they cannot be held responsible for their beliefs about it”.

Thereafter, Estes' negative representation of the West becomes more apparent; as can be seen in the following:

Example 7.2.

The point I am trying to get really is how much the West needs to understand what true Islam is about, because it is the thing they claim to be looking for, the claim they are making when they make their big speeches, and pontificate us infinitum to the principles that they offer to the ignorant, you know, backward, third world countries.

The third person pronoun “they” in the above example refers to the West, which is described as an arrogant pompous entity, antagonistic to Muslims as indicated in “pontificate us infinitum”. The West is also anthropomorphized, describing Muslims as “ignorant” and “backward”.

As can be seen above, Estes creates an image of the West “attacking” Muslims. This is mitigated, however, by means of an “afterthought” in which a disclaimer is made that “it is wrong to assume that everybody is like that” (attacking us).

Example 7.3.

So if somebody is attacking you as a Muslim, if somebody is even attacking Islam in front of you, realize that it is not really you, it is not us as a whole, the problem is they are responding to something they don't wanna accept, they don't wanna to accept it coz it will mean they have to give up all the stuff they are doing, you follow me, that is the problem. In the west for the most part, not everybody, by the way it is wrong to sum up and say everybody is like this in there, is not that wrong, like if somebody said that about us, no, we are human beings, we have different ideas, hopes and goals, true, for the most part, Muslims are good, and for the most part, Muslims are following Islam and doing a pretty good job, but there are some stinkers out there, true, in the same case, when you look to the west, it is wrong to say, all the West is like this, because they are not, there are good people there, and there are also human beings, they have goals, they have desires, they have things they are trying to do as well, and there are some who are looking, searching for the truth and they would love to know some of the things you will take for granted every day.

The use of the repetition in the above example “for the most part, Muslims are good” serves to emphasize Estes' positive representation of Muslims. The use of the disclaimer “it is wrong to assume.. there are also good people there” is not

incidental. It can be interpreted as a strategy of “calculated ambivalence”, which I have outlined earlier. Hence, his disclaimer can be presumably aimed at Western audiences, in an attempt to appeal to them. Towards the end of the utterance, Estes asserts that there is a sub-group of Western people “who are looking, searching for the truth and they would love to know some of the things you will take for granted every day”; the construction “would love to know some of things..every day” places responsibility upon Muslims to invite non-Muslims to Islam, which seems in line with Estes' missionary agenda (see section 6.1.4. Estes, the proselytizer: the creation of a spectacle). This also relates to Hamza Yusuf's claim that Muslims have a responsibility to carry; in this case, to correct the misconceptions about Islam and educate non-Muslims about it.

Related to the predication of Islam/Muslims is the representation of a sub-group of Muslims who abuse religion. This can be interpreted as an attempt to counter-argue the (negative) association between Islam and terrorism, offering a justification why this sub-group (of terrorists) cannot in fact represent all Muslims. The following example demonstrates this:

Example 7.4.

But it should be after somebody is dealing with Muslims they should have a good impression of what all Islam is really about. But as you heard a few minutes ago, some Muslims are pretty tough and not some and not so good and that leaves a bad impression for all of us.

The topos of abuse in the above example is premised on the following condition: Since only a minority abuses religion, they cannot be representative of a whole religion (Islam/Muslims). The following figure contextualizes the argument made.

A sub-group of Muslims abuse religion.... Islam cannot be blamed.

Data



Claim

Warrant: Since only a sub-group of Muslims abuse religion and the majority is peaceful, this sub-group cannot be representative of Islam.

Another example of the creation of out-groups occurs within the context of Estes' comparison between Islam and Christianity. Employing the topos of comparison, Estes uses the discursive strategy of the positive representation of Us and the negative representation of them. This again testifies to Estes' aim at proselytization, creating it as a field of action (see the following chapter). In the following excerpt, Estes makes a fallacious comparison between racial inequality presupposed in Islam and racial differentiation in Christianity.

Example 7.5.

Islam claims to be for all places and all people and all times. This is the claim of Islam. Because I grew up with a Christian background I can really speak from the fifty forty years and tell you that, I definitely saw, whether they will ever admit it or not, prejudice because even today there are Christian churches for Chinese and Christian churches for Japanese. And we have Christian churches for black people and Christian churches for

Mexican people even though they speak English. But would it strange to you and I if somebody said Oh don't go to that mosque because it is for black people? Because any *masgjid* (mosque) in the world could have a black person as the *imam* or a white person or a yellow person or any color person we would not think about it.

There are many linguistic devices in the above excerpt that serve to represent Christians as an out-group. The use of “Christian churches” in reference to Christianity is an example of synecdoche, which can be defined as using a part to refer to the whole (see Wodak et al 2009:43). It contributes to the negative representation of Christianity through the simplification of what could have been a complex argument about religion and defying racism (for example, by contextualizing the discussion within the context of the human struggle for racial and gender equality in the modern age). The use of the adverb “prejudice”, together with the argument from comparison and personal experience serve as argumentation strategies to negatively represent Christianity. The argument from personal experience (e.g. Walton et al 2008, p. 310) is based on the condition “if someone witnesses a particular event, then what s/he is saying may be plausible”. This can be indicated in Estes' claim “because I grew up with a Christian background, I definitely saw prejudice whether they will admit it or not”.

7.1.3. The notion of “true Islam”

Another strategy used by Estes to counter the negative representation of Islam is putting forth the notion of true Islam that Muslims have deviated from. The following example illustrate this:

Example 7.6.

When Malcolm x was close to real Islam, when he came to real Islam, that was one of the things that struck him that he had gone for Hajj and he is amazed, he said I will pray next to a white person and blacks and browns and all colors. You know all together, he was amazed.

Example 7.7.

I am saying not only the West needs Islam, I am saying Muslims need Islam, yes or no? We deviated far away, far away from the real Islam, it is not just in the eating, in the health and taking care of our bodies, but it is also in the way we treat each other, and that is much worse, because it is an important aspect of Islam, because after your correct relationship with your lord, the next close important thing is your correct relationship with the people and if it sucks, what are you all about? How are you a good Muslim if no body likes you? How? How does that work?

The above excerpts constitute Estes' claim that there is a “real” or a “true” Islam that Muslims (and non-Muslims) fail to understand; this is developed by means of definition in which Estes equates true Islam to one “that sets a close relationship with the people” following the “correct relationship with your lord”. The repetition of rhetorical questions such as “how are you a good Muslim if

nobody likes you?” serves as rhetorical strategy to persuade the viewer of Estes' claim.

The following table summarizes the nomination, referential, predicational and argumentation strategies used in Yusuf Estes' sermon.

Table 7.1. A summary of the predication, nomination and argumentation strategies in Estes' sermon

Social actors	Discursive strategies	Examples
Islam/Muslims	<p>References to Islam/Muslims</p> <p>You, as a Muslim We Muslims Islam Some stinkers out there</p> <p>Topos of responsibility Muslims have the responsibility to represent Islam "correctly" to non-Muslim peoples.</p>	<p>“So if somebody is attacking you as a Muslim,”</p> <p>"It should be after someone is dealing with Muslims, they should have pretty good impression about Islam".</p>
	<p>Topos of abuse</p> <p>There are some people who abuse Islam</p>	<p>"But some Muslims are pretty tough and not so good". (Therefore, people misunderstand Islam).</p>
	<p>The topos of number</p>	<p>"According to the Catholic church's last release, we have the distinction of being the largest religion of the world". But what matters is the <i>akhlaq</i> or behavior.</p>
	<p>Topos of comparison</p>	<p>Islam vis-a-vis Christianity</p>

		<p>“Islam claims to be for all places and all people and all times. This is the claim of Islam. Because I grew up with a Christian background I can really speak from the fifty forty years and tell you that, I definitely saw, whether they will ever admit it or not, prejudice because even today there are Christian churches for Chinese and Christian churches for Japanese”.</p>
<p>West/ Westerns</p>	<p>References to West/Western</p> <p>People in the West</p> <p>The so-called East and the so-called West</p> <p>The West</p> <p>We</p> <p>Topos of ignorance: Because some non-Muslims lack knowledge about Islam, they misrepresent it</p>	<p>“In the West, we still have problems, how come Hilary Clinton is out of the race?”</p> <p>“When I interviewed men on the street about their understanding of Islam, some have knowledge of it yet others were ignorant”.</p> <p>"Someone kept thinking and thinking" and said "Islam, is that a salad dressing"?</p>
	<p>The notion of “true” Islam</p> <p>Negative predication of the West.</p> <p>Mental image is created of the West as an arrogant pompous entity attacking Muslims.</p>	<p>The West needs to understand what true Islam is about. Because this is the thing they claim they are looking for when they make their big speeches and pontificate us infinitum about the background third world countries.</p>

In the following, I move on to explore Hamza Yusuf's sermon in terms of his representation of Islam/Muslims.

7.2. Hamza Yusuf's sermon: A message to humanity

The sermon "A Message to Humanity" was given by Hamza Yusuf in the 41st Annual Islamic Society of North America's (ISNA), held in Chicago, 2004; it was attended by about thirty thousand Muslims (Ghazali, September 2004). On YouTube, there are two versions of the sermon, a shorter edited version that lasts for fifteen minutes, entitled "Islam and the West", and the actual sermon given at the conference, entitled "A message to humanity". The latter spans thirty five minutes and is the one I explore in this chapter.

Looking into the genre of the sermon, it is a highly interdiscursive fabric of religion and politics; including topics on the contribution of Islam to civilization, a terrorist incident (Belsan School crisis) that took place in Russia, United States being hijacked (politically) by extremists and the U.S. role in the Palestinian issue (see Chapter 8 for further elaboration on the discursal hybridity of the speaker's sermon). In the following, I examine the pronouns used by Hamza Yusuf to address the audience, which will enable us to identify the intended audience in his sermon and the in-groups and out-groups he constructs, through the use of pronouns and other discursive strategies such as nomination and predication.

7.2.1. Use of pronouns

In a similar way to Yusuf Estes, Hamza Yusuf addresses the audience using the inclusive pronoun "we" and the second person pronoun "you". However, if the we-group in Estes' case constitutes Muslims, in Hamza Yusuf's discourse, "we" refers to more inclusive entities. As I will explain below, the pronoun "we" in

Hamza Yusuf's case has three referents: 1) we as Americans 2) we as Muslims 3) we as Americans and Muslims and 4) we as humans. Below are some examples.

Example 7.8.

I feel that we as Muslims are suffering all over because of the acts of a handful of people, we must in one voice condemn and completely reject the concept of indiscriminate killing in this religion.

Example 7.9.

So this is the issue of the age, the Republican party is basing their entire platform, basing an entire platform in the most powerful military nation on the earth, it is based on the idea that Islamic fanatics are a threat to the security of this country and this must be condemned (audience clapping). We have a society now that is facing social disintegration (.) we have the erosion of the middle class in this country (.) we have joblessness(.) we have an entire continent of Africa that has had 40 million deaths by AIDS, twice as many people as died in the great plague of Europe, the black plague, 40 million human beings and yet there is no funding for research into this plague that is afflicting the women of Africa in great numbers that we are looking at a hundred million people that are facing death by the plague of Aids and yet we are spending five hundred billion dollars on a defense budgets that is nine times greater than all of the defense budgets on this planet put together (.) that is not RIGHT (.) it is against every principle upon what this country was based.

In example 7.8. above, the pronoun “we” refers to Muslims as indicated in “we as Muslims” are suffering all over as a result of a “handful of people”. This in a way seems similar to Estes' representation of a sub-group of Muslims who are abusing religion and seems in line with Estes' representation of the suffering of Muslims. In example 7.9., the pronoun “we” refers to groups whom the speaker appears to endorse as an in-group: “we as Americans and Muslims” and “we as humans”. To illustrate, in the sentence “we have the erosion of middle class...we have joblessness”, “we” can be taken to mean “we as Muslims and Americans have the erosion of middle class”. The reference to Aids in Africa and the use of the word “planet” which is recurrent in his discourse (see EINaggar, 2012) suggests that Yusuf is speaking here from a more human perspective. This is further substantiated through the topos of right, “that is not right. It is against every principle upon what this country was based”, through which he positions himself as American.

I would like to remark here that by invoking topics on joblessness and the problem of Aids in Africa, Hamza Yusuf appears to subvert the topos of “Islam as threat” frequently used in media representations of Islam; it relies on the conditional “if a particular groups (Muslims) is causing threat to the nation, then this group must be eliminated” (e.g. see Wodak and Boukala, 2014: 177-180 on the representation of immigrants as a threat).

As is the case with Estes' discourse, Muslims are referred to as a collective body or one community, as indicated in the use of the collective pronoun “we” and the terms “the Muslim peoples”, “the Muslims”, “the Muslim world” and “our religion”. The use of the predicates and the deontic modality “we must in one voice

condemn indiscriminate violence” is rather an appeal to unity. This takes us back to the discussion in Chapter 4 about users' comments on televangelists' spaces and the visual analysis of the song that precedes Estes' sermon in which Muslims are represented as a community in harmony. This, again, lends truth to the claim made in this study that web 2.0 platforms (erg. blogspots, Google i-player) and satellite television have enabled some Muslims to re-imagine and address a virtual *umma* or a global Muslim community (e.g. also see Mandaville, 2001a; El Nawawy and Khamis, 2009).

Still exploring the nomination and predication strategies in Yusuf' sermon, we can note that Americans are referred to in collective terms such as “we”, “the people of the United States of America”, “this/these people”, and “they”; “this country”, “the United States”, “this people”, “Americans”, “American people”, “the people of the United States of America”, “these countries in Europe and the U.S”, “the majority of the people”, “this/these people”, “they” and “we as Western”. Hamza Yusuf attributes positive predication to Americans. The following examples occur within the context of Hamza Yusuf's criticism of George Bush's government:

Example 7.10.

They will stand up in one voice and I believe this in my heart and they would condemn and reject what is happening in their name.

In the heart of the Americans is a love of truth, a love of justice and a love of liberty and they believe these should be the values and virtues that are promoted throughout the world.

The phrase “I believe this in my heart” in the above example renders Americans referred to as “they” a close entity whom the speaker has an insight into. In the second utterance, positive representation of Americans is communicated through the repetition of the affective word “love” and the use of the nouns “values” and “virtues” themselves implicit predicates. In other words, one discursive strategy with reference to the representation of Muslims in Yusuf’s text seems to be an intentional choice to refrain from the dichotomy of Us/Them.

Thus, unlike Yusuf Estes who represents Islam and the West as two rigid entities in opposition, Hamza Yusuf represents Islam and West as two fluid entities that could overlap, representing an in-group. In fact, a rhetorical strategy Yusuf uses to this effect is creating a parallel representation of Muslims/Islam and Americans/US. Both entities, for example, are hijacked by a select group of extremists and both entities have a moral ideal to live up to. I would like to dwell on this representation in the following section.

7.2.2. Parallel representations of Islam/America

One claim made by Yusuf is that both America (under George Bush’s government) and Islam are hijacked by a select group of extremist. This is shown below.

Example 7.11.

I feel that we as Muslims are suffering all over because of the acts of a handful of people.

Example 7.12.

I believe this country is being hijacked by a select group of extremists themselves. There is an extremist agenda in this country not in the best interest of the United States. It is for the goodness of this people that every war this country goes to is done in the name of the highest ideal of this country.

In another instance, he says:

Example 7.13.

So I want you all to recognize that this country has great ideals. These ideals are rooted in Islamic ideals.

The above examples indicate that the speaker attempts to discursively map the representation of contemporary Muslims onto contemporary Americans, and the ideal Islam onto the ideal America. To clarify, that "Muslims now are suffering because of the acts of a handful of people (terrorists)" seems parallel to "this country that is being hijacked by a select group of extremists". Both utterances represent a description of a continuous action and in both there is "select", "handful" of (extremists) that are doing Islam and America harm, an out-group. Moreover, great ideals are attributed to both Islam and this country. In other words, the ideological positioning of Us/Them does not seem to hold in the speaker's representation.

The following table summarizes the nomination, predication and argumentation strategies used in relation to the representation of Islam/America in Hamza Yusuf's sermon.

Table 7.2. A summary of the predication, nomination and argumentation strategies in Hamza Yusuf' sermon

Social actors	Discursive strategies	Examples
Islam/Muslims	<p>References to Islam/Muslims</p> <p>Islam</p> <p>This religion</p> <p>our religion</p> <p>We</p> <p>Muslims</p> <p>This community (in the United States)</p> <p>The Muslim world</p> <p>We as Muslims</p> <p>We as a community</p> <p>We as Americans and Muslims</p> <p>The Muslim peoples</p> <p>The Muslims</p> <p>Positive predication</p> <p>Subverting the topos of culture/Islam as a threat (Wodak and Boukala, 2014: 177-180).</p>	<p>Examples</p> <p>“Some of the greatest contributions in our history have been from the Muslims, diverse contributions”.</p> <p>“It/Islam did not divorce the people from their land, from their culture and their tradition; it enhances and purifies the inherent genius of the people”.</p> <p>“It is not the only religion that is suffering from extremism”.</p>

	Topos of abuse	“We are suffering all over because of the acts of a handful of people.”
West/ Westerns	Reference to the America/ns This country United States This people Americans; American people; the people of the United States of America They This/These people We These countries in Europe and the U.S The majority of the people We as Westerns Positive predication Topos of abuse	 “The majority of the people would stand up and I believe it firmly in my heart and condemn and reject what is happening in their name” “In the heart of the Americans is a love of justice, love of truth and love of liberty and they believe these should be values that are promoted throughout the world” “ in the most powerful military nation” “This country is being hijacked by a select group of extremists themselves” “There is an extremist agenda in this country”
Reference to humanity	We this planet	“We have a society that is facing disintegration; the erosion of the middle class; joblessness” “We have 40 million people in Africa dying as a result of Aids”

In the following, I move on to discuss Baba Ali's discourse.

7.3. An overview of Baba Ali's YouTube videos

Baba Ali has produced five series of video-blogs over eight years (2006-2014); in total, 50 video-blogs. Each series of video-blogs has the title of a “reminder” in which Baba Ali addresses aspects of life of Muslims (in the West), for example, distractions during Friday prayers; personal relationships and the difficulties Muslims could face while flying. Each of these follow the same rhetorical pattern in which Baba Ali, first, outlines the problem then finally gives his advices. In a similar way to Estes and Yusuf, Baba Ali appears to address many audiences.

7.3.1. Baba Ali: addressing multiple audiences

A common linguistic term used by Baba Ali to address his audience is the pronoun “you” which oscillates between a) a general you and b) specific referents to Muslims. The following excerpts are taken from Baba Ali's YouTube video “who hijacked my religion” in which he explains why some non-Muslims may have a negative view about Islam.

Example 7.14.

People are often scared of things they don't understand; and don't think we are the only people who is victim of this propaganda; you remember the way Japanese were treated during World War II, or the way African American

are treated during the Civil Rights movement. You get the picture; history continues to repeat itself and the way that stereotype is built is done in a very sneaky sneaky way. You watch TV and you see images of black people stealing; I guess if you see it enough times, you assume that all black people steal or all Hispanic people cross the border to steal your jobs or all white people are trash or women are inferior to men and the false list of stereotypes goes on and on. These tactics are not new; it is the same tricks over and over again but this time they are building a stereotype of the Muslims.

In the above example, Baba Ali represents Muslims as victims of misrepresentation and represents the media negatively since it has initiated propaganda against Muslims, according to his view. The argument is developed by means of the topos “history teaches us lessons”, which I will further examine in Chapter 9. Of interest is how Baba Ali adopts different alignments towards his audiences and as such the pronoun “you” gains different meanings. The sentence “people are often scared of things they don't understand” is a generic statement that offers a sympathetic view towards those who fall victims of media misrepresentation of Muslims. Baba Ali, then, seems to align himself to “we”, Muslims who are represented as a victim of propaganda, i.e. “don't think we are the only victims of this propaganda”. An oscillation between “we” (Muslims) and “you” (in reference to non-Muslims and Muslims) takes place as Baba Ali makes his statement “you remember the way Japanese are treated in World War I” in which Civil Rights Movement and World War Two are drawn upon to support Baba Ali's claim. In this way, Baba Ali is positioning contemporary

misrepresentation of Muslims in a context of other injustices towards blacks and Hispanic.

Another strategy Baba Ali employs to address non-Muslims is the creation of a dialogue with an imagined viewer. In the same YouTube video “who hijacked my religion”, Baba Ali constructs a dialogue with a non-Muslim, whom he attempts to persuade that Islam does not teach terrorism.

Example 7.15.

Baba Ali (1): But what about these scary videos they show on TV?

Baba Ali (1): You know when two people meet each other, they say *al salamo alikom*, do you know what that means? That means may the blessings of Allah be upon you.

Baba Ali (2): Well, that sounds peaceful.

Baba Ali (1): So many people in America convert to Islam including myself.

Baba Ali (2): You are a convert?

Baba Ali (1): Yes, I am a convert.

Interestingly, the non-Muslim character -in the above excerpt- is not represented as being aggressive to Muslims as in Yusuf Estes' sermon but as being misled by how media (mis-)represents Islam.

If Muslims are subject to misrepresentation, then one way out according to the three televangelists is that Muslims carry the responsibility to change the the perceptions of Islam. Like Yusuf Estes and Hamza Yusuf, Baba Ali represents a responsible Muslim who can change people's perceptions about Muslims. To illustrate, in “who hijacked my religion”, Baba Ali notes:

Example 7.16.

Remember, so many enemies of the Islam ended up becoming Muslim when they saw Islam practiced correctly. Do you know what I am saying? At the end of the day, it does not make difference what the media shows or what the newspapers say. A lot of people judge actions not words and if you are a good Muslim enshallah, people wanna be like you. So, it is up to us to be good examples enshallah. And the only way we can do that is to practice Islam properly. Do you know what I am saying? This is Ali reminding you, just in case you forgot.

In the above example, Muslims are represented as carrying a responsibility to change the misconceptions that some people have about non-Muslims by practising “Islam properly”.

7.4. Conclusion

To sum up, in this Chapter, I have attempted to investigate how Islam is represented. One pattern that emerges in the discourse of the three televangelists is the imagination of a collective Muslim community, as shown in the use of terms such as “the Muslims” and “we”, which suggests that the three televangelists are imagining a Muslim community, calling upon its unity. Another salient point in the above discussion is that the three televangelists adopt different attitudes towards the West. Yusuf Estes represents the West as the Other (with ambivalence) allowing for a positive representation of a sub-group that is looking for the truth.

On the other hand, Hamza Yusuf attempts to counter the narratives of Us and Them, through creating overlapping identities of Islam/America; both entities suffer from extremism and both entities have moral values to live up to. As for Baba Ali, he appears to refrain from the nexus of Islam/West. Rather, he represents mass media negatively which he argues is the main reason for the misrepresentation of Islam/Muslims.

A remarkable aspect about Hamza Yusuf's discourse is the creation of an in-group that includes not only Muslims but also humans. In the following chapter, we gain further insights into Hamza Yusuf's sermon and his emphasis on the unity of Abrahamic faith, thus imagining an in-group of Muslims, Jews and Christians. Thus, in the following, I throw light on the discourse topics, sub-topics and fields of actions each televangelist creates.

