New Media Technology and Religious Fundamentalist Movements: Exploring the Internet Use by Salafi Movement in Indonesia

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Abstract: Influenced by the argument of incompatibility between modernization and religion as advocated by the proponents of secularization theory, some studies suggest that the internet is a harmful product of modernity to religion and its acceptance by religious communities will make religion lose something of what it is supposed to be. This paper, however, argues that it is inaccurate to characterize technological modernization as incompatible with religion; rather, both influence each other and co-exist in fruitful ways. To support this, we analyzed the relationship between religious fundamentalism and new media technology by focusing on Indonesia's Salafi movement and its internet use within the Indonesian context. We explored how the Salafi proponents employ the adopted internet in the frameworks of "cultured technology" and "spiritualizing technology". In doing so, we mainly used textual analysis as the primary method of analysis of Salafi web content and Salafi use of the internet.

1 INTRODUCTION

Explaining the interaction between religious believers and new information and communication technologies, some observers, who were strongly influenced by the argument of the incompatibility of modernization and religion as argued by the secularization theorists, believe that the internet is a harmful product of modernity to religion and its acceptance by religious communities will make religion lose something of what it is supposed to be. They argue that internet use has led to the decline of religiosity among religious believers, arguing that "the more religious a person is, the less likely he or she will use the internet" (Armfield & Holbert, 2003); that the internet constitutes a threat to religious traditions, as exemplified by its introduction into Confucian societies, because it symbolizes encourages the American values, which could be dangerous to Confucianist values of communitarianism, including freedom of expression, equal opportunity and capitalist spirit (Bockover, 2003); that "the internet itself is an American concept", which is used as an "ideological weapon" to destroy Islam and Muslims (Adamu, 2002); that the internet constitutes a challenge to religious

authorities by presenting alternative information that destabilizes traditional structure of religious knowledge and creating critical leaders who can challenge traditional religious authorities in defining and interpreting religious teachings (Barker, 2005); and the internet is seen as a threat to the cohesiveness of religious community as personal experiences of the internet can lead to the fragmentation of a religious community by detaching its members from shared rituals, collective identity and communal participation (Schroeder, 1998).

This paper, however, argues for the conception of the 'good' relationship between religion and the internet that new media technology plays an important medium for religious communities as it facilitates the religious-ideological needs and interests of its religious users. To do this, in the frameworks of "spiritualizing technology" (Campbell, 2005) and "cultured technology" (Barzilai-Nahon & Barzilai, 2005), it analyses the relationship between religious fundamentalism and new media technology by exploring the ways the Salafi movement in Indonesia uses the adopted internet. We focused our exploration on the main Salafi web, www.salafi.or.id, which represents the most orthodox group of Salafi movement, as it will

help us understand better the interplay between religious fundamentalism and technological modernization.

Generally, this paper aims to contribute the idea about the failure of secularization theory in explaining and predicting the relationship between religion and modernization. It will show that not only does religion survive problems and challenges of modernization processes, but also plays new roles in modern societies. As Berger (1999) asserts, contemporary societies are religious as they were, even more so in some part of the world. Secularization theory is problematic as it lacks empirical support (Stark 1999).

This paper is specifically expected to contribute to the studies on good relationship between the internet and religion (Campbell 2005; Barzilai & Barzilai-Nahon 2005) and the appropriation of global media technologies like the internet based on their users' specific locales and situations (Thompson 1995). It also aims to add to the studies on the relationship between the internet and communities within the Indonesian context (Hill & Sen, 1997, 2002, 2008; Lim 2002, 2003, 2005; Brauchler 2003, 2004).

The data needed for this study were obtained through online observation. The related postings by the web administrator and contributors were analyzed for topics, arguments, and responses. A textual analysis was employed to analyze the collected postings to reveal categories of the internet use by the Salafi proponents. In the context of this study, text comprises the Salafi website, which mostly includes posted articles.

In the following sections, this paper, first, describes briefly what Salafism is, its origin as a Islamic transnational religious movement, and how it spreads in Indonesia. Second, it explores how the proponents of Salafi movement in Indonesia use the adopted internet as a new important resource for their socio-religious interests. Finally, this paper provides some conclusions and higlights its possible contribution to the related studies.