Chapter 8: Discourse topics and fields of action

As I have indicated above, televangelists' sermons invoke discourse topics and sub-topics that are “linked to each other in various ways” (Reisigl and Wodak, 2009: 90) (see below). The aim of this chapter is to examine the discourse topics, sub-topics that are invoked in televangelists' sermons (see below), and how these contribute to a distinct representation of Islam and Muslims. Discourse topics can lead to “fields of action”, a term which has different meanings in the literature (e.g. Bourdieu 1991; Reisigl and Wodak 2009). The term “field of action” is first discussed by Bourdieu (1991) who was concerned with the meanings and dynamics of power in society. To him, the interplay of the relations of power is manifest in fields of actions (i.e. domains) in which individuals “seek to maintain or alter the distribution of forms of capital” in which capital is not only economic (in terms of material wealth) but also can be cultural (e.g. position of particular skills and qualifications) and symbolic, for example, as in prestige. A salient point is that fields of actions can be interrelated; as Bourdieu (1991: 185-190) illustrates, qualifications and skills (i.e. cultural capital) can be translated into economic capital as in salary and remuneration. Thus, to Bourdieu (1991) fields of action relate to domains such as the economic, social and political fields. Reisigl (2008: 243), while being focused on the political domain, adopts a linguistic perspective to fields of action. Reisigl (2008) illustrates that political speeches can have an illocutionary effect as they can enact particular “fields of action” such as law making and formation of political attitudes. To illustrate, lawmaking procedures can be realized in genres such as the State of the Union address and parliamentary debates in which legislative procedures can be proposed and contested. Another

field of action in political discourse, that relates to the analysis of televangelists' sermons, is the formation of public opinion and attitudes; for example, through presidential speech (e.g. State of the Union speech) and election speech. The present study takes up the more specific definition of fields of actions proposed by Reisigl (2008:243) in which he argues that speeches can perform “linguistic actions” that can have an illocutionary quality such as the formation of public opinion.

In this chapter, I will demonstrate that by alluding to particular discourse topics, a distinct representation of Islam (and Muslims) is created, sometimes enacting fields of action. For example, in his sermon, Hamza Yusuf invokes discourse topics and sub-topics on religion and politics (e.g. the Palestinian cause and criticism of George Bush's government), attempting to form a public opinion and attitudes against George Bush's policies. Furthermore, “proselytization” is a “field of action” most specific to Yusuf Estes' sermons. This can be exemplified in his sermon “Why the West needs Islam” - as a realization of his discourse- in which he invokes many discourse topics on the conversion of non-Muslims to Islam, apparently aiming at proselytization. In the following, I examine the discourse topics by each televangelist, starting with Yusuf Estes' sermon/s, moving on to Hamza Yusuf's and Baba Ali's.

8.1. Analysis of Yusuf Estes' sermon

By invoking particular topics rather than others (i.e. racial discrimination in the U.S. and contribution of Islam to civilization to Western Europe), Yusuf Estes

gives a particular representation of Islam and the West. As I will illustrate below, Estes associates the U.S. with topics on racial discrimination in the 1940s-1960s and inequalities towards women; and relates Islam to discourse on civilization. Hence, the choice of the discourse topics in Estes' sermon serves to represent Muslims positively and Americans/Westerners negatively. This is further shown below.

8.1.1. Discourse on racism: Conflating the present with the past

One discursive strategy Estes employs is conflating the past with the present; as Estes juxtaposes the racial discrimination in the 1940s and 1960s in the US with the racial equality presupposed in Islam. To illustrate, one topic in Estes' sermon is Malcolm X's visit to Mecca; Estes conflates the past (racial inequality in the U.S. during the 1940s-1960s) with the present, as he overlooks the developments that took place as a result of the Civil Rights Movement in the US.

Example 8.1.

When Malcolm x was close to real Islam, you know he used to be in the Nation of Islam but When he came to real Islam, that was one of the things that struck him because he had gone for Hajj and he is amazed. He said I "will pray next to a white person and blacks and browns and all colors" You know all together, he was amazed. He talked about it. One thing he talked about it when he did *salah* in a small *masjid* in Makkah; he said he noticed that the one leading probably from Africa he was black and so he went to him after the prayer and said "did you ever have a chance to be leading prayer in front of all these white guys?. He said the man looked to

him and said "what?↑" "↑What are you talking about? Because the stigma, the thing he grew up in his mentality; this was a big deal. You know to try to find to get a chance to be up to with whity. That is what he talked about.

The above excerpt serves to substantiate Estes' claim that Islam is free of ethnic prejudice and to construct a representation of a Muslim community that is color blind. There are many rhetorical strategies used by Estes, that are worth noting.

A rhetorical strategy that Estes employs is Internal Narration which refers to "those cases where the narrator reports a character's cognitive and emotional experiences without presenting any specific thoughts" (ibid.). This is indicated, on the lexical level, in "when he (Malcolm X) came to real Islam, that was one of the things that struck him because he had gone for Hajj and he is amazed", where the predicates "struck", "amazed" and "came to real Islam" reveal the cognitive processes that Malcolm X experienced.

In addition, Direct Speech is used to vividly represent the dialogue between Malcolm X and the mosque Imam; this shows in "He said the man looked to him and said "what?" "What are you talking about? According to Semino (2004:435), Direct Speech "often results in the foregrounding of the utterances it relates to, since it gives us the impression that we are listening directly to the characters' voices, apparently without the mediating interference of the narrator".

Another narrative convention used is the Direct Thought presentation which allows "the narrator to present a verbal transcription that passes as the reproduction of the actual thoughts of the character" (Palmer, 2005: 603). This shows in the use of the reporting clause "he said", indicating that what follows reflects Malcolm X's thoughts, i.e. "He said I will pray next to a white person and blacks and browns and all colors"; this is followed by "he talked about it" emphasizing Malcolm X's astonishment of racial equality in praying. In this way, Direct Speech and Direct Thought Presentation are used to give a vivid account of the characters' speech and thought processes; hence, they serve as rhetorical strategies used by Estes to persuade his audiences of his stance on Islam and racial equality.

The story about Malcolm X is followed by another narrative in which Estes presents the topic of racial discrimination from the point of view of a child or what is known in stylistics as "the mind style", i.e. which refers to "any distinctive linguistic representation of an individual mental self" (Fowler, 1977: 103; also see Semino, 2007). In addition, through change in paralinguistic features such as the use of stress and pitch, Estes animates the voices in the narrative, giving a vivid representation of black-white segregation in the 1940s in the U.S. (e.g. Tannen, 2007: 39 on animation of voices in conversations).

Example 8.2.

So he (my cousin) started talking with his friends about we gonna see some colored today, colored people, and I was thinking "wow", like rainbows or something, I imagine. I have no idea what they were talking about until we were going down to the beach and it had a big sign "no colored" and I was

thinking why cannot you have any color on the beach? I don't get it. This is in the 1940s and it was so ↑bad that people took it for granted....So we were now making a migration from up north to Texas, I remember that, and in our way, we stopped in a place called Arkinso, when we stopped in the gas station, my dad told us: "go guys and use the bathroom", "↑come on and we gonna go", my sister got to the ladies, somebody had demands and I kept on and someone said (shouting) ↑"colored" (.)↑colored I wanted to see what a colored bathroom looked like inside. I can imagine, it's gonna be something you know (laughing), and some guy told me: "↑Why ↑did ↑you ↑go ↑in ↑there ↑for?" I did not wanna tell him, you know, (whispering, on hand on his mouth) I used the ↓bathroom; he said "↑No (shouting) that's for colored". I did not get↑ it↑.

The use of verbs of thought such as "imagine" and "was thinking" reveal the thoughts of Estes in the above example; while the simile "like a rainbow" reveals the mind style of a child, i.e. "I imagine it (the colored bathroom) was like a rainbow or something".

As with the narrative on MalcolmX's visit to Mecca, the voices in the narrative are animated; for instance, Estes, animating the father's character speaks in a loud voice as he ordered his children to use the bathroom "come on and we gonna go". Two other voices were animated, "shouting" at Estes, the child in the 1940s, for overlooking the rules of white/ black segregation. One effect of the use of the above rhetorical conventions is the vivid representation of an event that took place more than 50 years ago, as if it is taking place now, thus conflating the past

with the present (e.g. see Semino, 2007, on mind style and Tannen, 2007: 120-124 on use of paralinguistic features); therefore, highlighting the segregation that blacks experienced in the U.S. during the 1940s-1960s.

If one moves from the level of rhetorical/discursive strategies to the historical account given by Yusuf Estes on racial discrimination in the US, it is manipulative in many respects.

While historically speaking slavery was abolished in the United States in 1865 through a constitutional amendment (e.g. Vorenberg, 2004: 1), a supremacist ideology in favor of whites was manifest in segregation in schools, public places, and public transport. For instance, white children attended separate schools, and in buses seats were reserved for black people usually in the rear of the bus (e.g. see "Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott"⁶⁴). In addition, blacks had limited access to education, employment, facilities and services (e.g. see White, 1991: 10-13).

In 1954, however, the Supreme Court decision declared segregation in public schools unconstitutional, marking the emergence of the American Civil Rights Movement (e.g. see White, 1991: 10-16). In this vein, two prominent figures that had a leading role in the Civil Right Movement were Martin Luther King and Malcolm X (e.g. see White, 1991).

⁶⁴ Available at:<https://www.thehenryford.org/exhibits/rosaparks/story.asp> Last accessed 23rd December 2014.

It is worth noting that racist structures have not vanished in the US and many forms of racism have emerged (e.g. see Bonilla-Silva 2014); hence, racism in the US seems to be a complex issue and cannot be covered in a satisfactory way here. However, the argument still holds that, in his account of racial discrimination, Estes overlooked the fact that as a result of the Civil Rights Movement, many improvements on the civic level took place; for instance, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that aimed to address discriminatory voting regulations targeting blacks (e.g. see Bardes et al 2009: 153-164), together with improvements in housing conditions, employment and economic possibilities (e.g. see Bardes et al *ibid.* and Ezra, 2013: 1-8). The deletion of the improvements that took place in civil rights fulfills Estes' aim of the negative representation of this era of the US; hence employing the strategy of the negative representation of Them and by comparison the positive representation of US.

To give legitimacy to his representation, Estes re-contextualizes narratives by Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, who have played an important role in the United States history, calling for civil rights and equality. Hence, the recontextualization of narratives related to both figures serves as the *topos* of authority according to which “X is right because A (=an authority) says that it is right” (Reisigl and Wodak 2001: 79). Thus, by highlighting the struggle of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Yusuf Estes is giving legitimacy to his claim about racial segregation in the United States from the 1940s to the 1960s.

In another instance, Estes invokes a discourse topic on the presidential elections in the United States that was taking place in 2008 between the

Democratic Party nominee Barack Obama and the Republican Party nominee John McCain. This is exemplified below.

Example 8.3.

You know in the West, they still have problems with women holding high position, believe that? How come Hilary Clinton is out of the race? Because and watch what's now happening to Obama when he goes against McCain, McCain is what? What color? Pretty white. You will see, I can be wrong, I have been wrong before, we will see.

The above excerpt invokes two overlapping topics: discourse on politics and discourse on gender. Estes claims, based on racial inequality and segregation at one historical point in the United States, that Obama will not win the race, a prediction that proved to be wrong, since Obama became the United States president in 2009. In addition, a claim is made about the little representation of women in leading political positions in the West; the latter is represented as a homogenous entity. Taking into consideration that this is a problem that is shared by non-Western and Western countries (e.g. see Gelb and Palley, 2009), the claim represents an example of the fallacy of "hasty conclusion" since it "ignores the presence or possibility of contrary evidence" (Johnson and Blair, 1983: 44), i.e. the problem exists elsewhere. This taps into Yusuf Estes' strategy of the representation of the West as the Other.

In other words, by relating the West to topics on racial discrimination and gender inequality, Estes is setting the West in a negative light. In contrast,

Islam/Muslims are positively represented through invoking discourse topics on racial equality and civilization. This can be shown in the following section.

8.1.2. Discourse (topic) on Muslim Civilization

Another main topic in Estes' sermon is Muslim civilization. In the example below, Estes refers to Andalusia in Spain, as a hub for learning during the Middle Ages. He creates two representations that are set in contrast: the supremacy of Spain as a Centre of knowledge in the Middle Ages and the dead bodies carried on wagons in the Middle Ages, as I will explain below.

Example 8.4.

Now I want to take you back †thousand years, the big scientists, doctors and scholars of the time, were in El-Andalus, Andalusia, in Spain and these people were Muslims and they were using the principles taught by Muhammed *alih al-Salat wal salam*, four hundred years before †them, and they were analyzing these things, talking about these things; being philosophical about these things, people like Ibn Senna, Ibn Rushd and other people, like this, are still today mentioned in the medical books, history books (.) you will find, that they were coming with so much amazing things for them, so much so, that by the time of the Black Death in Europe, which we call the West these days, the people there were dying like flies, so far they could not bury them, they would throw them on wagons, dead bodies on wagons, and it was so bad†, that everybody was there was fighting this disease, something was killing them, they call it the black death or the Black Death, you can read about it in encyclopedia, read about

it(.) But these same people used to send their children to be educated in Spain, because that's the real higher learning was, they↑ sent them to ↑Spain.

In the above example, the supremacy of Andalusia in the Middle Ages is represented and highlighted through the use of stress and repetition e.g. "these same people used to send their children to be educated in Spain, because that's the real higher learning was, they↑ sent them to ↑Spain". Europe, however, is linked to discourse on disease, i.e. the Black Death; the simile "people were dying like flies" is a rhetorical device that serves to reflect the severity of the disease, highlighting the precarious situation of Europe during the Black Death. Interestingly, Europe is represented as a place that is geographically distinct from Medieval Spain. This is shown below:

Example 8.5.

But they (scientists) found something amazing, even though some of the students came down with these diseases, it was only the students that came from Europe but none of the locals got it, why? (.) And they came to know↓ that it was because of this: cleaning this hand and only eating with this hand and this hand for anything dirty and still washing it anyway (.) the difference was that they were able to go back and saw the problem in Europe and that was the end of the Black Death after they understood it (.) By the way you won't find that mentioned in the common history books, as there is no reason to mention that, is it? Especially because there is a connection to Islam.

According to the above representation, "the locals" in Spain were immune of the disease in contrast to the students that came from Europe who carried it over. The juxtaposition between Europe and Spain, as two separate entities is indicated in his phrasing that scientists were able "to go back" and "saw the problem in Europe", in which Europe is represented as a geographically distant place and as the source of the problem. Furthermore, "argument from bias" (e.g. see Walton 1992: 338) is employed in "you won't find that mentioned in the common history books...because there is a connection to Islam" where bias towards Islam by the West is a premise for the conclusion rule, i.e. overriding the contributions of Islamic civilization.

To sum up, drawing contrasts and the conflation between the present and the past are salient discursive strategies Estes employs to ideologically represent the West as the Other. For example, Estes disregards the achievements of the civil rights movement in the U.S., extending racial discrimination in the 1940-1960s to the present time, through the use of Direct Thought Presentation and Internal Narration in his narratives and through presupposing that Barack Obama will fail in the presidential elections as a result of his color. This acts as a strategy for the negative presentation of Them (Americans/Westerns) and the positive presentation of US (Islam/Muslims). Furthermore, the supremacy of Andalusia as a hub for learning (the Golden Age of Islamic civilisation) is juxtaposed with the widespread of the Black Death, described as a "European" problem. As such, through the constellation of topics and use of contrasts, Estes creates a dichotomy between US, Muslims and Them, Westerns.

8.1.3. Discourse on the conversion of celebrities

Another important discourse topic in Estes' sermon "Why the West needs Islam" is the conversion of celebrities. Estes refers to two popular figures who converted to Islam: the boxer Muhammad Ali Clay and the former singer Cat Stevens. Both examples serve as the topos of authority which can be read as "since Cassius Clay and Cat Stevens (both celebrity figures) converted to Islam, then there must be positive aspects in Islam". Estes claims that both figures have faced criticism upon converting to Islam, which serves to emphasize Estes' claim about the misrepresentation facing Muslims.

Example 8.6.

When Cassius Clay back, it was 40 years ago or was 50 years ago? he was a boxer (clenching his fist as if in a boxing position), he was number one, he was on top and everybody is looking, "wow" Cassius Clay, who is this guy? Amazing (.) he accepted Islam and changed his name to Muhammed Ali, do you know what they said right away? (.) Too many shots to the head (.) There were a jazz singer that Elton John was jealous of (.) he was ↑glad when he became a Muslim and he never said I never had any competition after he got out of the business, who is he talking about? Cat Stevens. I think he was Greek Orthodox or something, I don't remember but he was Christian at least by name (.) But when he entered Islam, all the people that used to love him, because he has got a great voice, even today he has got great voice, and very creative with his music, but ↑as ↑soon↑as ↑he ↑became ↑a Muslim, you know what they said? Because he had been to the hospital, too many drugs (.) Look a that (.) This is the kind of things that

people say and it means they have to try to explain, what do you have to explain?

In the above example, Estes presents Muhammad Ali Clay positively through the appeal to his strength, fame and success, e.g. "everybody is looking Cassius Clay". This is emphasized through the stress on "boxer", "number one" and "on top", accompanied by clenching the fist of the hands, with a determined expression on his face, which reminds us of the importance of gestures discussed in Chapter 6 to the performance of the three televangelists. The following figure captures Estes as he performs the success of Cassius Clay.

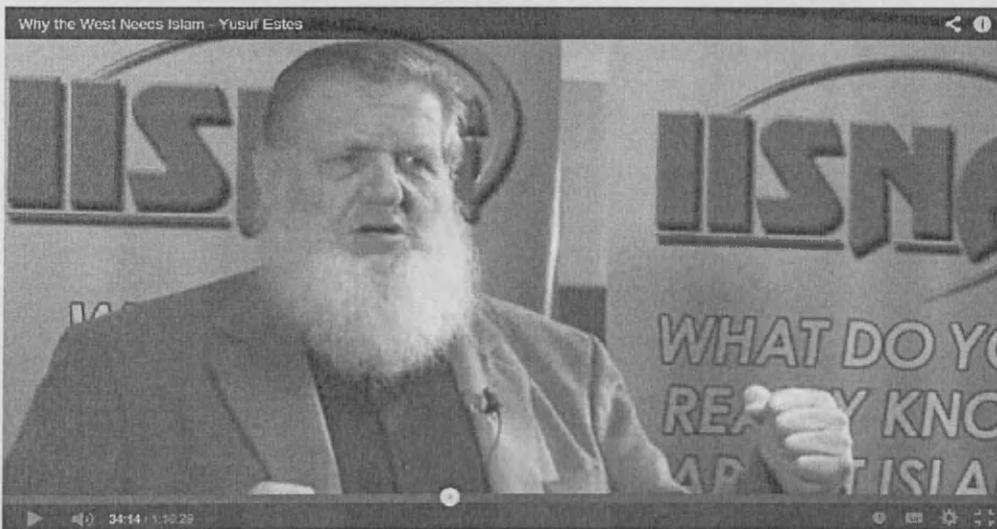


Figure 8.1. While clenching his fist, Estes says "he (Clay) was a boxer, he was number one, on top"

Another Muslim convert that Estes alludes to is Cat Stevens who is seen through the eyes of another celebrity, Elton John, who praised the success that Cat Stevens has achieved; once again, Yusuf Estes draws on the topos of authority, inter alia, to give legitimacy to his invocation to non-Muslims to adopt Islam.

Related to the discourse topic on conversion is a post published on Yusuf Estes' website, IslamNewsroom.Com, about the actor Liam Neeson, who – according to the website- may have converted to Islam. The use of an image for Liam Neeson at the beginning of the post is interesting in many ways; figure 8.2. below is a print screen shot of the report.

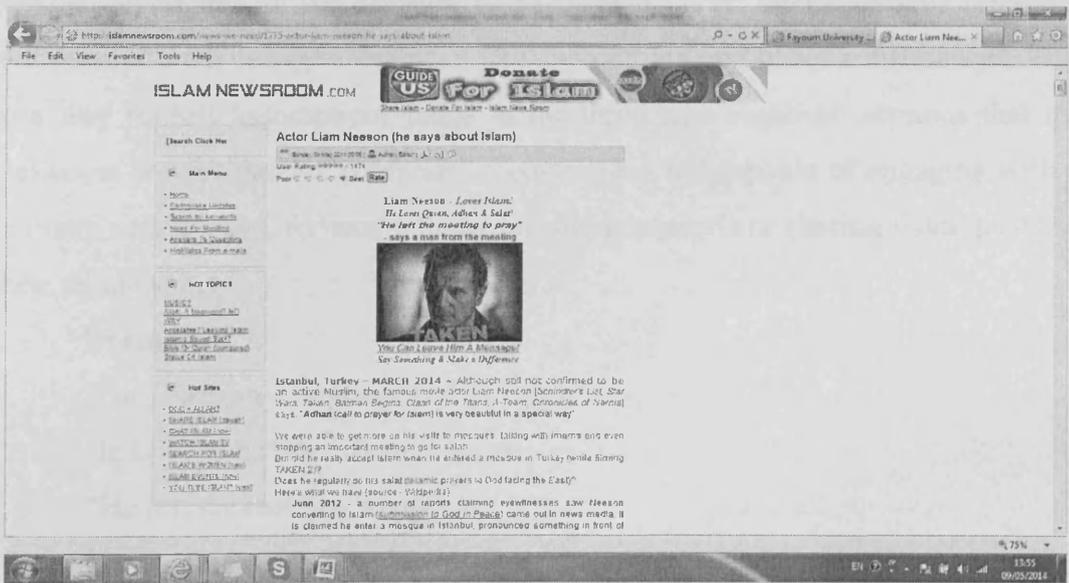


Figure 8.2. In IslamNewsRoom.Com, a report about Liam Neeson allegedly converting to Islam

Liam Neeson's popularity and fame are highlighted in the report. On the textual level, Neeson is predicated as "the famous movie actor Liam Neeson" followed by a list of his most popular movies (e.g. Schindler's List, Star Wars and Taken). Liam Neeson's acting roles are recontextualized in the post. The white shades round Neeson's face make up a halo, suggesting he is a hero; at the same time, the photo reads "taken", referring to the name of one of his movies; and serves as an anchorage to the image. The word can be read as "taken by an interest in Islam"; hence the word is polysemous and has double meanings.

It is worth noting that in the above report, the readers are not assumed to be passive but as having the capacity to participate, in an interdiscursive reference that mimics mediated democracy i.e. "say something and make a difference". This in a way reveals assumptions made in the three televangelists' sermons that the audiences are not passive receivers of content but are capable of engaging with it in many varied ways, for example, by leaving comments or sharing Estes' posts on their online spaces.

Example 8.7.

Liam Neeson - Loves Islam!

He Loves Qur'an, Adhan & Salat!

"He left the meeting to pray"

- says a man from the meeting

You Can Leave Him A Message!

Say Something & Make a Difference

As can be seen above, one discursive strategy Yusuf Estes employs is the appeal to the "authority" of celebrities in contemporary media culture, perceived as "a voice above others, a voice that is channeled into media systems, as being legitimately significant" (Marshall 2004: X).

Thus, through invoking particular discourse topics, Yusuf Estes presents a distinct representation of Islam vis-à-vis the West. To him, Islam is related to civilization, racial equality; and conversion (of celebrities), representing Islam as an "attractive religion". The West, by contrast, is associated with discourse about the Black Death (disease) and racial inequality. These constellation of topics serve to represent Islam positively and the West negatively.

In light of the Discourse Historical Approach, and its emphasis on the interrelation between text and the broader socio-historical contexts (e.g. see Reisigl and Wodak, 2009: 89-93), I would like to comment on Estes' construction of a discursive dichotomy between Us (Muslims) and Them (Westerns). This discursive strategy could be seen as one response "on offer" to the othering of Islam/Muslims in media discourse (e.g. Richardson, 2004; Baker et al 2013). In other words, if Muslims are frequently constructed as the negative "other" in Western media, what Estes is doing is that he is inverting the prism, representing the West as the Other. To illustrate, upon listening to the sermon, two mental images stand in contrast: the supremacy of science in Andalusia and the dead bodies carried on wagons elsewhere in Europe. In the same vein, an image of blacks and whites standing next to each other as they pray (as can be indicated in the analyzed song in Chapter 6) is juxtaposed with segregation between blacks and whites in toilets and schools

in the U.S. in the 1940s, fallaciously equating the past with the present. The positive representation of Islam in Estes' discourse, realized in his sermon, seems to be in line with Miller's remark (2004) about modern spiritualities aimed at creating a “feel good” experience for the individual.

Moving on to the analysis of Hamza Yusuf's sermon “a message to humanity”, I will illustrate below that he creates a different representation of Islam and Muslims and invokes different fields of action. Unlike Yusuf Estes who invokes discourse topics on conversion, on racial and gender inequality, Hamza Yusuf's sermon is primarily an interdiscursive fabric of discourse on religion and politics; for instance, as he invokes sub-topics on the unity of the Abrahamic faith, terrorism and George Bush's policies in the Middle East. The two televangelists, however, are similar in their invocation of discourse on Muslim civilization, and sub-topics on Africa and draw- to different extents - on the US political scene.

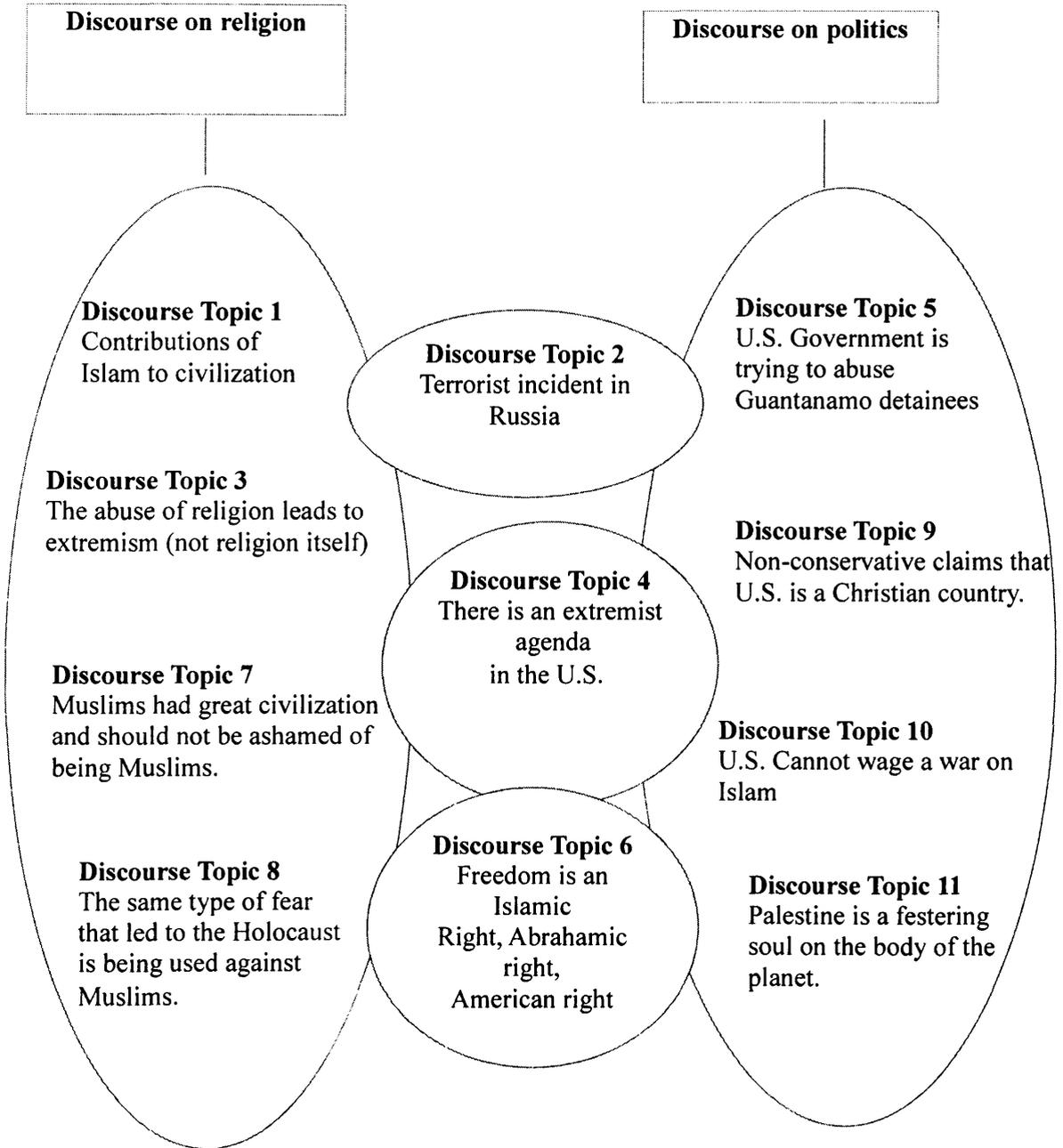
8.2. Analysis of Hamza Yusuf's sermon

As I indicated in the above section, a characteristic feature of Hamza Yusuf's sermon “A message to humanity” is that it invokes many discourse topics and sub-topics on religion and politics, including topics on the contribution of Islam to civilization, a terrorist incident (Belsan School crisis) that took place in Russia, United States being hijacked (politically) by extremists and the U.S. role in the Palestinian issue; thus, it is a highly interdiscursive fabric.

To illustrate, looking into the discourse topics of the sermon, we can identify five main broad (macro⁶⁵) topics in Yusuf's text: a) the Contribution of Islam to civilization b) Unity of Abrahamic faith; c) Islam and terrorism ; d) criticism of the U.S. under Bush's government and e) the Palestinian issue. These topics overlap; this is represented in the figure below:

⁶⁵ Building on Van Dijk (1980:6) I define macro-topics as "global meaning structures".

Figure 8.3. Some of the main discourse topics in Yusuf's text



As can be seen in the above figure, two interrelated discourse topics are religion and politics. Discourse topics on religion includes the contributions of Islamic civilization, defending religion itself as a reason of extremism (rather it is the abuse of religion), unity of Abrahamic faith and the use of quotes and religious references in support of the speaker's assertion that Muslims have to denounce terrorism and reject the concept of collective guilt.

Discourse on politics⁶⁶ includes topics and sub--topics that relate to the criticism of the U.S. government such as the policy of the Republican Party towards Islamic fanatics (perceived as a major threat), the unjust treatment of detainees in Guantanamo and the neo-conservative claim that America is a "Christian" nation/country.

Discourse on religion and politics overlap. For instance, on the macro-topic of Palestine, the speaker refers to the death of the human right activist Rachel Corrie, invoking a topic he mentioned earlier that indiscriminate violence is against Abrahamic tradition. The main topics in Yusuf's text are explained below.

8.2.1. Islam, an Abrahamic tradition

Unlike Yusuf Estes who presents Islam as a “better” correlate to Christianity, the unity of Abrahamic faith emerges as an important topic in Yusuf's

⁶⁶ Following Chilton and Schäffner (1997: 212) I take 'political' to mean "those actions (linguistic or other) which involve power or its inverse, resistance".

sermons. He imagines a Muslim community (an *umma*) that is not exclusive to Muslims but one in which Muslims are in unity with Jews and Christians. To illustrate, Hamza Yusuf invokes the sanctity of life in the Abrahamic faith (Topic 4) within the context of his argument that terrorism is a modern phenomenon that has to be denounced.

Example 8.8.

The Abrahamic faith shares the sanctity of life and the Muslims must assert their Abrahamic truth, we have to assert to the Abrahamic peoples that we are the last extension of the Abrahamic truth (.) that's there is a God and that he communicates with his creation and he calls them to his unity, and he calls them to the ↑highest morality, known to human kind.

One strategy employed in the above example is the use of parallel structures using the pronoun “we” followed by stative verbs that express a state rather than an action (e.g. we have to assert to the Abrahamic peoples that we are the last extension of the Abrahamic faith); this serves as a persuasive strategy through repetition. Responsibility and morality are employed as topoi leading to the conclusion rule that: since Muslims are the last Abrahamic faith, they have (a responsibility) to adopt the highest moral values; this claim is premised on the content-related warrant that a believer of the Abrahamic tradition should attain the highest moral ideas. This is further stressed through the use of stress on "last extension", "Abrahamic truth" and the increased loudness on "highest morality". In this way, Yusuf is constructing a representation of Muslims in unity with Christian and Jews; thus, in a way, Hamza Yusuf is re-imagining an *umma* that converges in its degrees of inclusivity to the *umma* of Medina (see section 3.6.1. The meanings

of *umma*). Through the repetition of “morality” and “highest ideals”, the speaker is positioning himself, on an intellectual level, as a figure who aspires for morality and universal values (see Chapter 6).

8.2.2. The contribution of Islam to civilization

Another important discourse topic in Yusuf’s text is the contribution of Islam to Western civilization; it spans different structural points in Yusuf’s sermon. Unlike Yusuf Estes to whom the Muslim civilization is restricted to Europe, Hamza Yusuf creates a wide (global) spanning for the Muslim civilization.

Example 8.9.

Wherever Islam went it did not divorce the people from their land (.) from their culture and their tradition (.) But rather it purified these people (.) It purified these people and made them realize their inherent genius....Some of the greatest contributions in our history have been from the Muslims (.) diverse ↑contributions (.) from Persia (.) from Muslim China (.) from Spain (.) and these contributions have infused Western civilization with gifts that they had in these countries in Europe and the United States had yet to recognize.

As stated earlier, one persuasive strategy Hamza Yusuf employs is the use of parallel structures, for example “from Persia (.) from Muslim China (.) from Spain (.)”. Through the use of these parallel constructions, each separated by a pause, Hamza Yusuf re-imagines a wide-spanning of the Muslim civilization. This is also

indicated through the stress and increased loudness on "greatest", "diverse" and "contributions".

Another important aspect in the above example is the subversion of the topos of culture by presenting a (counter-) argument that Islam did not divorce people from their culture. The topos of culture is used in discriminatory rhetoric to exclude particular groups (see Wodak 2001: 76) and is based on the condition that "because the culture of a specific group of people is as it is, specific problems arise in specific situations". In another instance, in Topic 10, the topos of right is used within the context of the discourse topic on Muslim civilization; the speaker argues that Muslims have the right to live in America and should not be ashamed of being Muslims.

Example 8.10.

You should know you are American, you have every right to be here. You have every right to descend, to speak your truth. Don't be ashamed of being part of religious tradition that created the civilization of noble India, that created the civilization of Andalusia in Spain, that gave the world some of the greatest treasures that we have, whether they be political, whether they be governmental, whether they be legal, whether they be philosophical, theological and even artistic gems, even artistic gems, don't be ashamed of your Islam, stand up fairly and bravely and speak your truth.

The use of the deontic modal verb "you should now", the second person pronoun "you", as a form of direct address, and the imperatives "stand up...your truth" highlight the urgency of Yusuf's call that is aimed at "every" Muslim.

In another topic, i.e. the United States cannot wage a war on Islam, Yusuf, again, invokes the topic that Islam had an impact on the Western tradition.

Example 8.11.

So we must see that Islam has given too much and tonight is about giving (.) Muslims have given too much to civilization for them to be accused or abused by those people who wish nothing but harm for this country (.) That is what they want (audience clap).

Yusuf puts an emphasis on the contribution of Islamic civilization through the stress on the quantifier "too much" and the material verbs "abused" and "accused". In this way, the past Islamic civilization is used in Yusuf's sermon as topos⁶⁷ or content-related warrant. This is based on the condition that "because Muslim scholars have contributed to Western civilization, Muslims should not be misrepresented/abused/accused and should not be ashamed of being Muslims".

8.2.3. Formation of political attitudes

If one field of action invoked in Yusuf Estes' sermon is proselytization, one field of action in Hamza Yusuf's sermon is the creation of a public opinion against the US government.

⁶⁷ Drawing on Kienpointner (1992:194) and Wodak (2001:74), I define topos as "content-related warrants or conclusion rules which connect the argument or arguments with the conclusion, the claim" (Wodak *ibid.*).

One topic Hamza Yusuf discusses is the claim that the US government is abusing Guantanamo detainees; the argument is developed through the topos of authority in which Hamza Yusuf refers to two popular attorneys and activists that were opposed to George Bush's policies: Michael Ratner⁶⁸ and Barbara Olshansky.

On the same topic on the abuse of Guantanamo detainees, Hamza Yusuf makes the claim that Freedom is an Islamic right, an Abrahamic right and an American right. This claim is developed through a reference to wars that have been fought in the last 500 years; he recurrently refers to a “planet”, implying that he is referring to a global community (see Chapter 7).

Example 8.12.

Too much blood have been shed on this planet, too much blood has been shed on this planet, in order that we might have rights and these rights are Islamic rights; they are Abrahamic rights and they are American rights and if we don't stand up for them, then we will suffer the fate of those who are not worthy of the rights that they had been given as we see them taken away from us.

In the above excerpt, Hamza Yusuf, once again, draws on the topos of rights to develop his argument, premised on the condition that “if a law or an otherwise codified norm prescribes or forbids a specific politico-administrative action, the action has to be performed or omitted” (Wodak, 2001: 76).

⁶⁸ Michael Ratner is an attorney and President Emeritus of the Centre for Constitutional Rights (CCR), a non-profit human rights organization based in New York City and is the president of the European Centre for Constitutional and Human Rights based in Berlin.

In another topic, Hamza Yusuf raises awareness of the importance of the recognition of the Palestinian cause:

Example 8.13.

And I will end on this note ↓ (.) that I sincerely believe ↑ until the Palestinian issue is recognized (.) as the festering soul on the body of the Planet (taps on the podium), until the United States of America rises up to her responsibility in addressing a grave crime against the people for over fifty years who have been suffering in humiliation in abject poverty (audience clap) and have suffered at the hands of the current government...Palestine is the ISS↑UE.

The use of the signpost "And I will end on this note" indicates that Palestine is one topic the speaker would like to emphasize; this is highlighted through the increased loudness and stress on "festering", "body" and "planet", together with the tapping sounds on the podium. The use of the parallel structures, "in humiliation", in "abject poverty" accompanied by stress on "humiliation" and "poverty" heightens the gravity of the topic; to which the audience responded with applause.

Thus, as can be seen above, the sermon of Hamza Yusuf is not tied to religious discourse but rather converges towards political rhetoric as the speaker attempts to create public opinion and attitudes against George Bush's government.

If Hamza Yusuf is critical of the US Policies during Bush's government, and his sermon can be understood as an attempt to persuade his audiences to adopt

these attitudes, Baba Ali seems to be focused on “ethnic Islam” as he attempts to redefine the relationship between Islam and culture, fulfilling the field of action of the formation of public opinion and attitudes.

8.3. Analysis of Baba Ali's videos

Broadly speaking, there are three macro-topics in Baba Ali's videos: a) misrepresentation of Islam; b) discourse on the unity of the Muslim community and c) personal relationships and etiquette/behavior.

8.3.1. Discourse on the misrepresentation of Islam

One important discourse topic in Baba Ali's videos is the misrepresentation of Islam. This topic is addressed in his first video-blogs “who hijacked my religion” (season 1); “How did you convert to Islam (season 1); “why Islam” (season 2); “Muslim while flying” (season 1) and “randomly checked at the airport” (season 3). These videos span two sub-genres. One is a hybrid drama/speech genre in which Baba Ali, first, outlines the problem, inserts acting scenes that aim to highlight the misrepresentation of Muslims/Islam, and puts forth his claim at the end. Another genre used by Baba Ali is the short speech, not more than ten minutes, in which Baba Ali argues why Islam does not preach terrorism. It is worth noting here that in Baba Ali's YouTube videos, claims are made in brief bullet-point format in which Baba Ali presents counter-claims as to why Islam does not promote terrorism. Hence, because of the structure of Baba Ali's sermons,

argumentation strategies present an important discursive strategy, which I give attention to below.

Topos 1: The topos of abuse

One topos that recurs in Baba Ali's videos is that since some people (Muslims and non-Muslims) misunderstand Islam and/or abuse it, Islam itself cannot be blamed. In "Why Islam", Baba Ali argues that "there are people out there who do actions that Islam forbids in the name of Islam abusing this beautiful religion". According to this argumentation strategy, since there are people who abuse religion, they cannot be taken as representative of what Islam teaches/all Muslims do.

Another variation of this argument is that since some Muslims are ignorant about their religion, they cannot be representative of it. To illustrate, in his video-blog "Why Islam", Baba Ali states: "most Muslims are born to this religion without anyone explaining it to Muslims and unfortunately, their action and behaviour reflect their lack of understanding". According to this content-related topos, since some Muslims are ignorant of their religion, they cannot be regarded as representative of it.

Topos 2: Islam is the religion of reason and rationality

In the same sermon "Why Islam?", Baba Ali represents Islam as the religion of reason and rationality. On this topic, Baba Ali explains that "scientifically, there are so many verses on scientific knowledge in the Qur'an, that I don't have time to

explain in this short video. All I can tell you 1400 years ago, it was impossible for anyone to have this accurate information, especially when some of these things are being discovered in this past century".

This broad theme of Islam and intellect is dealt with in different ways by Hamza Yusuf and Yusuf Estes; whereas Hamza Yusuf draws on the importance of reading and attaining knowledge (e.g. in his sermon the "The true spirit of Islam"⁶⁹), Yusuf Estes makes use of scientific discoveries alluded to in the Qur'an to prove that the Qur'an is a book of science. To illustrate, one of Yusuf Estes' websites, "Islamscience.com" includes videos by Estes in which the speakers provide evidence of the scientific miracles in the Qur'an.

Topos of numbers: "five to eight Muslims live here in the United States"

Another augmentation strategy is the topos of numbers which is used to justify Baba Ali's claim that Islam does not teach terrorism; since generations of Muslims have been living in the West. In "Muslim while flying", Baba Ali points out that "if you study Islam, you will see there is no terrorism in Islam. Think about it. Out of the six billion million in this planet, one and half billion people are Muslim...So if Islam taught terrorism, one and half billion human beings will be doing violent acts. But that is not the reality, because Islam does not teach terrorism". In another video "randomly checked at the airport", Baba Ali points out "the fact is Muslims have been living in the West generation after generation; so, if Islam really taught terrorism, they were all pretty bad terrorist".

⁶⁹ Link to the sermon: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l0cj0g_9fre Last accessed 2nd June 2015.

In the above examples, the topos of numbers, i.e. there are five to eight millions in the United States, is used to support the claim that Islam does not teach violence. In the discourse of Hamza Yusuf and Yusuf Estes, the topos of numbers, is likewise drawn upon in many varied ways, as I have outlined earlier. For instance, in his speech, “Changing the Tide: Islam in America”, Hamza Yusuf points out: “we are in the United States of America in large numbers, and we should be utilizing that fact, we have a job to do and that job is about reconciling, because we don't want a planet that disintegrate into more war, into more hatred, into more violence, into more conflict, into more human suffering”. Numbers are used as a content-related warrant to support Hamza Yusuf's claim that Muslims have a role to do, which is reconciliation.

Thus, topos of numbers as an argumentation strategy is used differently by the three televangelists; because we are in large numbers we have a moral responsibility to reconcile between Muslims and non-Muslims and/or Westerns (Hamza Yusuf); and because millions of Muslims are in the States, then Islam cannot be teaching violence (Baba Ali); and while there are billions of Muslims, what matters is the behavior (Yusuf Estes).

In addition to the misrepresentation of Islam, another topic that Baba Ali invokes is the criticism of first-generation immigrants who are represented as being out of touch with young Muslims.

8.3.2. Discourse on “ethnic Islam”

One theme that runs throughout the sermons of the three televangelists is the imagination of a Muslim community that is unified. This shows, for example, in Hamza Yusuf’s appeal to the audience to denounce terrorism “in one voice”, presupposing unity and harmony. It also shows in the songs that precede Yusuf Estes’ sermon in which Muslims are represented as a “color-blind” community that is unified and in harmony. The theme of the *umma* or the imagination of a global Muslim community is evident in Baba Ali’s YouTube videos. According to Baba Ali, the *umma* (global Muslim community) is in a weak state, because Muslims have adopted cultural practices that conflict with the teachings of Islam. Five video-blogs address the topic of “ethnic Islam”: “culture versus Islam” (season 1), “racism and pride” (season 3); “my culture” (season 5); “cultural parents” (season 5) and “what happened to our masjids” (season 5). To illustrate, in his video “culture versus Islam”, Baba Ali starts his video by pointing out:

Example 8.14.

Many Muslims who come from overseas, they leave Islam back in their home country, I mean, they bring their traditions, their culture but their traditions have nothing to do with Islam; for example, the idea of a forced marriage, when a woman gets married without her consent, Islam does not allow that, it is totally messed up man. Islam liberated people from this ignorant way of thinking. For some Muslims, they love their culture, more than they love Islam. And that is why they want to compromise religion for the sake of their culture.

The above example outlines inter-generational gap as one problem that faces Muslim youth in the West (e.g. Cesari 2003); as parents are represented as blindly following their traditions that conflict with Islam. This is emphasized through the representation of Islam as an object that first generation immigrants must have left it at home, i.e. “they leave Islam back in their home country” and through the use of negation as exemplified in “their traditions have nothing to do with Islam”. The use of the superlative form “they love their culture, more than they love Islam” sets culture as an entity that is opposed to what Islam teaches. The use of the colloquial term “messed up man” reminds us of the conversational style that permeates Baba Ali's sermons that has been discussed thoroughly in Chapter 6 of the thesis.

Another discursive strategy used in relation to the representation of “ethnic parents” is the use of irony to highlight the inter-generational gap between parents and Muslim youth. To illustrate, in his YouTube video “my culture”, Baba Ali gives a humorous account of an ethnic parent by flouting the expectations of the viewers as to how a parent might behave. In the video, the ethnic parent wears sharp, exaggerated expressions and acts bizarrely by insisting on giving Baba Ali his business card, even though Baba Ali is “not doing any type of business with him” (see figure 8.4. below). (Again, this reminds us of Baba Ali's self-representation as an entrepreneur). The parent, a “cardiologist”, complains that he would like the mosque to teach his son culture rather than Islam.



Figure 8.4. Asalamu Alikom, brother, I just listened to your talk and I would like to work with you. Here is my card.

In line with some of Baba Ali's videos (see section 6.3.2. Involving the audience), in the video referred to above, “my culture”, Baba Ali holds a dialogue with an ethnic parent. One salient point is how Baba Ali aligns himself to the Muslim youth, speaking on behalf of them. This leads to the assumption that Baba Ali is specifically targeting Muslim youth in his video-blogs.

Example 8.15.

Baba Ali: With all the respect, it is your culture. Your son may view it in a very different way than you view it. Have you really thought about talking to him to the Islamic angle regarding listening to your parents?

Cardiologist: It does matter what Islam says. It matters culture. I have CARDS. I have many cards (staring at the camera).

Baba Ali: Well, that seems to a problem, because why should he care about what your culture says. Kids today who are finding Islam are caring more about what Islam says...I often go to the masjid and see the same thing over and over again; I find cultural parents who have problems with their kids.

Sometimes the conflict is a result of their kids growing up in this country, and therefore they have a completely different culture than their parents; and sometimes the conflict is because the parents are cultural and the kids are religious and this is quite too common; either way, the parents who want their culture with their dear life, hoping that (opening his arms and looking upwards) one day, my child will become cultural, like me, remember back home. What they cannot realize is that their kids care less about back home (pointing with his thumb towards the back of his shoulder), because they are not back home and they are not planning to go back home, because this (pointing with his thumb fingers) is home.

In the above example, first-generation immigrants are described as being in a rift with their kids, as shown in “parents are cultural; kids are religious”. The expressions “this is far too common” and “over and over again” present the inter-generational gap between parents and kids as a common problem, which seems to be the case in light of research on Muslim youth in the West (e.g. Cesari, 2003; and Mandaville, 2001: 131-136 see below for further elaboration). In addition, Baba Ali draws on his personal experience to give legitimacy to his claim about the prevalence of the problem: “I often go to the mosque and I see the same thing over and over again”; employing personal experience as an argumentative strategy is also employed by Yusuf Estes and Baba Ali.

The video ends with a note in which Baba Ali directly address the parents:

Example 8.16.

A lot of youth are now returning back to Islam and what I said in this video is very clear for them. I hope one day, it becomes just clear for many of our parents as well. Do you know what I am saying?

“Dialogicality” seems to be one important aspect in the above excerpt; which following up on Bakhtin (1984:6) can be defined as the expression of “plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices”. This shows in Baba Ali’s statement, “they are not planning to go back home, because this (pointing with his thumb fingers) is home”; in other words, as Baba Ali refers to the US/West as “home”, he is apparently responding to voices that represent Muslims in the West as non-belonging (e.g. Baker et al 2013; Wodak et al 2013; Wodak, 2015). He, therefore, seems to be addressing “other” voices that hold opposite views to what he believes in (Bakhtin *ibid.*).