2 SALAFISM AND ITS SPREAD IN INDONESIA

2.1 The Ideology of Salafism

The term Salafism (Arab: *Salafiyyah*) is derived from the Arabic *salaf* (plural: *aslaf*), which means "predecessor". The *salaf* refers to the first three generations of the Muslim community that include

the companions of the Prophet Muhammad (*sahabah*), a generation after the *sahabah* (*tabi'in*), and a generation after who followed the *tabi'in* (*tabi al-tabi'in*). The Salafis believe that the Salaf were the best Muslim generations because they learned and implemented the pure Islam under direct guidance of the Prophet or those who knew him. So, Salafism refers to an Islamic ideology that makes the Salaf as a model and direction in its attempts to understand and implement the ideal and authentic Islam in the present and future. One who follows the method of the Salaf is called *Salafi* (Arabic: *salafiy*; plural: *salafiyyin*).

Moreover, the Salafis believe that legacy of the Prophet and the Salaf is normative and universalistic in nature, which is to be strictly followed and imitated by subsequent generations of Muslims in a "contextual vacuum across the space and time" (Duderija 2007, p. 347). The methodological basis of Salafism is characterized by the commitment to return to the pure Islam, which was believed as to be only materialized in the times of the Prophet and the first three generations of Muslim. Hence, the Salafi movement is founded "on a romanticized and utopian view of the past, ignoring or demonizing the balance of Islamic history" and rejecting the legacy of the long established juristic schools of thought (*madhhab*) (El-Fadl 2003 cited in Duderija, 2007).

According to Mansoor (2000 cited in Duderija 2007, p. 351), the Salafis consider tradition a perfect guidance that provides answers to all present and future problems. Religious texts (*nash*) should not be understood through reality as they are seen to precede and thus guide the latter. Rather, reality should be understood through the textual sources, though it might contribute to the formation of the latter. Likewise, the past, namely the prophetic time, should precede and should not be understood through the present. Rather, the prophetic time must be used as guidance for the present realities. Therefore, the authenticity of one's identity is determined by his degree of returning to the tradition and historical time of the Prophet and the early Muslim communities (Duderija, 2007). This reductionist view seems very interesting to Muslim masses because it is seen to constitute an authenticity and legitimacy of the Salafi ideology.

What distinguishes Salafism from other Islamic fundamentalist movements is that it believes that the true way of going back to the Qur'an and the Sunnah is following closely and explicitly the ways of understanding and practices set by al-Salaf al-Salih (the righteous predecessors). They call this *manhaj al-salaf* (the method of the Salaf). This method of returning to the authentic Islam is based on their

belief that the Salaf is the best generations of Muslim community who understood and implemented Islam under direct guidance of the Prophet so that they constitute as the perfect models for the following Muslim generations. For the Salafis, following the Salaf means following the true Islam and protecting Muslims from mistakes, sins and evil acts (Noorhaidi, 2005).

This sense of certainty has led the Salafis not to compromise and bridge differences with a number of Islamic sects or groups that are considered deviants such as Sufis. It is this consistency with the authentic Islam that has attracted followers to join the Salafi movement and helped it spread rapidly across the national borders. Salafism has become a forceful Islamic missionary movement without adopting ideas from other movements or groups, which is committed to establish a transnational community of true believers who are committed to the true Islam (Wiktorowicz, 2001).

2.2 Salafism as a Transnational Islamic Fundamentalist Movement

Salafism is a transnational movement which aims to propagate the puritanical approach to Islam and connect the members of an "imagined community" of true believers all over the world. It is one of the contemporary Islamic movements that grow and spread fast in many countries. Though its exact number of followers cannot be accurately identified, the Salafi presence can be easily seen in the countries of the Middle East, North America, Europe, Australia, and Southeast Asia. The development of the modern Salafism owes mainly to the supports, ideologically and financially, of the Gulf countries, particularly Arab Saudi, which have produced and exported Salafi publications, Salafi missionary works and humanitarian aids (Noorhaidi, 2005).

After World War II, Saudi Arabia adopted a policy of propagating Salafism as one of its major foreign policies. Politically, it was aimed as a counter attack to the expansion of Arab Socialist Movement led by Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, which eventually brought the kingdom to the Western bloc led by the United States that were involved in the Cold War with the Soviet Union-led communist bloc (Kepel 2002 cited in Noorhaidi, 2005).