The comments following the YouTube video lend support to Baba Ali’s claims about “ethnic Islam”. Since this is one important topic in literature on Muslims in the West (see Cesari 2003; Mandaville 2003; 2007), I choose below to substantiate my analysis of Baba Ali’s discourse on ethnic Islam, by exploring users’ comments following the YouTube video which can give us some useful insights into commenters’ view on the issue. Upon examining the YouTube comments following his video “my culture” two patterns emerge in the comments: a) expression of agreement that some parents are concerned with culture and are out of touch with their kids and b) negotiation of Baba Ali’s stance on culture and religion. Here are some examples.

Example 8.17.

jixalfx 10 months ago

Fantastic video! I completely agree with you. I'm 22 years old and I notice many of the older people in my family and extended family act more culturally than Islamically. I don't like many aspects of my Asian culture that seems to have stemmed from religions before Islam (polytheism perhaps). I also really don't care about 'back home' either, they fail to understand that?

Read more Show less (4) Likes

In the above comment, “jixalfx”, 22 years old, aligns with the stance taken by Baba Ali in rejecting the conflation between culture and Islam as shown in “I completely agree with you” and in the emotive verbs “I don't like many aspects of my Asian culture”. In line with Baba Ali's stance, the parents are represented as being out of touch with their children; as shown in the use of the verb “fail to understand”, negatively predicating parents. If the above example shows an alignment with Baba Ali’s stance, other users negotiate and redefine the meaning of culture that Baba Ali criticizes.

Example 8.18.

Mohiuddin23 10 months ago

This is a brilliant video! With all due respect... with our immigration of Muslims to the West, we have a new phenomenon of young Muslims who rediscover their religion. But in doing that, they deny the culture of their parents deeming it "un-islamic" in aims of following a "pure Islam." You then have these cliché slogans of "Deen over Culture." Islam does not

overlook culture. Culture has many benefits, it is a sign of God. It is the medium through which humans experience and express themselves in the world. Without culture, we are robots without context. Culture is essential to being truly human. People who reject culture end up lacking substance. Religion is the gardener of culture - it removes the weeds, prunes some plants, and waters the fruitful tress. It is the measure, but doesn't replace culture. Similarly, we need to recognize the differences between the blameworthy *dunya* and the *dunya* that allows us to gain proximity to Allah, such as following a certain career path to help humanity?

Read more Show less

Example 8.19.

jixalfx 10 months ago

That was a brilliant analogy.?

Example 8.20.

Mazzy Ali 5 months ago

A lot of cultural customs are backward and conflict with Islam. Personally, I reject culture so that my Islamic beliefs and cultural practices don't get mixed up, which is what I believe happened to my parents. Hence there (sic) lack of Islamic knowledge?

Example 8.21.

Mohiuddin23 5 months ago

Well that's why we should be aspirants to increase in Prophetic knowledge insha Allah?

In Example 8.18., Mohiuddin23 expresses his appreciation of the video through his use of the exclamatory expression “this is a brilliant video”. He negotiates Baba Ali's stance on culture through using two metaphors in which both Islam and culture are positively predicated. Using gardening as a source domain, Mohiuddin2 compares Islam to a gardener and culture to a garden, i.e. “religion is the gardener of culture - it removes the weeds, prunes some plants, and waters the fruitful tress. It is the measure, but doesn't replace culture”. One salient aspect is how the commenter represents an imagined community of Muslims as he uses the collective pronoun “we”, positioning himself as a critic who analyzes social problems and offers solutions; he advises Muslims to identify aspects of life that will make Muslims closer to God. This substantiates my earlier remarks that new media platforms are enabling some Muslims to re-imagine a global Muslim community. The negotiation of the meaning of culture reminds us of the debate I have taken up in Chapter 4 in which I discussed the emergence of a virtual public sphere on the Internet where views and counter-views can be contested and negotiated.

Indeed, there are four replies to Mohiuddin23 analysis of culture; “jixalfx”, for instance, expresses his positive stance towards “Mohiuddin23” as he states “that was a brilliant analogy”; “Mazzy Ali”, however, seems to disagree with “Mohiuddin23” in which he argues that “a lot of cultural customs are backward and conflict with Islam”, negatively predicating “a lot of cultural customs” as “backward”.

8.4. Conclusion

In Chapter 7, I explored the representation of Islam and the West and in this Chapter, I have extended the analysis to the discourse topics, narratives and the discursive strategies employed in televangelists' sermons. As I have demonstrated earlier, by invoking particular topics and discourses, each televangelist creates particular representations; some of which are common among the three televangelists.

To illustrate the above, through invoking the topics on the Black Death (in Europe) and Muslim civilisation in Spain, Yusuf Estes creates a discursive dichotomy between Islam and the West; both constructed in the text as two rigid entities that are in a state of conflict. In the previous chapter (Chapter 7), I elaborated on Estes' use of nominalization and predication strategies, through which the West is represented as an entity attacking Muslims. This chapter has further demonstrated that the topics Estes invokes can be perceived as realizations of the discursive strategy of the positive representation of Us and the negative representation of them; since Estes creates a stark contrast between Islam, linked to civilisation and Europe, associated with disease and Black Death. Furthermore, by creating topics on the conversion of celebrities to Islam, Yusuf Estes represents Islam as an “attractive” religion. Thus, proselytization -here- seems to be a “field of action” related to Estes' sermon. This also shows in Estes' self-representation on his websites (see Chapter 6) in which he publishes posts about conversion stories, including the story of his conversion to Islam.

Hamza Yusuf creates an inter-discursive fabric, intended to bring about change of political attitudes towards George Bush's government. However, Hamza Yusuf seems to include a more inclusive boundary for Us that includes Americans/Muslims/Believers of Abrahamic faith/humans. Note, for example, the recurrent use of the word “planet” in his sermons; for example, “we don't want a planet to disintegrate into more war” (Hamza Yusuf's sermon, “changing the tide: Islam in America”). This also shows in the sermon being examined in the study “A message to humanity” in which the problems of Aids in Africa and joblessness, rather global problems, are used as examples to subvert the representation of Islam as a threat.

As for Baba Ali, like Hamza Yusuf, he attempts to create public opinion about Islam/Muslims. Most salient here is the use of argumentation strategies to back up his claims that Islam does not support terrorism, including the use of topos of number, abuse, and his claim that there is a “true” Islam that some Muslims are not able to attain. I have pointed out that these topoi are not rather specific to Baba Ali's discourse but are recurrent among the three televangelists, which gives further empirical insights into the discussion in Chapter 2 (section 2.3. politico-tainment) on televangelism being part of an Islamic popular culture. Thus, despite the differences between the three televangelists in terms of age and style, there are arguments and shades of meanings that are recurrent in their discourses.

To recapitulate, the three televangelists appear to have different objectives. Yusuf Estes highlights the misrepresentations that Muslims and converts may face; thus serving his missionary agenda. Baba Ali is interested in changing attitudes

towards “ethnic Islam” through naming and identifying inter-generational gap as a problem facing Muslim youth. Hamza Yusuf, however, is more focused on the political level in which he attempts to create oppositional discourse against George Bush's policies, by alluding to injustices in Guantanamo Bay and calling for addressing the Palestinian cause.

The following chapter takes us to another important aspect in relation to the construction of Muslim identities, i.e. the religious and historical eras each televangelist recontextualizes and invokes.

Chapter 9: How is history (religious and non-religious references) recontextualized in Muslim televangelists' discourse?

One identity-constituency aspect is the use of history (Heer et al 2008:7). As the authors argue, “identity in the sense of self-identification is not only realized in the “name” of the collective but also in its history-in the narrative that it produces” (ibid.). History-in turn- is constituted of “interpretation and reinterpretation of the past” and is subject to “hegemonic” narratives (ibid. p. xiii).

It is worth noting that one characteristic aspect of televangelists' sermons is that it is a discursive space in which many historical/religious references (e.g. characters and eras) are invoked. Broadly speaking, as an argumentation strategy, history is invoked in televangelists' sermons based on the following condition: “because history teaches that specific actions have specific consequences, one should perform or omit a specific action in a specific situation (allegedly) comparable with the historical example referred to” (Wodak, 2001: 76; also see Forchtner, 2014). What distinguishes between the discourses of the three televangelists', however, is the degree of inclusivity towards particular eras/historical references. Most specific to Hamza Yusuf's discourse is the use of historical references that span many eras including the Middle Ages, the Enlightenment, Ottoman history and American histories. Baba Ali's sermons, feature historical references to World World II and Muslim civilization in Baghdad (see below). In addition, religious references (e.g. texts and Qur'anic allusions) are re-contextualized in televangelists' sermons, including Biblical references and allusions.

As I will explain below, the re-contextualisation of historical references serves two functions: a) creating a distinct representation of Islam (vis-a-vis the West); b) creating a common history for Us, Muslims, through highlighting particular historical eras, which are thus represented as part of “our history”. As for the use of religious references, they serve two functions: a) giving legitimacy to the claims made by the speaker by virtue of the authority most Muslims attribute to the Qur'an and the Prophet's sayings and b) representing Islam (i.e. those religious references) as a dynamic entity that is capable of seeing through the contemporary problems of Muslims and offering solutions.

9.1. Use of historical references in televangelists' sermons

As indicated earlier, one historical era that is invoked by Yusuf Estes is the Muslim civilization in Spain, which serves to highlight the supremacy of Islam in the Middle Ages.

Like Yusuf Estes, the sermons by Baba Ali feature a reference to Muslim civilization. In his sermon “the pursuit” of cleanliness, Baba Ali discusses the importance of cleanliness in which he draws upon the Muslim civilization that grew in Baghdad.

Example 9.1.

When Europe was going through the dark ages, people were not taking showers; they were filthy; at the same time, the Muslim umma was in its golden ages and many Muslims were taking Islam seriously. The people were clean and bathed regularly? What do you think soap and *atir* (*scent*)

came from? During the time of Haron El-Rasheed, they were washing the streets of Baghdad with soap and water. That is clean. But these days, because you wanna be clean, you are looked upon as being strange. As a practising Muslim, cleanliness is very important.

The above example bears a reference to the Golden Age of Islam, which refers to the scientific, cultural and intellectual flourishing that occurred during the reign of the Abbasid Empire in which Baghdad in Iraq became a Centre of a “civilization which drew heavily on the foundations laid by Greece, Byzantium and Persia” (Bennison, 2009: 5). One main aspect- according to Estes and Ali- is that when Europe was in the Dark Ages, Muslim scholars were able to create a flourishing scientific and cultural traditions.

In the above representations of Muslim civilizations by Estes (who referred to Muslim Spain) and Baba Ali (who referred to Abbasid Iraq), one aspect that is overlooked is that Muslim civilizations relied on the assimilation between Muslim Jewish and Christian scholars. One consequence of the above omission is that a fallacious representation of Muslim civilizations are given, which are imagined to be an exclusively “Muslim endeavor” and in which Europe is imagined to be a monolithic entity that Muslims “surpassed”. Moreover, both Baba Ali and Yusuf Estes give a simplistic account of the Muslim civilizations. What is never mentioned, for example is the role of translation, which allowed, inter alia, Muslim and Jewish scholars in Baghdad and Andalusia to translate, critique and build up on scholarly work from Greece, Byzantium and Persia (see Bennison, 2009: 5-7).

Like Yusuf Estes and Baba Ali, the Muslim civilization is re-imagined by Hamza Yusuf (see section 6.2.2 of the thesis). Unlike Yusuf Estes and Baba Ali, Hamza Yusuf re-imagines a wide spanning for the Muslim civilization that stretched to Muslim India and China, as indicated earlier (8.2.2. The contribution of Islam to civilization).

In addition, Hamza Yusuf draws upon Muslim civilization as an argumentation strategy premised on the following condition: since Muslims contributed to the Western civilization in the past, they have the right to be assimilated in the West. Another variation of this argument is that since Muslims have contributed to the Muslim civilization in the past, they should not be abused or accused. Other historical eras invoked by Hamza Yusuf include: the Ottoman history, the Enlightenment and the ratification of the Constitution of the United States of America. This could be interpreted as an attempt by Yusuf to create an American Muslim identity in which American histories are considered to be equally important and binding, as Islamic histories.

To illustrate the above, on the topic of the abuse of detainees in Guantanamo Bay, Hamza Yusuf supports his claim about the unjust policies of the the US government during Bush's era by referring to the Magna Carta as an important legal document European histories (see below).

Example 9.2.

I spent several hours with Michael Ratner, with Barbara Olshansky in the Centre of Constitutional Rights; we were seeing memos from the State Department, from the department of justice that was calling to put the

detainees in the Guantanamo Bay so that they would not have any judicial review. This is against the Magna Carta; this is against the Medieval European document we as Westerns pride ourselves on; this is against the medieval doctrine; we are living in the twenty first century.

Historically speaking, the Magna Carta (Latin for Great Charter) is a document forced on King John, who ruled England from 1199 until his death in 1216, by a group of his subjects in an attempt to limit his power; the document is known in the English speaking world as an important document for setting the rule of constitutional law in England and Europe (e.g. see British Library project: taking liberties⁷⁰).

Another claim made in Hamza Yusuf's sermon is that the ideals of the United States of America are rooted in "Islamic ideals". He refers to an edict of toleration issued in Transylvania, what is known now as Romania, under the suzerainty of the Ottoman Empire:

Example 9.3.

Toleration is an Islamic gift to the West; and this can be historically proven, because the first edict of toleration was the edict of Buda and it was done under the Ottoman Empire, under the suzerainty of a Unitarian Transylvanian Prince.

⁷⁰ Link to the project: <http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/takingliberties/staritems/21magnacarta.html>
Last accessed 2nd June 2015.

In the above example, a historical incident is invoked that took place in 1548 under the Ottoman ruling; the Catholic authorities asked the Pasha of Buda to expel a preacher who was preaching Protestantism. The Pasha of Buda, however, denied their request, and issued an edict of toleration, which stated that:

Preachers of the faith invented by Luther should be allowed to preach the Gospel everywhere to everybody, whoever wants to hear, freely and without fear, and that all Hungarians and Slavs (who indeed wish to do so) should be able to listen to and receive the word of God without any danger (Greenwood and Harris, 2011).

A salient point to mention here is that, compared to Muslim Spain, frequently cited as the prime of Muslim civilization in science, literature, art and culture, Ottoman history, for instance its multicultural policies, is rather underestimated and misrepresented (e.g. see Agoston and Masters, 2009: xxviii). As Yusuf recontextualizes the incident of the Pasha of Buda, he is setting the Ottoman history in a positive light, as part of "our" Islamic history.

In the same vein, on the topic of Islam had an impact on the Western tradition (Topic 14), Yusuf refers to Edward Pococke, an Orientalist and Arabic scholar who influenced the political theorist John Locke:

Example 9.4.

We have also clear evidence that John Locke, one of the greatest political theorists in Western history was influenced by Edward Pococke who just happened to be the Professor of Islamic and Arabic studies at Cambridge

University. He convinced John Locke to abandon his Trinitarianism and embrace Unitarianism, to embrace the unity of God.

In the above example, Hamza Yusuf refers to one important figure in European Enlightenment, Edward Pococke, being influenced by the Islamic tradition; this serves to back up Yusuf's argument of the impact of Islam on Western traditions.

Another era that Hamza Yusuf recalls is the ratification of the constitution of the United States of America in the eighteenth century. This era is invoked within Hamza Yusuf's reference to the neo-conservative claim that the US is a Christian nation. He opposes this argument by inserting one quotation by Thomas Jefferson in support of The Virginia Act for Establishing Religious Freedom (1786):

Example 9.5.

Jefferson wrote: it was proposed that the Lord, holy author of our religion, be changed into our lord Jesus Christ, but the proposal was rejected by a great majority; this is in Virginia in the legislature, the proposal to replace God with our lord Jesus Christ was rejected by a great majority in proof that they meant to include within the mantel of its protection, the Jew and the Gentile, the Christian and the Muhammadans, the Hindu and infidel of every denomination. And that is the basis of this country.

By including references such as as the Magna Carta and the ratification of the constitution of United States of America, Hamza Yusuf positions himself and

his audiences as both, Muslims and Westerns, as indicated in “this is against the Magna Carta that we as Westerns pride ourselves on”.

Another reference made in the text is the atrocity of the Holocaust. Yusuf refers to the Holocaust in the context of recounting an incident of non-Muslims handing out pamphlets in solidarity with American Muslims because –he says- the same type of fear that led to the Holocaust is now being used against Muslims:

Example 9.6.

This is what American people were saying because they know that the very fear that was created in Nazi Germany against the Jewish people that led to the horrific atrocity of the Holocaust is the same type of fear that is being used to cast the eye of suspicion upon righteous women, upon virtuous women who don't look very different than the nuns that are revered and respected in this culture.

There are two points worth noting in the above quotation. By re-contextualizing the Holocaust in the contemporary context of Muslims, Hamza Yusuf is in a way dramatizing the context of Muslims in the post 9-11 context and relativising its meaning as the extermination of nearly 6 million Jews (e.g. Rossel, 1992: 16-17). Yet, by describing the Holocaust as a "horrific atrocity", he is revealing an ideological position towards the Holocaust that Muslims by implication should adopt.

Related to the above excerpt is one article Yusuf wrote, mediated on the Internet in many websites, giving reasons why Holocaust denial undermines Islam

when it has set rules-long ago- for verifying knowledge. Rejection of anti-semitism is rather a salient point in Yusuf's sermons; as he attempts to defy anti-semitic rhetoric in some Muslim contexts (e.g. see KhosraviNik (2010) on anti-semitism in the political rhetoric of Ahmadinejad).

9.2. Use of religious references

In addition to the use of historical references, religious references are recontextualized in televangelists' sermons, which includes Qur'anic references and references to Prophet's sayings. One function of the use of religious references is to relate televangelists' sermons to the religious realm; another function of the use of religious references is to back up the claims made by each televangelist; hence, religious references are employed as a persuasive device.

Looking into Yusuf Estes' sermon "Why the West needs Islam", one claim that Yusuf Estes makes is that Muslims in the post 9-11 context are facing hardships. Estes draws upon one Qur'anic verse in Arabic, Al Ankaboot [29:4], which states that affliction accompanies belief; the verse reads:

Do men imagine that they will be left (at ease) because they say, we believe, and will not be tested with affliction? (Al Ankaboot 29:4; Pictal's translation).

It is worth noting that the above verse was revealed to the Prophet in the city of Mecca where the Prophet and his followers faced opposition at the hands of

Quraysh, the powerful clan in Mecca (e.g. see Encyclopedia of Islam: 11). Recalling a verse about the hardships facing Muslims serves to reflect on the context of Muslims that Estes represents, i.e. being “attacked” and “misrepresented”.

Another claim made by Estes is that Islam is about content. To support his claim, Estes draws on a Qur'anic verse. It states:

(And) lo! those who believe and do good works are the best of created beings [98:8] Their reward is with their Lord: Gardens of Eden underneath which rivers flow, wherein they dwell forever. Allah hath pleasure in them and they have pleasure in Him. This is (in store) for him who feareth his Lord [98:9].

Only part of the verse is recited in Arabic, i.e. "radiya Allah 3anhom wa rado 3aneh" (Allah hath pleasure in them and they have pleasure in Him) to support his claim that Islam is about content. By re-contextualizing the verse, Estes is sending a message of hope as he highlights the misrepresentation facing Muslims. This reminds us again of the rise of "therapeutic" religion or feel-good religion which aims to provide the individual with ontological security (Miller 2004: 86).

As for Hamza Yusuf's sermon, religious references include Qur'anic texts and Prophet's sayings. One function of the recontextualisation of religious references is to support the claims made by Hamza Yusuf. For instance, as Hamza

Yusuf calls upon his audiences to denounce terrorism, he supports his claim through a Qur'anic reference.

Example 9.7.

And for that reason, the sanctity of life, we decreed upon (the people of Israel) and by extension upon the Muslims, that anyone who kills a soul, without just cause, or brigandry in the earth, terrorism, that is as if they have killed all humanity..... Every soul is sacred, and this has to be reestablished on the earth, once again the teaching of Abraham Alih El Salam (Peace be upon him).

The above quotation by Yusuf is an explanation of the meanings of one verse in Surat al Maaidah: verse 32; it states that:

On that account: We ordained for the Children of Israel that if any one slew a person--unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land- -it would be as if he slew the whole people: And if any one saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people. Then although there came to them Our Apostles with Clear Signs, yet, even after that, many of them continued to commit excesses in the land (Surat al Maaidah: verse 32- Yusuf Ali translation).

As Hamza Yusuf recontextualizes the above verse, he expounds on its meanings, foregrounding "and by extension upon Muslims"; to emphasize that Islam denounces terrorism. It is worth noting that the meanings in the above verse are not specific to the Qur'an but occur in the Talmud, i.e. the rabbinic texts that draw on the Hebrew Bible. For instance, the Babylonian Talmud, Folio 37a reads:

For this reason was man created alone, to teach thee that whoever destroys a single soul of Israel, scripture imputes (guilt) to him as though he had destroyed a complete world and whoever preserves a single soul of Israel, scripture ascribes (merit) to him as though he had preserved a complete world.

The choice of a religious text that has similar meanings in Islamic and Judaic tradition seems in line with Yusuf's argument that Abrahamic faith shares the sanctity of life. As I pointed out earlier (see 8.2.1. Islam, an Abrahamic tradition), the Muslim identity that Hamza Yusuf is attempting to construct is one in which Muslims are not represented as distinct from Jews and Christians but rather as having common values among them.

In another instance, on the topic of the U.S. cannot wage a war on Islam, Yusuf invokes-in Arabic- one text from Surat Al Balad:

I do call to witness this City. And thou art a freeman of this City (Yusuf Ali's translation)

The above reference to the verse is followed by an explanation in English where Hamza Yusuf states:

Example 9.8.

I swear an oath by this land and you are a lawful citizen to this land.

According to exegesis (e.g. see Abd alrahman, 1973), one meaning of the Qur'anic verse is as an assertion to the Prophet and his companions that they would finally dwell in Makkah, where –for long- they suffered oppression. As the verse is

recontextualised- Yusuf appropriates the meanings of the verse: he changes the word "city" used in the Qur'anic reference to the generic word "land"; in addition, he appropriates "freeman to the city" to a "lawful citizen to this land", a rather modern concept. In other words, the meanings of the Qur'an are re-interpreted in light of the contemporary era, rendering the meanings of the Qur'an applicable to the contemporary times.

Other examples of religious re-contextualisation include the Prophet's sayings. To illustrate, Hamza Yusuf supports his claim that religion is not the reason for extremism through quoting a saying by Prophet Mohamed.

Example 9.9.

Every soul is sacred. And that is why our prophet *salla Allah 3alih waslam* (Peace be upon him) warned us: "beware of extremism in religion, in religion because it is extremism in religion that destroyed the peoples before you". He would not warn us if it was not a serious threat to the Muslim community.

The use of direct quotation in the above example gives a vivid presentation of the Prophet (see Semino and Short, 2004: 55 on the use of direct quotation). In addition, the recontextualisation of the Prophet's saying in the contemporary context of terrorism/extremism sets the Prophet in a new light; he becomes a figure, albeit historical, capable of enlightening Muslims about their contemporary problems.

In another instance, in topic 17, Islam is innocent of what it is done in its name, the speaker recontextualizes one saying by the prophet to support his argument:

Example 9.10.

We have only 500 hadith that are absolutely of the status of the Qur'an, and one of them says, naha rasolo Allah salah allah alih wa salam 3an qatl el-nesa2 wal awlad, the Prophet of God forbade the killing of women and children (.) the prophet of God forbade the killing of women and children (.) the prophet of God forbade the killing of women and children.

The repetition of the phrase “the prophet of God forbade the killing of women and children” acts as a persuasive device to emphasize the gravity of killing in Islam. In this way, religious resources are represented as viable resources that can give an insight into Muslims' contemporary circumstances. Thus, like Yusuf Estes, Hamza Yusuf uses religious allusions (e.g. Qur'anic and Prophet's sayings) to give more authority to his claims and to relate religion to contemporary issues. There are differences, however, in the way religious references are re-contextualized in Baba Ali's videos.

First, instead of using the term the Qur'an says or the Prophet says, a broader term “Islam teaches us” is used. To illustrate, in the video “arrogant people”, Baba Ali makes use of an allusion to one saying by the Prophet: “Islam teaches us that a person with even a small amount of arrogance in their heart won't enter paradise. So we must be humble, no matter how much success reaches us”, which is an allusion to a Prophet's saying.

Second, one pattern that emerges in Baba Ali's videos is the appearance of religious reference on screen, either at the end of Baba Ali's videos or in the middle. This could serve as visual emphasis and utilizes the possibility of inserting graphic elements on YouTube. For example, in his video “racism and pride”, Baba Ali reads a letter of a girl from the Middle East who complains that her father does not want to marry her to a man whom he believes is of “lower class”. After delineating the problem, Baba Ali, then, addresses the problem:

Example 9.11.

For all the non-Muslims who watch my show, this sounds a little confusing but don't worry. I will make sense of it a little bit. You see, before Islam, people used to be binded by their tribes and their countries, they hold this class system that categorize you; then Islam came to free us from this ignorant way of thinking. Sura 49, aya (verse) 14 (we hear the voice of Baba Ali reading the verse that is now on screen) (figure 9.1.): “Oh, mankind, we have created you from a male and female and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another”. Unfortunately, many Muslims choose their culture over their religion; thus you see people who appear to be practising Muslims though the things they do have nothing to do with Islam. And this is what makes them backward and one of the reasons why Muslims are in the conditions they are today. For all those who follow these ignorant rituals, here is a reminder just in case you forgot.

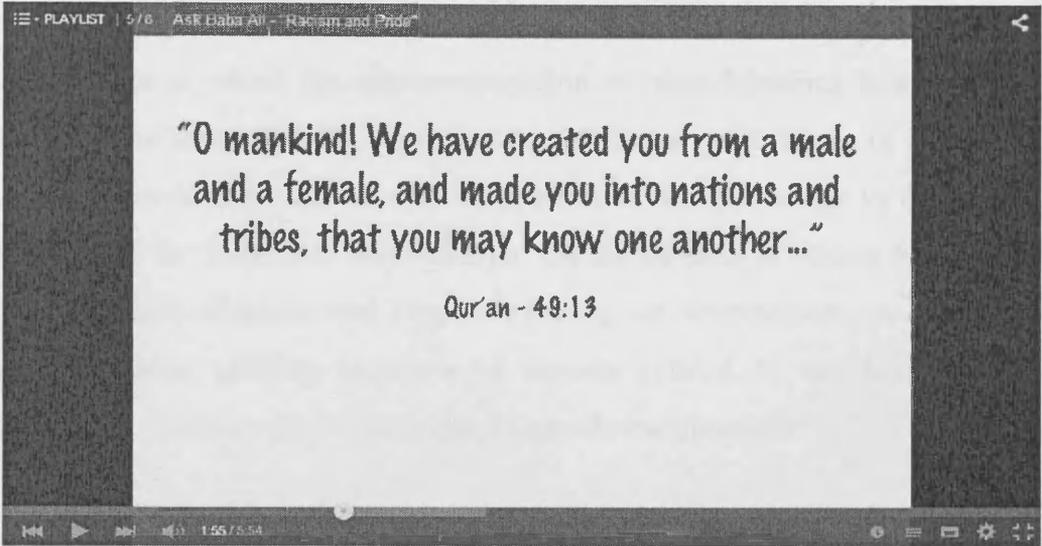


Figure 9.1. Recontextualization of Qur'anic references in Baba Ali's videos

The Qur'anic verse appears on the screen as Baba Ali recites it. A salient aspect- in the above example- is how the conflation between culture and religion is represented as one reason why Muslims are “backward” (see section 8.3.2. Discourse on “ethnic Islam”).

9.3. Conclusion

To conclude, one pattern that emerges in the discourse of the three televangelists is the use of Qur'anic references and Prophet's sayings to give more legitimacy to their claims. Furthermore, through the recontextualization of religious references, Islam emerges as a viable entity that can guide Muslims through their contemporary problems and predicaments. This shows, for example, in Hamza Yusuf's use of a saying by the Prophet who enlightens Muslims about the

contemporary problem of terrorism. It also shows in Yusuf Estes' reference to a Qur'anic verse in which the misrepresentation of Islam/Muslims in mass media is linked to a Qur'anic verse that perceives hardships part of the state of belief; hence, Qur'anic references are represented as dynamic entities relevant to contemporary problems. As for Baba Ali, one recurrent phrase he uses is “Islam teaches us” in which Qur'anic allusions and Prophet's saying are weaved into the fabric of his YouTube videos guiding Muslims in aspects related to manners and social relationships, for example, cleanliness, fair trade and marriage.

As for the use of historical references, Hamza Yusuf, unlike Yusuf Estes and Baba Ali, opens up his discourses to many historical eras that are positively represented as part of “our history”, including the Magna Carta in Europe, the history of the Declaration of Independence (1776) in the US and references to scholars in the Middle Ages that were influenced by the Muslim civilization (e.g. John Locke and Edward Pococke).

In addition, one common aspect between Yusuf Estes and Baba Ali is the use of the Islamic civilization in Spain and Baghdad as a reference point in which Muslims were at an “advantage” compared to Europeans, a comparison that in my view is fallacious. This is because this representation abides by a mode of thinking that perceives Islam and West as two (antagonistic) forces that were/are in competition, creating a dichotomy of US/Muslims and Them/Europeans/Westerns.

Chapter 10. Discussion and reflections

I started this study with a reference to my visit to an island in Hurghada in 2003. Reflecting back on my PhD journey (long, mountaineering and adventurous!), the encounter with a young middle-class woman, a fan of the Egyptian televangelist Amr Khaled, seems to have been the starting point of my inquiry and curiosity about this phenomenon. Now, I can ask: What was happening to the world that I was not aware of at that time, soaking the sunshine in Egypt? And how has televangelism developed since it first appeared in Egypt in the late 1990s?

Well, “we are living in the twenty first century”. Now, from my vantage point *here* at Lancaster (you may like to imagine me, pondering, on a mountain now!), the 21st century implies: a) the widespread of global media technologies b) the rise of infotainment network society c) the advent of web 2.0 and d) the rise of the consumer societies (see Chapters 1-4 of the thesis).

A question that I have explored in my PhD thesis is: what might be the broader dynamics this phenomenon relates to and what might it indicate about the representation of religion online?

Therefore, let me first summarize the main theoretical cornerstones of the thesis as I reflect on the above-mentioned questions.

Chapter 1 has outlined the popularity of televangelism and its hybridity, exploring the research context, the rationale behind the choice of the Internet as a medium of data collection and the criteria used in the choice of three case studies and selected data.

In Chapter 2, I focused on the characteristics of Muslim televangelism as a phenomenon that is particularly popular among Muslim youth. I have argued that televangelism is a complex phenomenon that is sustained by media power and the contemporary media culture. Two theoretical frameworks account for the popularity of this phenomenon, first, Giddens' (1984, pp. 95-110) “space-time” distanciation through which media outputs can be re-embedded in new contexts in different times and places; second, Kellner's conception (2003) of “media spectacle” and the ability to seize massive audiences as a characteristic feature of contemporary media culture. As I have demonstrated in Chapter 6, one aspect that Hamza Yusuf and Yusuf Estes highlight in their self-representation is their ability to attract wide audiences to their programmes. Note, for example, how the video-edition of Hamza Yusuf's and Yusuf Estes' excerpts features long shots in which the camera pans to massive audiences attending the speech event. The ability to attract wide audiences is -likewise- echoed in Baba Ali's YouTube sermons; for example, as he starts one of his YouTube videos, stating “sixty thousand views, are these people really watching?!”

In Chapter 3, I moved on to explore the socio-historical context of Muslims in the West, being the immediate audience of televangelists' sermons. I have focused on the theoretical underpinnings of “individual” and “collective” identities' construction and its relevance to the theorization of Muslim identities' construction

in the West. First, research (e.g. Wodak et al 2009) has postulated that collective identities are not a static phenomenon but are in a process of change and transformation; hence, one impetus of the present study has been to explore what patterns of representations might be common among the three televangelists. Second, since identities are in a continuous process of transformation and change, I have argued against the essentialization of Muslim identities by attributing particular characteristics/features to Islam/Muslims. Thus, from the top of an imaginary mountain, I would like now to say: “never say Muslim *identity*, rather *identitieeeeeees*”.

A thread of discussion I have further pursued in chapter 3 is the impact of the processes of globalization and new media technologies in providing platforms for the emergence of “transnational” Islam. I have speculated that one reason of the popularity of the three case studies is that they fit into the processes of “transnational” Islam relying on the easiness of communication and the rise of digital Islam. The latter allows Muslims to live and/or re-live aspects of their religious experiences, for example, through listening to a YouTube sermon by a televangelist online or through downloading the call for prayers (*adan*) on their mobile phones.

Another important aspect I have drawn upon in this chapter is the specific context of Muslim youth in the West. Using the UK as an example, an important point I have discussed is the dissatisfaction of Muslim youth with the ethnic Islam of their parents and the intellectual and social challenges they face as a result of growing up in the UK. A feature of this context is the call on a critical approach to Islamic traditions by scholars such as Amina Wadud (1999) and Sardar (2015).

The analysis of televangelists' sermons has shown that these layers of contexts are-to different extents- echoed in televangelists' discourses; for example, a common discourse topic among the three televangelists is the misrepresentation of Islam. There is also some sort of critical engagement by Hamza Yusuf and Baba Ali. The former is critical of George Bush's policies in the Middle East and of antisemitic rhetoric by some Muslims. The latter is critical of cultural practices such as forced marriage and lack of observance to personal behavior (e.g. cleanliness and fair trade).

Moving on to Chapter 4 “Religion and televangelism in cyberspace”, I have explored the rise of religion on the Internet being an important medium through which televangelists' sermons are mediated and re-mediated. I have explored three main themes that are crucial to the understanding of religion online, televangelism being one of its manifestations: a) the debate as to whether the Internet can provide a virtual public sphere; b) contemporary manifestations of religion online; c) the use of online spaces by the three televangelists and their fans.

Firstly, I have argued that the Internet has become a platform for stance-making and the expression of multiple views. Besides exploring relevant literature (e.g. Mosemghvdlishvili and Jansz 2013), the study has examined two up-to-date examples that show the diversity of religious views online: the Vatican as an example of traditional religious authority and Jewish Voice for Peace which has emerged as an important independent platform for the expression of political/religious views in favor of Palestinian rights during the war/conflict in Gaza (August 2014).

Secondly, I have shown how the Internet has changed the expression of religious faith online through online platforms such as Second Life in which worshipers can be avatars and have the flexibility to perform rituals at a time convenient to them. This points to an aspect related to televangelism; as users can view televangelists' sermons online asynchronously (at the time convenient to them).

Thirdly, chapter 4 has also explored the online spaces that televangelists use; for example, Facebook, YouTube and blogspots. It is worth noting here how televangelists' fans take an active role in popularizing their discourses through sharing their posts on Facebook or linking to their sermons in their blogs. Related to this is how Baba Ali has had a visibility on Kick Starter, an online space that is not traditionally associated with religion, projecting his identity as an entrepreneur (Chapter 6).

Fourthly, in the light of the analysis of the comments and posts by televangelists' fans, another finding of the study is that the widespread of media technology appears to have made it possible for some Muslims to imagine or re-imagine a global Muslim community.

In Chapter 5, I have outlined the approaches I have employed in my investigation of the phenomenon of televangelism and in the analytical chapters (Chapters 6-9). Two approaches I have integrated are the DHA (e.g. Wodak, 2001, 2011; and Wodak and Angouri, 2014) and the theory of Visual Grammar (e.g. Van Leeuwen, 2011). To justify why the choice of the DHA is well-suited for the study,

I have traced the historical development of Islamic preaching in the light of relevant literature on the homily (e.g. Gaffney, 2004 and Hirschkind, 2001; 2006), as its analysis, understanding and explanation also depends on an in-depth historical contextualization (Chapter 8 and 9). I have differentiated between televangelism aimed at the everyday life of Muslims and the *waaz* genre that focuses on the themes of death and the Day of Judgment. Thus, I have explained that the choice of the DHA, and its emphasis on the layers of context surrounding discourse, apart from its theory on identity construction and its discourse theory, is well-suited for the examination of Muslim televangelism as a complex phenomenon and for the analysis of televangelists' sermons as a multi-modal field in which aspects of the situational context such as dress code and gesture contribute to the process of meaning-making. The DHA has also allowed for the examination of the contemporary discourse topics the three televangelists allude to. In light of the DHA, I was able to take up the challenging task of deconstructing the meanings of historical/religious references in televangelists' sermons and the meanings of Qur'anic and biblical references/texts, besides the examination of televangelists' use of rhetorical and argumentation strategies relevant to identities' construction.

Having provided an explanatory framework of the phenomenon of televangelism and the development of the study, in the following, I summarize some answers to the research questions.

10.1. Answers to Research Questions

How do three of the Muslim televangelists popular in the West represent their identities and construct their authorities? What discursive and multi-modal strategies they draw upon?

In Chapter 6, I have examined the self-presentation strategies of the three televangelists. I was able to observe that in their sermons, televangelists construct multiple identities, drawing on many modes, including verbal language (e.g. choice of topics), dramatic elements (e.g. use of staging, dress codes and music) and camera techniques (e.g. reaction shots).

The analysis has revealed two types of religious celebrities. On the one hand, Yusuf Estes and Hamza Yusuf construct their identities inter alia as preachers, a figure traditionally associated with authority (Gaffney 2004). One example of Yusuf Estes' self-representation as a preacher is the sermon "Islam tomorrow" in which Estes' authority is enacted visually through a) occupying a higher position than his audience, and b) wearing a semi-traditional garb representing the "power dress code" traditionally associated with preachers and religious scholars. In other YouTube excerpts, Estes represents himself as a proselytizer. One example is a YouTube video by Estes that has attracted millions of hits on YouTube in which Estes converted a young black man to Islam. As I have indicated in Chapter 6, a salient feature in Estes' performance is the creation of a spectacle in which the camera pans to huge audiences who are holding their mobiles and taking photos of Estes and the new convert. I showed that many

elements were integrated to render Estes' performance a dramatic one, including the use of music-to signal the movement from one “organizational” frame to the next- graphic elements and gestures.

As for Hamza Yusuf, I have suggested that he constructs his identity, *inter alia*, as a preacher. His sermon “the danger of heedlessness” is a case in point. It draws on the admonition genre or *waaz* as he discusses the topic of heedlessness and the Day of Judgment typical of the *waaz* genre. As I have indicated in Chapter 6 (section 6.2.2. Yusuf), the situational context proved to be important in constructing Yusuf's identities. He wears a suit and a cloak; thus creating a hybrid “modern-traditional dress code”. The use of Arabic terms in the sermon contributes to his representation as a learned scholar.

On other occasions, Hamza Yusuf presents himself as a public speaker. Unlike his dress code in “the danger of heedlessness”, in his sermon “a message to humanity”, he wears a suit. On this occasion, the celebrity status of Hamza Yusuf is visually constructed through the camera panning to huge audiences and reaction shots featuring young women of multiple ethnicities pondering over the claims made by Yusuf. Unlike his sermon “the danger of heedlessness” which aims at reminding the audience of “reckoning” and remembering God, in his sermon “a message to humanity”, he converges towards political discourse as he invokes topics and sub-topics on US policies in the Middle East, problems of Aids in Africa, unemployment in the US and the importance of the recognition of the Palestinian cause.

Moving on to Baba Ali, I have illustrated that he gains his authority through his expression of “informality” and “ordinariness”. This is constructed through multimodal means. In terms of dress code and staging, Baba Ali sits on an arm chair (grey wall is his background) and wears casual clothes. Other strategies indicate his self-representation of ordinariness such as the use of slang and colloquial register (e.g. Oki dop; I love it!). Another important strategy of Baba Ali' self-representation is his invitation to his audiences to take part in the creation of his videos and/or rate and comment on them. The YouTube comments - following Baba Ali's comments- further endorse his expression of ordinariness and his self-representation as a “funny” guy.

How is Islam and the West linguistically referred to and predicated in the sermons of the three televangelists?

In Chapter 7 of the thesis, I have focused on the construction of in-groups and out-groups in televangelists' sermons. This has entailed an examination of the intended audience in televangelists' sermons and their representation of Islam/Muslims. I have demonstrated that the three televangelists employ different degrees of inclusivity in constructing in-groups and out-groups.

Firstly, one discursive strategy in Yusuf Estes' sermon is “calculated ambivalence” which can be taken to mean: “the fact that one utterance carries at least two more or less contradictory meanings, oriented towards at least two different audiences” (Wodak and Forchtner, 2014: 237). On the one hand, the West is anthropomorphized and animated as being an entity that is attacking Muslims

and being antagonistic to it (describing it as “backward”). A negative representation of the West is also given through associating the West with metaphors of disease and racial inequality. On the other hand, this negative representation is contradicted through the use of a) disclaimers that this negative representation does not apply to all people in the West b) the use of the topos of ignorance to justify that some people might represent Muslims/Islam out of ignorance and c) the creation of a sub-group of people in the West “searching for the truth”. In this way, Estes draws on the strategy of calculated ambivalence, constructing two ideological positions while apparently aiming to appeal to Western (non-Muslim) audiences.

Another discursive strategy I have identified relates to the different uses of the pronoun “we” through which Estes represents himself as both an insider and outsider to the out-group, the West. He is an insider when he positions himself in a position of knowing about problems in the West (e.g. “we still have problems in the West of women holding high position”). He also represents himself as an outsider (to the West) by homogenizing and excluding it from the boundaries of the in-group through negative predication (see Richardson, 2004: 75- 93).

Moving on to Hamza Yusuf's sermon, I have outlined how it contrasts with Yusuf Estes' discourse in terms of its ideological positioning. First, he positions himself as both Western and Muslim through the use of personal narratives: “I was born in this country” and through the use of perspectivisation strategies such as “we as Western”, “I would like to talk to you tonight in essence *as Muslim and as American*”. Second, Yusuf creates a parallel representation of Islam and America;

both are hijacked by a select group of extremists (an out-group). Related to this is the use of positive evaluative terms to describe Americans (e.g. in the heart of the Americans is the love of truth, love of virtue). I have also indicated that the pronoun “we” in the case of Hamza Yusuf has three referents: a) American Muslims b) Muslims c) humanity. Thus, he appears to offer a more inclusive approach to his representation of the Muslim community which reminds us of the conception of the *umma* in Medina that included believers and non-believers in its boundaries of solidarity.

Baba Ali, however, appears to evade the nexus of Islam/West in his sermons. It appears that the mediation of his sermons (exclusively) on YouTube has helped shape the audience he imagines and addresses. The pronoun “you” is commonly used in his sermons to mean two referents a) general use of you (non-Muslims/Muslims) and b) specific referents to Muslims and c) specific referents to characters whom he criticizes (such as ethnic parents). This serves as a persuasive device to directly impact the viewer and could be interpreted as being related to the medium of video-blogging on YouTube. The assumption here is that by blogging on YouTube we are imagining an individual viewer watching us unlike giving a sermon (or a speech) to co-present audiences.

In this way, the three televangelists differ in their representation of Islam/Muslims. However, one common aspect in the discourse of the three televangelists is that they draw on content-related warrants in their representation of Islam/Muslims (see below). These appear to have two interrelated functions: a) defending Islam against being a religion that supports terrorism; b) responding to

content-related arguments used in some discriminatory rhetoric, for example by the far-right (see Wodak 2015). I list the content-related warrants used by the three televangelists:

1) Topos of number

This content-related warrant relies on the conditional: since Muslims live in Europe in large numbers, Islam cannot teach terrorism (Baba Ali). Hamza Yusuf argues that because Muslims exist in large numbers, they have a responsibility to reconcile between Muslims and non-Muslims. Yusuf Estes argues that though Muslims live in Europe in large numbers, what matters is the behavior.

2) Topos of abuse

This content-related warrant relies on the conditional: since there is a sub-group of people that abuses Islam and the majority of Muslims are peaceful, this sub-group cannot be taken to represent Muslims. Hence, Islam cannot be blamed.

3) Topos of ignorance

This content-related warrant relies on the conditional: since some Muslims are ignorant about Islam, they cannot be held responsible for representing Islam/Muslims. This is used by Baba Ali as he points out that some Muslims are ignorant of their religion (see 8.3. Analysis of Baba Ali's videos). Another variation of this argument is that since some non-Muslims are ignorant of what Islam means, they cannot be held responsible for their beliefs. This topos is employed by Yusuf Estes and Hamza Yusuf who calls on Muslims to educate non-Muslims about Islam which presupposes non-Muslims' lack of knowledge about Islam and its teachings.

4) The notion of “true” Islam

One assumption shared by the three televangelists is that there is an “essence” or “true” Islam that some Muslims have lost contact with. This functions as an argumentation strategy to justify why some Muslims have adopted practices that are un-Islamic e.g. terrorism and indiscriminate violence. In his sermon "Why the West needs Islam", Yusuf Estes reiterates that "we have deviated far away from true Islam". In his sermons, Hamza Yusuf repeatedly remarks: "we/Muslims have lost our moral high ground".

5) The claim of the “responsible Muslim”

If Muslims are misrepresented, then the solution that the three televangelists propose is that Muslims have a role (or degree of agency) in correcting the misconceptions that some people have about Islam. Yusuf Estes suggests that after a non-Muslim deals with a Muslim then s/he should have a good/better notion about Islam, thus, instructing his audiences that they have a responsibility to educate non-Muslims about the religion. The same proposal/appeal is made by Hamza Yusuf who claims that Muslims have a responsibility to correct people's misinterpretation of the religion. Baba Ali calls upon Muslims to practice Islam correctly, since in his view, this is the best way to counter the negative views about Islam.

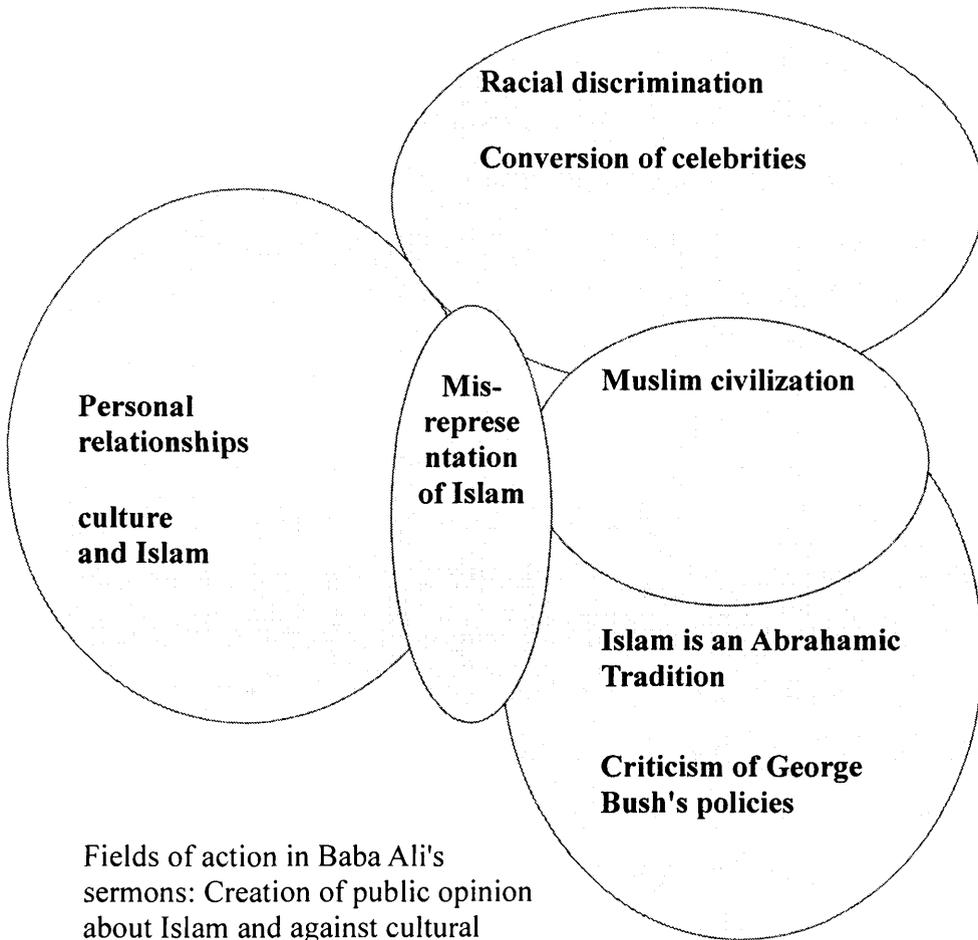
Other topoi are used by Hamza Yusuf; for example, the topos of rights/law as he points out addressing Muslims: “you should know, you are American, you have every right to be here”; the topos of rights relies on the conditional: “if a law

or an otherwise codified norm prescribes or forbids a specific politico-administrative action, the action has to be performed or omitted” (Wodak 2001: 76). Hamza Yusuf subverts the topos of culture used in discriminatory rhetoric to exclude particular groups (see Wodak and Boukala, 2014), for example, in his statement: “Islam did not divorce people, from its land, its culture, its tradition, whenever Islam went, in Muslim Spain, in China, it contributed to the inherent genius of these people”.

What discourses and fields of actions do the three televangelists invoke in their discourses and to what effect?

In Chapter 8, I have investigated the discourse topics and fields of actions that each televangelist invokes. Figure 10.1. below captures the main discourse topics and fields of actions in the selected data of the three televangelists.

Figure 10.1. Main discourse topics in televangelists' sermons.



Fields of action in Baba Ali's sermons: Creation of public opinion about Islam and against cultural practices such as forced marriage.

Fields of action in Yusuf Estes' sermon: Creation of public opinion about Islam through presenting Islam as an attractive religion.

Fields of action in Hamza Yusuf's sermons: creation of public opinion about Islam; formation of attitudes against George Bush's policies in the Middle East.

As can be seen in the above figure, Muslim civilization in the Middle Ages represents one common topic in the sermons of the three televangelists. Hamza Yusuf re-imagines a wider geographical spanning of the Muslim civilization that includes China, India and Spain. To Hamza Yusuf, the Muslim civilization rather acts as a discursive strategy that aims to legitimize the existence of Islam/Muslims in the West; Muslims have contributed to Western civilization and as such should not be abused or accused (of terrorism). Yusuf Estes, however, imagines this civilization as exclusive to Muslims which is historically not true since the civilization in Spain was characterized by the intellectual engagement and assimilation of Muslim, Jewish and Christian scholars, as discussed earlier (see 9.1. Use of historical references in televangelists' sermons). According to Yusuf Estes and Baba Ali, the Muslim civilization (in Spain and Baghdad respectively) is used to testify to the “supremacy” of Islam in the Middle Ages, and ideologically speaking, this representation abides by a mode of thinking in which Islam and the West are misconceived as two (monolithic) entities that are in rivalry.

Misrepresentation of Islam is another main topic in the discourse of the three televangelists. Baba Ali's YouTube videos “Muslim while flying” and “randomly checked at the airport” create un-real scenarios of Muslims who face troubles in the airport, for acting shady in an airport or incidentally saying “the food was a bomb!”. Yusuf Estes creates a mental image of Muslim/Muslims who are being “attacked” by the West. Hamza Yusuf refers to misrepresentation of Islam in his sermon “Changing the tide: Islam in America”, in which he employs a metaphor of “the Muslim community” under “siege” in his reference to the misrepresentation of Islam in mass media. This finding confirms other research

(e.g. van Zoonen, Vis and Mihelj 2010 and El Nawawy and Khamis, 2009) which has pointed out that misrepresentation of Islam is a common topic on YouTube videos about Islam (see Chapter 4), which further asserts that Islamophobia and anti-Muslim discourse are problems facing Muslims, particularly in the West.

One common field of action among the three televangelists is the formation of public opinion and attitudes towards Islam. Yusuf Estes presents Islam in a positive light through relating it to narratives of celebrities' conversion. Hamza Yusuf presents Islam in a positive light by alluding to the Muslim civilization that stretched across many geographical areas and that paved the way for the Western one. Baba Ali- like the other televangelists- employs argumentative strategies in which he gives legitimacy to Islam through the use of the topos of number, abuse and ignorance, discussed earlier.

Both Hamza Yusuf and Baba Ali appear to be aimed at raising awareness of (political and) social problems. Hamza Yusuf, for example, addresses sub-topics on Guantanamo Bay, Palestine and Africa to bring about change in the political views of his audience.

Baba Ali appears to be focused on the family domain and personal relationships; for example, as he talks on behalf of Muslim youth addressing parents that they should be aware that young Muslims do not understand their “cultural” practices and are not leaving their home countries (see 8.3.2. Discourse on “ethnic Islam”).

Thus, in light of the above, we can conclude that the three televangelists are-in varied ways- addressing the socio-historical contexts of Muslims. Despite their different ideological positions, the three aim to form public opinion towards public opinion towards Islam/Muslims. Baba Ali also addresses issues that appear to be problematic to young Muslims such as inter-generational gaps and the redefinition of the meanings/role of culture in Muslim practices, as discussed in Chapter 2. Hamza Yusuf converges towards political rhetoric by opposing the practices of George Bush in the Middle East.

What historical eras (religious and non-religious) do televangelists invoke in their sermons and to what effects?

As I have pointed out earlier (Chapter 9), history is an identity-constitutive element (see Heer et al 2008). Thus, by exploring the religious and historical references used by each televangelist, I aimed to find out the religious and historical references each televangelist considers authoritative and binding.

The analysis of televangelists' sermons has demonstrated that the three televangelists draw on Qur'anic references and the Prophet's sayings to give legitimacy to their claims. One assumption common among the three televangelists is that the Qur'an and Prophet's sayings can guide Muslims and instruct them on their contemporary problems. For example, Yusuf Estes links the misrepresentation of Islam to a Qur'anic verse that points out that hardships accompany belief. Hamza Yusuf substantiates the topos of right (You are American, you have every right to be here) with a Qur'anic verse that promises Mohamed that he would be

able to stay in Mecca after the hardships he had witnessed. Thus, religion is presented as a force capable of enlightening Muslims on contemporary issues related to them, providing them with ontological security and meanings of reconciliation.

The re-contextualization of Qur'anic verses that belong to the Meccan era, in which Muslims suffered oppression, is a common aspect I have identified in the sermons of Estes and Yusuf. This could be interpreted as giving a conciliatory note to Muslims, in the context of the rise of Islamophobia. A plausible meaning of the recontextualization of meanings from the Meccan era is that: if Muslims (as a historical community) have faced hardships in the past and were able to overcome them, then they are most likely to do so in contemporary times. In this way, religious references are reinterpreted and gain new meanings in televangelists' sermon, i.e. as being relevant and applicable to their contemporary contexts.

As I have mentioned above, historical eras invoked by the three televangelists are the Middle Ages in which Muslim civilization flourished in Andalusia and Baghdad. We can, however, revive our understanding of this era in light of televangelists' representation. First, one criticism that could be leveled to televangelists' representation of this era is that it adopts a narrow view on the Muslim civilization-fallaciously imagined- as exclusive to Muslims. An example of multi-cultural engagement in Muslim civilization is Maimonides, one of the prominent theologians in Andalusia whose work in philosophy and theology was influenced by and influenced other great Medieval scholars such as Averroes, Avicenna and Al-Farabi (e.g. see Stroumsa 2009, pp. 73-80).

Moreover, I would like to point out that Hamza Yusuf, in comparison to Yusuf Estes and Baba Ali, invokes American/European historical references as being important to his self-representation and to his representation of Islam/Muslims. This can be detected in perspectivisation strategies such as “this is against the Magna Carta that we as Westerns pride ourselves on” and in other references made to the American constitution and the founders of the United States. This is a different form of recontextualisation than the one used by Yusuf Estes who -likewise- invokes figures that are important in the history of the United States (Malcolm X and Martin Luther King). Yet these are re-contextualized within the discursive strategy of the positive representation of Us and the negative representation of Them (the West). In other words, in both cases, Yusuf and Estes use historical figures as a topos of authority to give legitimacy to their claims, though with different ideological outcomes, namely creation of the West as an out-group in the case of Yusuf Estes and the creation of the West/America as an in-group in the case of Hamza Yusuf.

In what ways there might be patterns of conformity of representation between the three selected televangelists?

As I have indicated earlier, one aspect that is common among the three televangelists is the appeal to the unity of the Muslim community. This is obvious in Hamza Yusuf's call on Muslims to denounce terrorism “in one voice” and in the visual images that precede Yusuf Estes' sermon in which Muslims are imagined to be in harmony and unified, including black and white people. It is also manifest in Baba Ali's criticism of Muslims who are proud of their own nations and his

creation of unreal scenarios in which Muslims make friends only if they belong to the same country (e.g. his YouTube video “Muslims at work”). Appeal to unity is therefore a theme that runs through televangelists' sermons.

Another pattern of conformity is that the three televangelists are -in varied ways- responding to the socio-historical context of Muslims in the West. Hamza Yusuf subverts the topos of Islam as a threat by pointing to more serious problems than Islamic fanatics such as Aids in Africa and unemployment. He also subverts the topos of culture through making the claim that Islam has not changed the culture of the communities it entered.

Baba Ali focuses on problems particularly relevant to Muslim youth such as the inter-generational gap and the discontent of Muslim youth with the cultural practices of their parents. This is reflected in the comments following his YouTube video “my culture”; as some commenters have expressed their agreement with Baba Ali's stance on ethnic Islam. Other followers have negotiated the meanings of culture and religion, which again lends truth to the proposition of the Internet as a virtual public spheres where views can be contested and negotiated.

Yusuf Estes responds to anti-Muslim discourse and Muslims' awareness of misrepresentation (after 9/11) through engaging in the strategy of the positive representation of Us (Muslims) and the negative representation of them (West/erns).

In light of the above, we can assume that one of the reasons of the popularity of the three televangelists is that they have engaged with the socio-historical context of Muslims in the West.

Related to the above is the use of recurrent argumentation strategies by the three televangelists to give legitimacy to Islam/Muslims in the light of the rise of anti-Muslim discourse; for example, that Muslims are in the West in large numbers, that Muslims have contributed to Western civilization and that only a few Muslims abuse religion and thus cannot be representative of all Muslims.

In addition, common to the representation of the three televangelists is the invocation of Qur'anic references and Prophet's sayings as binding and authoritative. Related to this is the invocation of references (by Estes and Yusuf) from the era of Mecca in which the Prophet and his companions suffered oppression.

Thus, despite the different styles of the three televangelists and their different individual identities, some recurrent themes and argumentation strategies underlie their discourses.

Another salient point I would like to highlight is how the three televangelists assume Muslims (and their audiences broadly speaking) to be active receivers who can change attitudes. This is implied in the fields of actions the three televangelists create in which they call upon their audiences, inter alia, to adopt particular attitudes to counter the assumptions communicated about Muslims in

mass media. This is substantiated through a variety of rhetorical tools such as the use of rhetorical questions (e.g. “who hijacked my religion?”), imperatives (e.g. “think about it”), metaphors (e.g. “our community is under siege”) and parallelism (*we (Muslims) reject indiscriminate killing whether it is an Israeli child, Russian child, we reject it*).

10.2. Televangelism: The changing face of “religious discourse”

This study makes general claims about the representation of religion (online) in the twenty first century. First, as I have demonstrated, televangelism is a complex phenomenon that can be contextualized in digital Islam, fragmentation of religious authority and increased mediation, among other aspects. The analysis of televangelists' online spaces, users' practice in Chapter 4 and the self-representation strategies of televangelists in Chapter 6 indicates that televangelists- invariably- draw on a variety of multiple modes including the use of graphic elements, camera techniques (e.g. long shots), songs, images, and music. This suggests that in a similar way to politico-tainment, discussed in Chapter 2, religion has gone down the route of entertainment; it is thus, possible to coin the term “religio-tainment” to refer to the manifold manifestations of the blurring between religion and entertainment that are emerging online (e.g. televangelism, religious songs, hip hop religious bands and stand-up comedy).

Moreover, contemporary media culture has helped shape televangelism. One aspect I have discussed earlier is how aspects of media culture are reflected in the sermons of the three televangelists, for example, in their ability to create

spectacles and seize audiences. Televangelism also converges towards popular culture, for example through the use of sound bites (borrowed from journalism) as in Yusuf Estes' examined excerpts and the integrating of advertisements or generic-features related to advertisements in the sermons of Baba Ali and Yusuf Estes (e.g. imperatives and rhetorical questions). The study also identifies the convergence of religious discourse to political rhetoric in Hamza Yusuf's discourse. 10

Second, the study has demonstrated how the accessibility of new media such as Facebook and blogspots has widened the circle of individuals who can express their views and religious knowledge. For example, one practice that accompanies the reception of televangelists' messages on new media is users' advertising their own Islamic online spaces; they aim to attract more “likes” or visibility through televangelists' online spaces (Chapter 4).

Third, the study attests to the development of religious discourses online and the development of televangelism as a specific media genre. Related to televangelism is the emergence of religious celebrities who can navigate multiple discourses and construct multiple identities (Chapter 6). In addition, since the emergence of Khaled in Egypt in the late 1990s, televangelism has now embraced different styles of preaching and self-presentation strategies.

Another important aspect the study illustrates is that new media (e.g. blogspots and Facebook pages) has enabled some users to re-imagine cross-bordering (global) Muslim community not tied to specific ethnicities or localities, i.e. a virtual *umma*.

From a discursive point of view, the present study has substantiated the claim that televangelism constitutes an Islamic popular culture. Particular meanings and arguments are mediated and negotiated online (see answer to Research questions above), despite the fact that the three televangelists belong to different generations and have (different) multi-faceted individual identities.

10.3. Limitations of the Study

Below I indicate three limitations of the study, which were due to space and time limitations.

Firstly, only a few sermons are examined for each televangelist. This is due to the constraints of analyzing spoken data and the time and labor intensive transcription process. Since the sermons by Hamza Yusuf and Yusuf Estes are rather long (about an hour each), this has allowed for an examination of one sermon for each televangelist. However, I have attempted to overcome this limitation through substantiating my analysis by watching, observing and taking notes of televangelists' sermons and have supplemented my analysis with as much information as possible, by exploring televangelists' self-representation strategies and in identifying the discursive patterns relevant to Muslim identities' construction in their sermons.

Another limitation is related to the design of the study. This study has examined the discursive and multi-modal strategies that the three televangelists draw upon in constructing identities for themselves and for their imagined Muslim

communities. It has not involved interviews with the televangelists themselves, which might have been useful in exploring their intentionality of employing particular discursive strategies (e.g. the positive representation of America/West by Hamza Yusuf). Interviewing the three televangelists could have given further insights into the meanings of being a “religious celebrity” in the contemporary era and the practices of televangelists' fans.

Moreover, the study has not involved interviews with the audiences or doing ethnographic fieldwork on the reception of televangelists' sermons. This might have given us more knowledge of the reasons why particular televangelists appeal to them and in what ways and directions these televangelists are impacting and influencing their way of life.

10.4. Contributions of the study

This study has been an innovative attempt to apply the Discourse Historical Approach, developed by Ruth Wodak and scholars at the Vienna School of Linguistics, to religious discourse (see Wodak, 2001; 2009; 2011; 2015; Wodak and Reisigl, 2001; Wodak and Meyer, 2009). Broadly speaking, the study has challenged one (common) assumption about religious discourse: that religious discourse is rather irrational and unworthy of critical engagement (see Davie, 2007: 53). The study has clearly illustrated that contemporary religious discourse (has become) is a hybrid fabric that draws on many topics, religious and historical references and employs both formal and content-related argumentation strategies. I thus call for further application of Critical Discourse Studies to religious discourse

in its traditional and contemporary forms (e.g. exegesis, Qur'anic interpretations, hip hop (Islamic) lyrics and religious songs).

The study has also contributed to the understanding and analysis of televangelists' construction of Muslim identities. This seems to be a neglected area of research in the light of the lack of attention given to religious discourse in Critical Discourse Studies (Chilton, 2004: xi). Thus, this study thus feeds into the increasing body of research on identities' constructions (e.g. see Wodak et al 2009 on Austrian identities, Krzyżanowski (2010) on European identities and Unger (2013) on Scots' identities).

From a sociological perspective, the study has contributed to an in-depth understanding of the complex phenomenon of current televangelism. It has related this phenomenon to the many dimensions and aspects of the twenty first century (e.g. rise of infotainment consumer society, e-religion and the emergence of new online platforms for expressing social/political views). The study further traces the development of televangelism as a genre that embraces many different styles of self-representation and preaching (e.g. serious and comedic styles as Hamza Yusuf vis-a-vis Baba Ali) and shows how the three televangelists are able to borrow elements from other genres such as journalism (as in the use of sound bites), advertisements (by Yusuf Estes and Baba Ali) and political rhetoric (Hamza Yusuf).

Furthermore, the study contributes to the understanding of digitization (or more specifically digital Islam) and its role in societies (e.g. Bunt, 2009; and El

Nawawy and Khamis, 2009). Indeed, digitization appears to be a crucial aspect to the popularity of the three televangelists. In light of relevant literature on politics (e.g. Wodak and Wright, 2007; and Wodak, 2015), I speculate that digitization will continue to extend its influence in our lives; and in my view, any attempts to create counter-views or to challenge racist discourses have to find their way to digital media.

10.5. Recommendations for future research

The study makes the following contributions to research in light of the theoretical and analytical concepts of the thesis which should be taken further.

Firstly, in Chapter 4 of the thesis, I have argued that the Internet has facilitated the creation of a virtual public sphere as views and counter-views can be displayed. I agree with Dahlberg's (2001) proposition that technology could be developed which enhances critical deliberation and modifies the rules of discourse online (or netiquette) so that it would encourage deliberation and rational-critical discourse.

Secondly, besides televangelism, other media genres have emerged, which are mediated and re-mediated online; for example, "hip hop" songs and "stand-up" comedy. Future studies should/could explore Muslim identities' construction in the above-mentioned genres, which would further insights into contemporary discourses on Islam, online.

Thirdly, the continuing misrepresentation of Islam calls for further critique of anti-Muslim and xenophobic discourse (e.g. see Wodak, 2015; Baker et al 2003).

Fourthly, in light of the empirical data of this study and research on Muslim youth in the West (e.g. see Cesari 2003; Gilliat-Ray 2010: 160-162; Mandaville 2003; 2007; Rosowsky 2006; 2007; 2008; 2011) and the challenges they face in communicating with mosque imams, more (academic) attention could be given to Islamic education, including preachers' education and training. To cite Rosowsky (2008:36) here, "there is a growing demand for the use of English in the mosque".

Another theme that emerges from the PhD study is the imagination of the Muslim civilization. While the assimilation of Jewish, Christian and Muslim scholars is already addressed in some scholarly literature on the Muslim civilizations in the Middle Ages (e.g. Lowney, 2005 and Menocal, 2002), there is a need to further "popularize" the inclusive nature of the Muslim civilization, in non-academic discourse, since this is one aspect that is overlooked in televangelists' re-imagination of Muslim civilization in Spain and Baghdad. This would allow for a more tolerant approach towards the representation of non-Muslims in religious discourse.

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Appendix 1

Transcript of Hamza Yusuf's sermon: A message to humanity

I want to say that I feel that the spirit here this year is much higher than last year and I think that is partly because we have overcome some of the traumas that we experienced as a community in this country. And that's why tonight I would like to speak to you in the essence as Americans and as Muslims, and the reason I want to do that, is that I believe that the challenge for this community in the United States is to reconcile between these two aspects of our identity. I am a convert to Islam but I was also born in this country; and I come from a long line of people in this country that go back many many generations, and when I embraced Islam at the age of eighteen I had a serious breach with my identity as somebody who was from this country. I went to the Muslim world, and I immersed myself in another world for many many years and gained immense insight and also a modicum of knowledge of this religion and I continued to struggle with that, learning and acquiring more knowledge and as time has passed, I have realized that whenever Islam went, it did not divorce the people from their land, from their culture, and their traditions but rather it purified those people. It purified them and made them realize their own inherent genius; and this is one of the greatest strength of this religion is that wherever it went, it enhances the natural genius of the people whether it went to India, whether it went to Africa, to Turkey, to Asia, even to Europe when it was in Spain, and in East Europe in Hungary, in Albania, it brought out the inherent genius of those people and some of the greatest contributions in our history have been from the Muslims, diverse contributions from Persia, from Muslim China, from Spain and these contributions have infused Western civilization with gifts that they had yet in these countries in both Europe and the United States, the majority of people had yet to recognize; an immense debt is owed to this religion and ultimately to the founder and the Prophet of this religion, *sallah allah alih wa salam* because he is the source; Allah made him the source of these blessings. So I want to speak to you tonight, about a very important topic that I feel it is absolutely necessary that I speak about because I would not be true to what I am feeling inside. In Russia, a group of people took hostage, a school filled with children and that resulted in the death of several hundred people including around a hundred and seventy five children and this atrocity unfortunately was done once again in the name of our religion. And I feel that we as Muslims are suffering all over because of the acts of a handful of people, and we must in one voice condemn and completely reject the concept of indiscriminate killing in this religion. It is neither from the religion, nor is it sanctioned by the religion in any reading of our pre-modern tradition.

It is a modern phenomenon and unfortunately, those practising it have learnt it from Marxism and from Asian philosophies that have the concept of the kamikaze. This is not our tradition. And we must recognize that it is doing untold damage to Islam because we cannot be so short-sighted that we don't see the eyes of history looking upon us as a community. And I feel that what happened in that school is more heinous than the destruction of the Church of the Sepulchre that occurred under the insane Fatimid ruler Al Hakim Bi Amr Allah and we suffer the fact that it is recorded in the history books, a blemish on the Muslim peoples as long as people read history. There are things occurring today that are a blemish upon this religion. We have distorted this pristine clarity that are our prophet gave us: *lailoha ka naharoha*. Its night is equal to its day in its clarity and its light; and that is why we have to reject it, whether it is an Israeli child, a Russian child, an Iraqi child, an American child, a Chinese child, it does not matter who it is. We must reject indiscriminate violence against innocence because blood is too precious.

And it is our lord that sanctified the blood of *bani adam* and for that reason, the sanctity of life, we decreed upon (the people of Israel) and by extension upon the Muslims, that anyone who kills a soul, without just cause, or brigandry in the earth, terrorism, that is as if they have killed all humanity, and this is what has happened.

We don't count numbers. We don't say they killed three thousands of us or three thousands. We don't count numbers. Every soul is sacred, and this has to be re-established on the earth, once again the teaching of Abraham (*alih al salam*). The Abrahamic faith shares the sanctity of life and the Muslims must assert their

Abrahamic truth. We have to re-assert to the Abrahamic peoples that we are the last extension of the Abrahamic truth; that's there is a God, and that he communicates with his creation and he calls them to his unity, and he calls them to the highest morality, known to human kind because those who are attacking religion, are attacking the best of humanity. It is the absence of religion in religious people that leads to these types of atrocity in the names of religion. It is not religion itself; it is the misuse the abuse and the assault on religion in the name of religion that leads to a hatred in the hearts of other people unjustly towards the highest truth that we as human beings hold; and that is why our prophet *salah allah alih waslam* (Peace be upon him) warned us: "beware of extremism in religion, in religion because it is extremism in religion that destroyed the peoples before you". He did not warn it if it was not a real and serious threat to the Muslim community. And so this is the issue of the age; this is the issue that the Republican Party is basing their entire platform on, basing an entire political platform in the most powerful military nation on the earth; it is based on the idea that Islamic fanatics are a threat to the security of this country and this must be condemned.

We have a society now that is facing social disintegration. We have the erosion of middle class in this country. We have homeless people. we have joblessness we have erosion in our schools of the standards of education that were once the pride of this country that produced the scientists who are now imported from places like India and Pakistan. This is the reality. We have an entire continent of Africa that has had over 40 million deaths by AIDS, twice as many people as died in the great plague of Europe, the black plague; 40 million human beings and yet there is no funding for research into this plague that is afflicting the women of Africa in great numbers that we are looking at a hundred million people that are facing death by the plague of Aids and yet we are spending five hundred billion dollars on a defense budget that is nine times greater than all of the defense budgets on this planet put together. That is of right I. It is against every principle upon what this country was based and this is the second extremism that I want to talk about. I believe that this country is being hijacked by a select group of extremists themselves. There is an extremist agenda in this country that is not in the best interest of the United States and it is for the goodness of people that every war that this country goes to is always done in the name of the highest ideals of this country because the hypocrites that use those ideals for their advantages, no because in the heart of the Americans is a love of truth, a love of justice and a love of liberty and they believe that those should be values and virtues that should be promoted throughout the world. So these people are being used. The hatred that is directed to this country is unjust; because the majority of people in this country; if they understood the issues as they should be understood, they would not only be ashamed of what is being done in their name, they would stand up in one voice and I believe this in my heart, and they would condemn and reject it.

I have never believed the presidential elections and I am not a politician nor am I interested in politics but I have to speak the truth, because I have never believed in my lifetime that the presidential elections have any significance. I have never seen it as a significant event; but I spent several hours with Michael Ratner, with Barbara Olshansky in the Centre from constitutional rights. We were seeing memos from the State Department, from the Department of Justice, that were calling to put the detainees in Guantanamo Bay so that they would not have any judicial review. So that they can be interrogated as they please; and this is against the Magna Carta; this is against the Medieval European document that we as Westerners pride ourselves on; this is against the Medieval doctrine. We are living in the twenty first century. We are living in an age in which people in the West in the last 500 years have given their blood, sweat and tears so that their progeny, so that their offspring, might live free, might breathe the air of freedom, might be free from the persecution of unjust governments; and we have to reassert these ideals; too much blood have been shed on this planet, too much blood has been shed on this planet in order that we might have rights and these rights are Islamic rights, they are Abrahamic rights, and they are American rights and if you don't stand up for them, we will suffer the fate of those who are not worthy of the rights they have been given as we see them taken away from us. We have to stand up for our rights. You should know. You are Americans. You have every right to be here. You have every right to descend. You have every right to speak your truth.

Don't be ashamed of being Muslims, don't be ashamed of being part of the religious tradition, that created the civilization of noble India, that created the civilization of Andalusia in Spain, that gave the world some of the greatest treasures that we have, whether they be political, whether they be governmental, whether they be legal, whether they be philosophical, theological, and even artistic gems, even artistic gems. Don't be ashamed of your Islam, stand up fairly and bravely in the face of what is happening, stand up fairly and bravely and speak your truth because each one of you is a sovereign state unto yourself. God placed you on the earth and made you a *khalif* and you have every right to speak the truth, speak the truth even when it is bitter. I absolutely demand from all of us that we must reject what is happening in the Muslim world, in our names and what is happening in the current administration in our name. We have to stand up; we have to stand up with the people who are with us; and there are many people who are with us; don't think, when we were in New York we saw people handing out pamphlets, non-Muslim people, and one of the first principles they were saying: "don't let fear drive a wedge between Americans, stand up by your Muslim Americans". This is what American people were saying because they know that the very fear that was created in the Nazi Germany against the Jewish people that led to the horrific atrocity of the Holocaust, is the same type of fear that is being used to cast the eye of suspicion upon righteous women, upon virtuous women upon chased women, who look no different than the nuns who are revered and respected, in this culture; it is also the men who are attempting to live according to the highest principle of religion, growing beards in the tradition of the prophets. If you see the picture of Jesus Christ, it has a man with a beard on it or Moses; the beard is nothing to shave out of fear, the beard is to wear with a pride of one who is emulating the best of creation *sallah allah alih wa salam*.

Assert your Islam in this day and in this time, and I want to bring...because the Arabs loved the deals and I want to bring some of the deals of this country to show to you that those neo-conservatives, whether they are be secular or from religious group, that claimed that this country is a Christian country, that it was designed by people who wanted Christianity to be the law of the land, that they are not only dishonoring the founding father; they are telling a grave lie to the people of the United States of America.

In the ratification of the constitution of the United States, almost every state in this union had religious tests. In other words, in order to hold a public office you had to take a religious test, to see whether or not you were a Christian. The constitution refused to ratify these ideas and an amendment was not ratified in the constitution, when the ratification of the constitution of the states was debated, this was one of the major arguments and I would just like to read from Governor Johnson. When somebody in North Carolina in 1788 said:

If we don't have a religious test, Muslims will one day possibly hold the highest public office in this country, the office of the president of the United States. This is what Governor Johnson said: 'It is apprehended that Jews, Muhammadans and pagans may one day hold office under the government of the United States. Those who are Muhammadans or any others who are not professors of the Christian religion can never be elected to the office of the president or any other high office, save under two cases, first, that people of America lay aside the Christian religion all together, and what is that telling you is that if a Muslim choose a Muslim government or a Muslim president in a Muslim land, they have the democratic right to do that, and so the question is not whether Islam can embrace democracy, the question is can democracy embrace Islam. That is the question. He said it may happen; this was the vision of these men. He said it may happen that the Americans lay aside Christianity, if unfortunately the people would choose men such as they think like them. In other words, they would choose the ruler they want and that is their God given right, because the government is only valid based on the consent of the governed and then he said, that the second possible reason for choosing those people would be:

If somebody, another case, if any person of such description should not withstand their religion, in other words, even though they were Muslims, acquire the confidence and esteem of the people of America by their good conduct and practice of virtue, they may be elected, even though to the office of the president of the United States.

In other words, if Americans wish to elect a Muslim, then the founding fathers, said they had every right to do that, and we should feel proud to be in a country that we are in a country that we in 2004 we were in the minds of those men, because Thomas Jefferson said in the Virginia bill to establish religious freedom. Jefferson wrote: it was proposed that the lord, holly author of our religion, be changed into our lord Jesus Christ, but the proposal was rejected by a great majority. This is in Virginia in the legislature; the proposal to replace God with our lord Jesus Christ was rejected by a great majority in proof that they meant to include within the mantel of its protection, the Jew and the Gentile, the Christian and the Mohammedan, the Hindu and infidel of every denomination and that is the basis of this country: You are lawful citizen to this country. *La oqsimo bihaza al balad, wa anta hellon lehaza el balad*, I swear an oath by this land and you are an lawful citizen to this land.

The Muslims are here to stay and Pablo Canon said in a very profound essay if this government thinks they can wage war on Islam like we waged war on fascism or communism, or any other ideology, they have another thing coming, because Islam has been here for fourteen hundred years, and proved itself indestructible. Islam is indestructible. Islam is indestructible. Islam is indestructible, and that's what Pablo Canon had to say, a respectable republican. Islam is indestructible. So, I want all of you to recognize; so I want you all to recognize that this country has great ideals; these ideals are rooted in the Islamic ideals; these ideals are rooted in the Islamic ideals and toleration is an Islamic gift to the West; and this can be historically proven, because the first edict of toleration was the edict of Buda and it was done under the Ottoman Empire under the suzerainty of Ottoman Empire by a Unitarian Transylvanian Prince. We also have evidence, clear evidence that John Locke, one of the greatest political theorists in Western history was influenced by Edward Pococke who just happened to be the Professor of Islamic and Arabic studies at Cambridge University. He convinced John Locke to abandon his Trinitarianism and embrace Unitarianism, to embrace the unity of God.

So we must see that Islam has given too much and tonight is about giving, the Muslims have given too much to civilization for them to be accused or abused, by those people who wish nothing but harm for this country, that's what they want and I will end on this note that I sincerely believe until the Palestinian issue is recognized as a festering soul on the body of this planet. Until the United States of America rises up to her responsibility, in addressing a grave crime against the people for over fifty years who have been suffering in humiliation in abject poverty, and have suffered at the hands of the current government, that could be called nothing less but a fascist government, nothing less but a fascist government, nothing less but a fascist government, that Palestine is the issue and well I hold no enmity in my heart for Jewish people; I hold no enmity in my heart for the children of Prophets, for the children of Jacobs because I know that their fathers would only wish them well, and I wish what their father wishes for them. But I call on the Jewish people of this country, to rise up and condemn the oppression that they see with their own eyes.

We as Muslims must abandon tribalism. We must abandon tribalism. We must reject the concept of collective guilt. We must reject the concept of *bani Islam*. I did not join a tribe. I joined what I believe is the religion of truth, and wherever that religion tells me to stand, I will stand with it, whether it is with the Muslims or against them. We cannot fall victims to tribal mentalities.

We have to reject in our hearts vengeance, revenge for the sake of pride. We have to reject this in our heart and begin to read the Qur'an, as it was clearly intended by the author whom we believe is the lord of the world. When he said in the Qur'an again and again: "we man *3afa we asalaha fa agroho 3la allah. 3aqibo bemethil ma 3oqeptom bih wa l2n sabartom fahwa xairon lel sabireen*". That yes, you can address wrongs as you choose. But if you show patience, if you are forbearing, that's better to you. If you forgive, that's better to you, and I was with the patient with Rachel Corrie who lost their beautiful daughter in Palestine, run over and crushed by a caterpillar, a caterpillar tractor built in the United States of America, and given as aid to Israel, and used as a weapon of destruction against the Palestinian pharmacists who had nothing to do with any violence against the state of Israel, but was punished for collective guilt which is a crime against every legal system on this planet. The idea that one holds the sin of another is alien to the Abrahamic tradition. The Qur'an says and it is reiterated in the bible, and the all New Testament forms, *la taziro*

wazeraton wezr okhra. No soul bears the burden of another soul. The sins of all Palestinians who are having their trees uprooted, who are having their houses destroyed, nothing to do with anything other than gross injustice, and we reject it, just as we reject innocent Jews that are killed in the name of Islam. I reject it. I want to stand by the truth, that's where I want to be, and I want all of you to stand by the truth. And look into your heart, *estafti qalbak wa law aftook el nas*. Take a fatwa from your own heart, even if, people give you fatwa, you ask your own heart, that is what the Prophet would do. We have only 500 hadith that are absolutely of the status of the Qur'an, and one of them says, *naha rasol Allah (salah allah 3alih wa salam) 3an qatl elnesa2 wal awlad*; the Prophet of God forbade the killing of women and children, the prophet of God forbade the killing of women and children, the prophet of God forbade the killing of women and children.

We cannot see his name vilified. We will not allow his religion to be vilified for crime that has nothing to do with his religion and we should say like he said when Khaled ibn el-Walid killed those prisoners unjustly: *allahuma eni bare2 mema fa3l* Khaled. I am innocent of what Khalid did. I am innocent of what Khalid did. This is what he cried and this is we must cry. Islam is innocent of what is being done in its name. We reject it in the same way that the Christians now reject the gross intolerance, the crusades, the Christian crusades and any other pre-modern crime that was done in the name of Christianity, the modern Christians reject it and we too must reject what is being done in the name of our religion, really with one voice and our *ulama* have immense burden and I believe our *ulama* have failed to address this critical issue and I want them to address it. Because it must be seen for the crime that it is, it has to be seen for the crime that it is and I want to say Daniel Pipes put a test out on the Internet how to determine whether somebody is a good Muslim or a bad Muslim, and I took that test and failed and I want to say to all of you I hope you fail that test too and I want to say to all of you. I hope you fail that test too, you don't want to be a good Muslim in the eyes of Daniel Pipes and for anybody here who is representing him, I wish all the best for that man, I hope he is guided and looks into his heart and really reassess what he has been doing, but I really want to say that I want to be a good Muslim in the eyes of God and being a good Muslim in the eyes of God often means being condemned in the eyes of people, and so don't be ashamed.

Jesus Christ told his followers you will be persecuted in my name, in my name. Jesus Christ told his followers, the people of the world will hate you, and they will persecute you because people of truth are often hated and despised by people of falsehood. So don't be afraid of being hated and despised. May God strengthen this organization. May God strengthen all organization. May you go back to your community with a renewed spirit to strive even harder, and I would say Tariq Ramadan when he is refused, or not refused when his Visa is revoked, it is time to change administrations. And I want to say if the Republicans are closer to the truth I am with them, if the democrats are closer to the truth I am with them, but in this case, anything but Bush. Because this country has to send a message; this country has to send a message to the rest of the world, that the last four years were a mistake. Abo Gurayeb was a mistake. Abo Gurayeb does not represent the good people of the United States and Abo Gurayeb goes right to the top and just as like Truman said the box stops here. *As salamo 3alikom*.

Appendix 2

Transcript of Yusuf Estes' sermon "Why the West needs Islam"?

It is great to be with you here again tonight. Mashallah. I like that. I was listening to the program and I was thinking what happens when people who are not Muslims hear about Islam in the media, websites, even you know from some people who have contacts with some Muslims and I was remembering what happened when I first had a chance to meet a Muslim. How many of you heard the story? You have heard it? I won't bother you with it. Do we have anybody here who is a Muslim? Do we have anybody who is not a Muslim yet? You already got a beard now. We have got to go. How about over here? (Audience laughs).

When people hear stories of what some Muslims do and this of course has to be exaggerated a little bit. Then we find that there are pretty rotten stories that come around. And just the other day right here in Australia, I had the chance to interview some people. I like to do the man with the camera thing. And you listen to people responses. Some of them are hysterical. I remember one time I was asking someone what do you know about Islam and he kept thinking and thinking and he said, Islam; is that a salad dressing? But you know, so you have things in-between and you have those who really have a bad notion about Islam. It is fair because if that's all they know, that's all they know. But it should be after somebody is dealing with Muslims they should have a good impression of what all Islam is really about. But as you heard a few minutes ago, some Muslims are pretty tough and not so good and that leaves a bad impression for all of us.

They do have and that's according to the Catholic Church latest release, you already heard so I would not buy it with you again, according to them Islam is the largest religion in the world, that's according to the Catholic Church, Islam is one of the largest religions in the world. We passed them up they said in the last senses. You look excited? If we have one more or one less Muslim out of one and a half or two billion people. I can't tell the difference. You can't tell the difference. But it makes a lot of difference how the Muslims we have behave, the *axlak* of Muslims is really what's all about, the behavior, the manner, the way of the Muslims.

When we talk about the people of the West, the so-called West and the so-called East, so-called Middle East, there will always be cultural differences, and there is gonna be traditions that some tribes and people have, that will separate them from the other people, but when we talk about religion, most religions have something that's kinda lean towards their area, for example, Hindus will obviously be basically from India, why? That's really the name. It's Hindustan, religions named after the place, Hinduism. Christianity is not exactly the same way, because it has believers from all populations around the world. Judaism, on the other hand, is pretty strict, if you wanna be a real Jew you have to be born under the tribe of Juda. So the only way you can get it is to be a blood transfusion from somebody who is from there. And then Buddhism is just limited really to certain areas, some people are attracted to it. But what about Islam? Islam claims to be for all places and all people and all times. This is the claim of Islam. Because I grew up with a Christian background I can really speak from the fifty forty years and tell you that, I definitely saw, whether they will ever admit it or not, prejudice because even today there are Christian churches for Chinese and Christian churches for Japanese. And we have Christian churches for black people and Christian churches for Mexican people even though they speak English. But would it be strange to you and I if somebody said Oh don't go to that mosque because it's for black people. Because any masjid in the world could have a black person as the imam or a white person or a yellow person or any colored person we would not think about it. Would we? All we think about is to recite the Qur'an correctly. That will be the main thing.

When Malcolm x was close to real Islam, when he came to real Islam, that was one of the things that struck him that he had gone for Hajj and he is amazed, he said I will pray next to a white person and blacks and browns and all colors. You know all together, he was amazed. He talked about it; one thing he talked about it when he did *salah* in a small masjid in Makkah, he said he noticed that the one leading probably from

Africa, he was black and so he went to him after the prayer and said did you ever have a chance to be leading the prayer in front of these all white guys? He said the man looked at him and said what? What are you talking about? Because the stigma, the thing he grew up in his mentality, this was a big deal. You know, to try to find a chance to be up to with whity. That is what he talked about. And I watched. By the way I used to be white. (Audience laugh). I tried to keep a straight face I could not.

When I was real little I watched my cousins you know, and they were telling me something one time about colored. And I was thinking you know, color? At that time color was a big deal because movies were black and white but there was something new out called techno-color. It was a big deal: Tardeo, techno-color and Point Vista which was part of Disney the animal things, like the early version of animal planet Okay? So he was with his friends and he said we gonna see some colors today, colored people and I was thinking wow. Like rainbows or something I may imagine. I had no idea what they were talking about until we were going down to the beach and it had a big sign "no colored" and I was thinking why cannot you have color on the beach I don't get it. This is 1940s. And it was so bad that people took it for granted and it was alright. Still little kids they don't really see this because they start out innocent. We mentioned that last time, that when children are born, they are in a state of innocence, not in a state of guilt. You know, in Arabic, you have something that extends over into tribalism; it is called *asadeyya*, and this is worse than that, it is something horrible; so we were now making a migration from up north to Texas. I remember that and in our way, we stopped in a place called Arkansas, when we stopped in the gas station, my dad told us, go and use the bathroom, we gonna go, my sister went to the ladies, and I had demands and someone said "colored". I wanted to see what colored bathroom looked like inside. I can imagine, that's gonna be something, and someone told me , what did you go in that room for? I did not wanna tell him, you know, I used the bathroom, he said no, "that's for colored", I did not get it, but even though we have through a lot in our countries and we have seen buses taking children from the black area to the white area and from the white area to the black area, we spend all of our security money to do it, all the reserves of security, they use it up for that, and in the 1690s it got really bad and we went to the point where we had, some really serious violence, and when Martin Luther King Junior, was giving a speech, he said that he had a dream, and his dream was to see all children growing up together, going to school together, that was the dream he had and he said that. And right after that they assassinated him, they killed him, this is the kind of hatred that comes with that, for what? For the color of his skin, can you imagine that? You might think it's over, we don't have that problem? No. What it does is that it goes deeper, hides its head down low, you know under the radar but it is still there. You doubt what I said, it extends beyond the white black thing it is also a man woman thing, you know in the West, they still have problems with women holding high position, believe that, how come Hilary Clinton is out of the race? Because and watch what's now happening to Obama when he goes against McCain; McCain is what? What color, you were white, you will see, I can be wrong, I was wrong before, we will see.

The point I am trying to get really is how much the West needs to understand what true Islam is about, because it is the thing they claim to be looking for, the claim they are making when they make their big speeches, and pontificate us infinitum about the principles that they offer to the ignorant, you know, backward, third world countries. A white girl who was a Christian in Colorado, was talking to someone and she got the notion that she needs to go save the Muslims in Africa, she joined some peace group, whatever it was and went trips all over the way to Africa, and you know going from place to place, thinking she is going to save these people, and she had a good heart, don't get me wrong, true they were poor, they literally made their houses, what they live in from whatever was available, palm trees and grass huts, things like this, but when she visited the village, the people would treat her like it was a festival and she thought "oh because I am American I am gonna give them civilization, I am going to save them and everything, that is why they were holding big celebrations when I come". And there was food a lot of food, more than she could eat and the people would say: "No. no. take more, take more, more food and more food"; so she goes to the next village, and again, all the food is there, eat, eat come one, cucumbers, tomatoes, whatever, eat.

Along the way, she was in one village and she cannot eat any more and she said I thought you guys, like poor over here, they said we are, our children are starving, she said, "there is food everywhere I go, there is plenty of food"; the guide said "mama it is because you are here, they are Muslims and they are taking everything they have in the village here because you are the guest", because this is Islam, it does not matter our conditions because our guests are first, she started crying, she said I did not come over here to hurt these people; I thought I can help them, and after doing some search, she realized they actually had more than she really did. Because she did not have the capacity to do what they were doing, to actually take food out of their children mouth, they were going house to house to have anything they get at all, have a cucumber, Ok, have half a tomato, Ok, give it to us, what do you have over here? Hay? A piece of bread. And they were literally taking everything they had, so that she would not feel uncomfortable and insisted that she would eat it.

Many of you know exactly what I am talking about, but there are a lot of people in the world today who don't have clue about that, they don't understand that, by the way this lady made *shahada*, put on *hijab* and went back to Colorado, telling people about Islam, of course they got this typical, whoever goes to Islam, they have something to say about it, and in her case, she probably got malaria and she has been crazy ever since (audience laugh).

When Cassius Clay, that was 50 years ago, he was a boxer, number one on top and everybody is looking, wow Cassius Clay, who is this guy? Amazing he accepted Islam and changed his name to Muhammad Ali, you know what did they say? Too many shots to the head, there were a jazz singer that Elton John was jealous of, he was glad when he became a Muslim, and he never said I never had any competition after he got out of the business, who is he talking about? Cat Stevens. I think he was Greek Orthodox or something, I don't remember, but he was Christian at least by name, when he entered Islam, all the people that used to love him, because he has got a great voice, even today he has got great voice, and very creative with his music, but as soon as he became a Muslim, you know what they said, because he had been to the hospital, too many drugs, look at that, these are the kind of things that people say and it means they have to try to explain, what do you have to explain? If somebody decided they don't be a Republic, they wanna be a democrat; that is in my country; why do you have to explain something, what can it be it's just a choice; why is that you have to make excuse? And they do. You should hear some of the things that people said even about me and my family when we came to Islam. These were harder, they had to really come up with something because hey, everybody knew us, everybody knew what we were all about. Each time somebody goes to Islam, you will see there will be resistance, they are gonna be heavy resistance. When I came to Islam, I got into Islam, and some of my relatives were telling me "stay away from those Muslims", and I could not explain because I was the one who called my family to Christianity to start with, so when I got to Islam and I came back, they were like "Oh you know we can't listen to you anymore". I said: "I found the next step up, come on, go up". Something happened; a very bad experience happened, with some Muslims, they did something really bad, which in fact I am not gonna tell the story because, it is that bad. Still, it was only a couple and it was not certainly not representative of Islam, it was some bad people, so and again they come to me and said "see..see we told you now come on back and be with us". I said for what? I came in Islam, not for you, not for them. I came to Islam because it is the only thing that makes any sense. Islam is the only thing that offers proof for everything it says and there is nothing illogical, one stays one, hello, one equals one, end of the story, no more explanation after that, as for Jesus, being the son of God, it is simple, but he was a miracle, a creation of human being, just like Adam and Eve.

So when something like this happens and somebody comes into Islam, should it be that they got a real easy road because if you get to the right way, why would it be difficult, it should be real simple, if you take that logic, then it should happen that all Muslims should be in good shape all the time, it should be according to that logic that Muslims should never had any hard time, they will always be in a good way, makes sense?

One of the places I am supposed to go speak coming up in July, sent me something that I read yesterday, they do a conference, may be one in their whole life, they put it together, they bring speakers in, they give you a title or something, I remember one time, they said, "coming to Islam, what can I do with that?" Is that

the name of the speech? “Oh”, I said, “what can I do with that?” In their case, they wanted me to talk about the happy prophets, prophets, the happy people, something like this. What? What do you say? Is that like a cartoon? Okay? “The happy prophets are coming on”, you know. Content. That is what we decided was a better word. That Allah talks about believers, *radia allahu 3anhom wa rado 3anh*, people are pleased with Allah and Allah was pleased with them. Pleased or content, but not happy. I don’t mean you that can’t be happy and be a Muslim but what I am saying is that prophets specially are gonna be the ones that suffer the most, and this is why because they are getting huge reward for what they doing, and Allah tells us in the Qur’an, this is in chapter 29, in *El 3ankabot* or spider, *a3ozo bellah min el shaytan el rajeem*, do human beings think they gonna be left alone because they said “we believe?” And they were putting on to *fitna*, big trial, calamity, difficulty, squeeze you, you know, because Allah continues he did the same thing to the people before you, to show you who are the truthful and who are the liars, because if you are really true, you believe in Allah, and you want to do something about it, Okay, go ahead and try, and you might say, why? Why would that be a difficulty? Part of that is to understand what the real purpose of life is? Part of that is to understand whose your creator really is. To understand that will be then to understand your role in all of this and then, you would find out what you are supposed to be doing, and that is where the rub comes, not the rub in Arabic, rub in English, the problem you gonna have is that you would soon realize, that you can’t do what you wanted to do, that is we are here to do what he wants us to do, and if we understood that, then there a lot of things we have to give up, you narrow your options down to be a real Muslim, and a lot of people don’t want do that; they don’t want give up, their desires, their lust, their personal goals, and that’s where the problem comes. They are not attacking Islam: they are attacking faith.

So if somebody is attacking you as a Muslim, if somebody is even attacking Islam in front of you, realize that it is not really you, it is not us as a whole, the problem is they are responding to something they don’t wanna accept, they don’t wanna to accept it because it will mean they have to give up all the stuff they are doing, you follow me, that is the problem.

In the west, for the most part, not everybody, by the way it is wrong to sum up and say everybody is like this in there, is not that wrong, like if somebody said that about us, no, we are human beings, we have different ideas, hopes and goals, true, for the most part, Muslims are good, and for the most part, Muslims are following Islam and doing a pretty good job, but there are some stinkers out there, true. In the same case, when you look to the west, it is wrong to say, all the West is like this, because they are not, there are good people there, and there are also human beings; they have goals, they have desires, they have things they are trying to do as well; and there are some who are looking, searching for the truth and they would love to know some of the things you will take for granted every day. I am pretty sure I am right when I say this; that many of the people in the West would love to hear about it, until they found out it is Islam, simply because of the pre-conceived notion of Islam and Muslims, but if they know how beautiful is this *deen*, this way and how it solves so many of the problems they have, they will be very happy with it, so by now I should give you some example on that, I made my statement so I really could quit but I would like to give you some examples of that.

One example is when I hear people, I wanna show you something, how is the reverse of everything, this is just like turning a subject upside down and turning at it again. Somebody comes to us and attacks us, I mentioned that last night, and they say what a dumb thing, so backward. What is this thing about right hand, left hand? What is that all about? Come on. Cause we shake hands with this. We don’t know somebody to give us left hand, do we? This is very bad, somebody gave you your left hand; what do we use this hand for, besides shaking hands? What do we use this hand for? Eating? Do we eat with this hand? How do we eat? Imagine somebody who is putting his left hand? Ha ha. How is that? Why? Because you are backward you don’t know your left hand, from your right, hahaha. Even I heard one say: “how you gonna deal with, a socially acceptable environment, I wanna say that right, and eat in a decent restaurant with utensils”? This sounds like a primitive cave man, right (audience laughs).

Because when you pick up your meat, don’t you pick up the knife with this hand and pick up the fork with this hand? Ya? You cut the meat, you put that in your mouth? What is the matter with you? That’s so

backward, even that, now check this out, there is a reason we do this because this hand we keep it clean, because this hand we use to clean ourselves after the toilet, “oh, how backward, don’t you use paper?” (audience laughs). The United States navy did a study, in the navy you got people in the boat you can’t get in touch with other people out there. And what they did, they had people washing their hands before and after their meals, on another ship, they ran the same test, and had these guys not wash their hands, before and after the meals, to see what will happen, totally and completely no doubt about it, the ones washing their hands, before and after, had the least amount of sicknesses being passed around, of course, we know that well nowadays, because of the studies they have done, and how many times, people are getting this hepatitis, hepatitis B, I think, they get from fast food places, the guy went to the bathroom and come back, he does not wash his hands, the next thing, you will see an outbreak of all this all over the whole city, and everybody that ate there, got it. So now they have these signs that all employees must wash their hands, things like that. Another time, a woman who works for an insurance company, she did an independent study, she works in a big corporation, they had so many employees, taking off time, being sick, being ill, and they asked her to come in and do a study; she went into every floor of building and everything around, and did a laboratory test, and she would put this material, dust, on the telephones, on the keyboard, and then she would come back and collect it up later and they found fecal matter on the telephones, on the keyboards, on the fax machine, along with other germs as well, because people want care of washing themselves after they go to the toilet, so they insist employees wash hands and it makes a huge difference; you won’t believe that this happens? How does this work in the left hand, right hand? How does that come in? We gonna understand this subject a little bit more to get it for you. If, we are now talking about the toilet paper thing, if and I wanna ask you, You Muslims, don’t have dogs, but in the West, everybody has got a dog, and ask them, have you picked up the paper this morning? You go through the grass, you put it up and then you say, oh, has somebody walked with their dog right here? Look at this. Ah, you got it on you. So what you gonna do? You gonna turn the newspaper off, you gonna go to the house and wash the newspaper off, which one? So for the dog you are washing but for you are using paper. Now you are getting a clue; you are starting to get a clue, because what happens when a person washes themselves and this is what actually Muslims are doing; they wash themselves totally with water as if you are going to the bathtub or something, and the difference is tremendous because after washing, this hand is a lot cleaner than you think.

Now I want to take you back thousand years, the big scientists scholars of the time, were in Andalusia in Spain and these people were Muslims and they were using the principles taught by Muhammad, *Salih el salat wal salam*, four hundred years before them, and they were analyzing these things, being philosophical about these things; people like Ibn Senna, Ibn Rushd and other people; they are still today mentioned in the medical books, history books, you will find, that they were doing amazing things for them, for their time, so much time that at the time of the Black Plague in Europe, the people were dying like flies; so far they could not bear them, they would carry them on wagons, bodies on wagons, and it was so bad, that everybody was there, finding their disease, something was killing them, they call it the black death or the black plague. You can read about it in encyclopedia, read about it, but these people used to send their children to Spain, because that’s the real higher learning was; they sent them to Spain, but they found something amazing, even though some of the students came down, with these diseases, it was only the students that came from Europe but none of the locals got it, Why? And these came to know that it was because of this, cleaning this hand and only eating with this hand, and this hand for anything dirty and still washing it anyway. The difference is that they were able to go back and saw the problem in Europe and that was the end of the black plague after they understood it. By the way, you won’t find that mentioned in the history books, as there is no reason to mention that, is it? Especially because there is a connection to Islam, I wanna share another one with you think about this. I was coming home one night from a program very late at night, driving back; my wife let me drive, I put my head on the steering wheel, I was so tired, I put my head back up, my little daughter was with me, she said, daddy “wake up, daddy wake up”. I said I cannot. I am exhausted. I want pull over, and she tuned the radio on really loud. I like to listen to talk shows and the first thing that came out, it was the beginning of a sentence, a man’s voice said, “always sit down when you eat or drink”, ah, he

said: “never stand up when you eat or drink”. What is this? What is this guy talking about? You know, this is Sunna, *al rasul sallah allah ali wa salam*, said “sit down when you eat or drink, don’t stand up”, and I was thinking “what’s this?”. He began explaining the damage that goes starting at the neck and going to down and he starts explaining all the problems and all the operations that could be avoided if people just sit down when they sit or drink. I mean I was awake when I was listening to that, but now you got a problem, because now if you realized all what he said and understood the problem, all the damage done to your body, so now you gonna sit down, when you eat or drink. Are you doing it for Islam for Allah or are you doing it for your health? Makes sense? 1400 years ago, somebody is giving you advise, you make fun of it until you say wow it really works. I am probably having a lucky guess, ha? It surprises me that the Muslims don’t pick up on this faster. I see people who are not Muslims see things happen, then come to Islam, there is another example. I used to be in a hotel, and I happen to be waiting for a customer in a store once, and I was just walking around, and he had something in the toothpaste department, health toothpaste of some kind, and the claim on this toothpaste is that it has the only substance on earth that can remove black and tartar from your teeth without damaging the enamel; it improves the gums, and cleans the gums all the way down into your stomach, and it mentioned the ingredients, some technical terms that I still can’t pronounce, but it says it comes from *siwak*, ha? From what? *miswak* and he showed the stick, on there and it was trimmed about and I saw it, that was a *miswak* stick and I turned it over and I read Dr Muhammad's toothpaste, 4 dollars 75 cent for this small and you still have to go and buy a toothbrush, or if you are using the real *miswak*, instead of getting one or two percent, that’s what was on there, you get a hundred percent, if you use the tooth stick that prophet *sallah allah alih wa salam* used and you find people say oh that’s tacky, you carry your stick with you, oh, (audience laugh) But even today you see one of the brothers that are using it today, what does their teeth look like? Let us go back to the guy cutting his stakes, go back and read Emily post, you know who is Emily post, go back and check the people who tell you about proper manners, the proper manners is, yes, you pick up the knife with the right hand, you pick up the fork with the left, you cut the stake and you lay the knife down, and you cut up the fork with the right and you eat it with the right. So this goes back to the time when they were getting over the problem of the black plague, hello.

So often we are taking criticisms from ignorant people and then adding more ignorance on top of it and rejecting that is really intelligence. I am saying not only the West needs Islam, I am saying Muslims need Islam, yes or no? We deviated far away, far away from the real Islam, it is not just in the eating, in the health and taking care of our bodies, but it is also in the way we treat each other, and that is much worse, because it is an important aspect of Islam, because after your correct relationship with your lord the next close important thing is your correct relationship with the people and if it sucks, what are you all about? How are you a good Muslim if no body like you? How? How is that work? Even the enemies of the Prophet had respect for him, some of his enemies had respect for him, yes or no? And when I find Muslims who don’t have respect for their scholars or teachers I wonder what is really going on? What is this? Where is the proper behavior? The things that we notice is bad treatment to parents in most of these programs, and that’s not new, that did not just happen last week, that has been going on since 1930s, for there was television. Judaism, Christianity and Islam forbid that, they forbid that and back in order, in all three of the monotheistic religions that the parents are so high that they are mentioned in the commandment in this priority, after god, almighty Allah, worship him alone and keep away from falsehood, worshiping according to his own rule; that is number one in the commandment, number 5 in the commandments is how do you treat your parents, it comes before number six, which is “don’t kill”; it is exactly the same order in the Qur’an, no difference, so regardless of what your take is, in what religion, in which book, all of us need to look back and think what are we doing? How can we possibly treat our elders as we do today? How can you even make jokes? It is not acceptable that you put down your mother, to put down your father, to talk about your elders, your teachers, regardless of their religious affiliation, regardless of their political minds, they are your parents, and you have to give them that dignity, am I wrong or right?

They want me to talk about how the West needs Islam, I am saying all of us need it, I am saying it is not something of an obscure area; I am saying if you are human being how can you live without Islam? And most people on the earth have things in their life about Islam and they don't know it; is that true or false? It is true. Think about it. If somebody is willing to put some other body ahead of their needs, is not that a teaching in Islam? If somebody wanted to sacrifice themselves to help somebody else? Is not this Islam? If somebody is going to feed the people in need or take care of the orphan, the traveler, is not that part of Islam, and may be they don't have the right beliefs but how about the actions? And we find there are many people who would like to do something good; they have an idea, how about this, instead of cutting them down to the level of Okay, because you don't believe (unclear), how about emphasize the good things that people do and encourage them to do more. I mentioned something yesterday but I will mention it again, sometimes we find people of the other faiths who hang around the Muslims, and even to the extent that they like what they see, they like what they hear, they feel good when they are with you because you don't drink alcohol; you don't smoke cigarette; you don't play with drugs; you don't chase after women, and as long as these things are in place; especially you don't cut people down; you don't make people somebody feel like low; they feel good, they wanna be with you; to the extent that when they wanna do *salah* they wanna pray; when you are fasting, they wanna fast with you, so you ask them. Do you want to become a Muslim? No..But they are still doing some good deeds, ya. And then we come back to the same thing again, to remind them as much as your good deeds is your doing, how about this idea? How about enrolling in the program to get the benefits? How about sign up for the job so that you can get paid on pay day? Makes sense? If you gonna do these things any way, what is it to enter Islam? It is to say with conviction that there really is God; one God and you wanna worship him on his standards; that's the first step, immediately to be followed by the second step to bear witness that Muhammad brought the message that I just said, that there is one God. What is so tough about this for somebody who already claims he believes in the monotheistic faith? And the answer comes, this is what I really grew up in, this is what I found my forefathers doing, I am committed to this because my father is this, my tradition is this and so on, Allah *Subhano wa ta3la* mentioned that in the Qur'an this is exactly the excuse that people use, but it is not a valid excuse, it is ignorance because if you know that something is better for you than what you have? Why can't you abandon that for what is better for you? Why not?

Appendix 3

Transcript of Baba Ali's YouTube videos

Who hijacked my religion?

Who hijacked my religion? Seriously, who hijacked my religion? I am watching TV and this guy is explaining Islam but he is talking non-sense. What religion is this guy talking about? Not only he does not have any idea of what he is saying but he is saying "I am a Muslim". Seriously, from where do they get these characters from? It is even funnier how they give him the title of "expert" (laughing). Just because you have read a book about Muslims, does not make you an expert. And don't get me wrong. It is not just non-Muslims they also confuse Muslims on TV. Somehow they keep finding people who have little or no knowledge of the religion. They show them talking all crazy, talking about killing and murdering. It is not based on the actions of Islam. You hear all kinds of crazy stuff. And I am of serious thinking, of all the Muslims they can put on TV, they put these people on, come on man. I don't recognize what you are talking about as Islam. It's like practising a totally different religion. Sometimes, they give the green light to extremists. Coincidence? I don't think so.

This is how they build a public opinion on a group of people but their hatred is based on ignorance. People are not born racist. Prejudice is something that is learnt; they don't necessarily come out and say Muslims are terrorists but they do everything else so you can come up with that opinion.

Look up at all those mumbo jumbo you see in the movies. In the movie, they can lie as much as they want because they can use the excuse it is only a movie. But have you ever noticed that all the bad guys in the movies these days are Muslims and their actors who play their roles, they don't do their homework. Sometimes, they show a Muslim praying and in the middle of his praying, he answers the phone or in the middle of his praying, he talks to somebody "joke". Sometimes, you have the Muslim characters sleep with one of the women in the movie. Double joke. Who writes this stuff?

And how come they show the main bad guy acting evil, they are playing the azan in the background. Hello, the azan has called for prayers. Coincidence? I don't think so.

They take a peaceful religion and they try to associate violence to it; no wonder the masses are confused about Islam.

People are often scared of things they don't understand and don't think we are the only people who is victim of this propaganda; you remember the way Japanese were treated during World War II or the way African Americans are treated during the Civil Rights Movement. You get the picture. History continues to repeat itself and the way that stereotype is built is done in a very sneaky sneaky way.

You watch TV and you see images of black people stealing; I guess if you see it enough times, you assume that all black people steal or all Hispanic people cross the border to steal your jobs or all white people are trash or women are inferior to men and the false list of stereotypes goes on and on; these tactics are not new; it is the same tricks over and over again but this time they are building a stereotype of the Muslims; they are associating the word "Muslim" with the word "terrorist" but the word Muslim and terrorist is an oxymoron; you know, when you put words next to each other that have opposite meanings; it is like saying "definite maybe" or "that's a loud silence", "same difference", "exact estimate". You get the picture . The word Muslim terrorist does not make sense. The word "Muslim" means one who submits to God. The word

“terrorist” means someone who submits to terror. So how one who submits to God spreads terror? It does not make sense.

How come when non-Muslim commits a crime, he is merely committing a crime but when somebody is committing a crime, their religion is never been mentioned?

They take verses out of the Qur'an out of context to serve their own purpose. Think not that I came to send peace but a sword. Does that sound violent to you? Does that sound like it is taken out of context?

That's not from the Qur'an; that's from the bible, Matthew 10:34. You see, you can put that trick on any religion. Do you know what I am saying?

I live in a country where the majority of people are Christian but you won't hear the term Christian terrorist if a Christian commits a crime; that is because it is common knowledge that Christianity does not teach terrorism.

But since the average person lacks the average knowledge of other religions; they are easily fooled to believe what is told to them; they are the ones who based their opinion based on what they see on TV and if you repeat a lie enough times, people take it as truth. Just imagine if the TV was your teacher. You probably think Islam is the religion of fanatics; that Muslims have no connection with reason or rationality but in reality that's the exact opposite.

When you study Islam, you see that it encourages thought. It advises men to think and reflect. It promotes peace and tranquility. But there are people out there who do actions that Islam forbids in the name of Islam, abusing this beautiful religion, to promote their own agenda and the media loves this type of people. So many times, they find these people of bad apples which is usually people who don't understand Islam. They wait till they get emotional and they throw them on TV, ratings baby, ratings, they don't care about the truth. The only thing they care about is the numbers. They wanna boost their ratings; increase their audience. So they can raise the price of their commercials and make the money.

If only we practise Islam, the way it is supposed to be practised, these people would not have any foolish things to play with. You see, you can't judge an entire religion based on the actions of a few. I don't judge Christianity based on the actions of those who blow abortion clinics. By the way, what kind of life-message you are sending by blowing up innocent people?

Let us clear all the confusion and make it really simple. A religion should not be judged by its misguided followers; a religion should be judged by its teachings; here is a thought.

How about putting a practising Muslim on TV who knows what he is talking about. Have him explain Islam to the masses.

If you are really interested in seeing what Islam teaches, go to your local Islamic Centre. What you hear might surprise you.

It is very different from what you see on TV or read on the newspapers. A bunch of people are trying to hijack my religion and I wanna it back.

Remember; so many enemies of the Islam ended up becoming Muslim when they saw Islam practised correctly; do you know what I am saying?

At the end of the day, it does not make difference what the media shows or the newspaper say; a lot of people judge actions not words; and if you are a good Muslim *enshallah*, people wanna be like you.

Culture versus Islam

Many Muslims who come from overseas, they leave Islam back in their home country; I mean they bring their traditions, their cultures but their traditions have nothing to do with Islam. For example, the idea of a forced marriage where a woman gets married without her consent; Islam does not allow that; it is totally messed up, man. Islam liberated people from this ignorant way of thinking; for some Muslims, they love culture, more than they love Islam. And that's why they want to compromise religion for the sake of their culture. Joke. Now, I am not saying that all cultures are bad. There's a lot of great things we can learn from different cultures. There's tasty food, beautiful artwork, rich languages and so much more; you know, one of the things that confuse a non-Muslim is when they see a Muslim take part of Islam, part of their culture, put it all together and label the whole thing Islam. Not only you are giving Islam a bad name, you are confusing everybody; you know, if you add or subtract anything from Islam, it is not Islam anymore and there are so many Muslims who would like to customize Islam just to meet their desires. Desires. *Alhamdulillah*, I found Islam before I met these types of Muslims. *Alhamdulillah*. As a convert, I can tell you that Islam is a very beautiful religion. This is why I feel bad for a child who grows up in the family where Islam is not given to them properly. You know, what I am talking about, the parents who purposely teach only parts of Islam, the parts that benefit them. The child grows up, misunderstanding Islam because he sees his parents compromising it, you know what I am talking about man. How about a father who occasionally closes his liquor store so that he can go to his *jummah* prayers. Oh brother, it is not halal to have business, over the *jummah*. Bro, it is a liquor store. Your business is not even halal. How about a mother who tells her daughter to put on hijab at the masjid stairs but tells her to take it off for the interview. What is up with that? That's why the kids are all confused. They can't tell the difference between what's culture and what's Islam and you don't take it seriously until the day you wake up; the day you wake up and you find that your kids are not kids anymore. They are teenagers. That's when you start losing your hair. Your daughter starts asking you questions about having a boyfriend and what type of plastic surgery you are "cool with" dad. You freak out and tell her to go and talk to her mom. But then, you find your son talk about tattoos and what parts of his body, he wants to get pierced. But you try to talk to him but since, you never talk to him, you lost the channels of communication a long time ago. Basically, you have no idea what the boy is saying anymore. It goes something like this. Yoyoyou pops. I wanna go down to play some bball; so when my homies call me, tell him to call me on my cell. I will catch you latest. What? What are you saying? Where are you going? I loves to hang out and chill pop but gotta go pps and the other day when I told you to keep it to the deal, you gotta keep it on the hush hush baby, anyways, I would like to study, I have got to go. Pace out. Later, Pops. What are saying? Where are you going? Now, you are really worried and you don't know what to do. But it gets worse. You find that those kids have those not so Islamic pictures on their Myspace account. Now you son has chosen the career of a gangster rapper for himself, and your daughter s wants to be a part-time model and a part-time feminist. Actually, her whole feminist movement is because of you. You see, throughout her life, she has been watching the way, you unjustly treated her mother. You got your back home mentality where you thought you are the king and she is your slave. And since you did not treat your wife properly, the way Islam teaches you to do so, your daughter is now rebelling against you and your backward way of thinking; you see, Islam teaches us that the best of you is the best who is best to his wife but apparently, you don't take that part of Islam, seriously and now you are paying for it. And right when you think your relationship with your daughter can't get any worse, you hear those words that wanna make you cringe; but I love him. At this point you start to panic. You look at your wife and say: "What are we gonna do? What are we going to do?" You see, you brought all this drama upon yourself because you did

not teach your kids Islam. Instead, you were raised with customs that conflicts with the teachings of Islam. As little kids, they follow these cuts but guess what, they are adults now and they are thinking on their own. Because they see the errors and the backward customs that they were raised with. Here is a reality check for you. Many kids have no intention to practise the culture of their parents; so they picked their own culture; so instead of picking your own culture, they decided to pick up their own. By the way, don't you wish, you should have told them about Islam, right about now. You see in this new culture that your kids picked up; it is cool to be rebellious; so, they don't listen to you and since, you never gave a role model, and you were never role models for them, they have decided to pick up their own role models. People they can look up to, people they can imitate; society teaches them what is cool or not; everything from the way they dress to the way they act, even the slang they use. How are you pops. I would like to put on some bling bling. Now, you tried everything you can as a last resort. You dropped off your kids at the Sunday class. You know, the weekly Sunday class for the kids at the masjid, the one you never took them to; but your kids do give these classes a chance; everything goes one ear and out of the other. Now your kids think you are hypocrite because you tell them to do something that you don't do yourself. If you were praying, fasting, doing the things that you tell your children to do, maybe they would have done it. It is someone telling you don't be a smoker (coughing and doing the gesture of holding a cigarette) , it will kill you. How do you respect that? So many kids go away from Islam because Islam was not presented correctly to them. They get taught the modified version where parents mix their culture with Islam and package the whole thing under the label of Islam and they see the errors in this culture. Yes, parents have rights in Islam but your children have rights to. If you know Islam, teach it to your kids, don't just tell them about how to be a good Muslim. Be a role model. This means you have to do it too. If we practise Islam the way the Prophet *sallah alla 3alih wa salam* taught us to practise it, we would not be in this mess, but as long as we love our customs more than we love Allah *suhanu wa ta3ala*, we will continue to suffer. You know what I am saying? This is Ali, reminding you just in case you forgot.

Notes:

For the transcription of Arabic excerpts, the present study uses the morpho-phonemic transcription system adapted from Harrell (1957), Hafez (1991) and IPA. It includes twelve vowel symbols and twenty-four consonant symbols. This includes six short vowels:

/a/ as in ka3b (heel),

/â/ as in hârb (war), țârii?â (way), koorâ (ball)

/i/ as in nisiit (I forgot), kalbi bonni (my dog is brown)

/e/ as in fehem (he understood), mejja (one hundred), fekr (thought)

/o/as in forb (drink n.)

/u/ as in musiiqâ (music)

and six long vowels, their length shown by doubling the symbol:

/aa/ as in gaari (current), saa3a (hour), faat (he passed)

/ââ/ as in gââri (my neighbor), fââr (mouse)

/ii/ as in diin(religion), țwiilâ (long), xamsiin (fifty)

/ee/ as in deen (debt),

/oo/ as in fooț (one of the two halves of a match), koorâ (ball)

/uu/ as in juut (kick the ball), fuul (beans), 3ââ țuul (right away)

The consonant symbols are those of IPA; /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/, /g/, /m/, /n/, /l/, /f/, /v/, /s/,

/z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /h/, /w/ and /j/ have similar values to those used in transcribing English sounds. The following are specific to Arabic: /

/ʔ/ as in ʔaam (he rose), noʔâ (point), ʔawwel (first)

/q/ as in qâwi (strong), qânuun (law)

/r/ as in wârâ (behind)

/x/ as in xamsiin (fifty), xaaf (he was frightened)
/ʔ/ as in ʔârʔejâ (covering)
/h/ as in wahda (one)
/ʒ/ as in ʒârd (width)