In addition, in response to the Iranian Revolution, Saudi Arabia was determined to contain the shocking effect of the revolution by undertaking the following measures: at the domestic level, it attempted to prove that the kingdom was committed

to Islam by enforcing strict Islamic law; and, at the international level, it intensified its commitment to disseminate Salafism to the Muslim world and include in its doctrines anti-Shiite and anti-revolutionary elements (Noorhaidi, 2005).

The global Salafi dissemination was a political reaction to the eruption of the Iranian Revolution in 1979 that brought Ayatullah Khomeini to power. For Saudi Arabia, the Iranian Revolution was a threat to the existence of the kingdom in the Muslim world as it provided a model for the establishment of an Islamic State that long been dreamed of by political Islamists. Saudi Arabia feared that such a revolution would spread its influence to other Muslim countries and put its own monarchy to an end. In response to the Iranian Revolution, Saudi Arabia was determined to contain the shocking effect of the revolution by undertaking the following measures: at the domestic level, it attempted to prove that the kingdom was committed to Islam by enforcing strict Islamic law; and, at the international level, it intensified its commitment to disseminate Salafism to the Muslim world and include in its doctrines anti-Shiite and anti-revolutionary elements (Noorhaidi, 2005).

2.3 The Development of Salafism in Indonesia

In addition to the emergence of new social and political groups, Indonesia post-Suharto regime witnessed the rise of religious fundamentalist movements which were initiated by certain religious groups in the country. Islamic Salafi movement is one of these religious movements that have characterized Indonesia after the collapse of the New Order era in 1998. It began to (re)emerge taking benefit of the relative absence of the state control over civil and political spaces of the Indonesian societies. The political landscape of post-Suharto Indonesia provided the fundamentalist groups with opportunities to express their identities that were previously restricted by the state. They made use of the new freedom resulted from the newly born democratic, but unstable country.

In Indonesia, Salafism spreads mainly through the Middle Eastern graduates, particularly those who finished their studies in Saudi Arabian and Yemen universities, which gave rise to a new generation of Salafis in Indonesia (Noorhaidi, 2005). Having finished their studies in these countries, they became determined to propagate the Salafi thoughts in their homelands in a systematic way, particularly among 'secular' university students. Among them were

Chamsaha Sofwan alias Abu Nida, Ahmad Faiz Asifuddin, and Aunur Rafiq Ghufron, who were assigned to teach at some *pesantrens* (Islamic boarding schools), including the pesantren al-Mukmin, Ngruki, Jawa Tengah (Central Java) (Noorhaidi, 2005).

They began their activities by disseminating Salafism among the university students. It was Chamsaha Sofwan alias Abu Nida who took an initiative to propagate the Salafi movement among the university students. With the support from Saefullah Mahyuddin, the head of DDII (Indonesian Council for Islamic Propagation) branch of Yogyakarta, Abu Nida started to promote the Salafi ideas by giving lectures at the Jama'ah Shalahudin, a Muslim student community which was attached to the Gajah Mada University, and organizing *halqa* (study circles) and *dawrah* (religious trainings) at mosques located in some universities and high schools in Yogyakarta (Noorhaidi, 2005). In the early 1990s, the arrival of other Middle Eastern graduates reinforced the campus da'wa activities, which was initiated by Abu Nida. They were Ja'far Umar Thalib, Yazid Abdul Qadir Jawwas and Yusuf Usman Baisa who were assigned by LIPIA (the Institute for the Study of Islam and Arabic) to teach at the Pesantren al-Irsyad, Solo, Central Java. These graduates promoted the Salafi thoughts by organizing da'wa activities at Diponegoro University, State University of 11th March, Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta, and also Gadjah Mada University (Noorhaidi, 2005).

Other channels that helped the dissemination of Salafism in Indonesia are DDII (Dewan Dakwah Islam Indonesia [Indonesian Council for Islamic Propagation]) and LIPIA (Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Bahasa Arab [the Institute for the Study of Islam and Arabic]) (Noorhaidi, 2005).

To accelerate the Salafi propagation and reinforce the existence of Salafi communities, the Saudi Arabian and Yemeni graduates established the Salafi foundations with the financial support from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. These include As-Sunnah Foundation and Majlis al-Turats al-Islami and the Islamic Centre Bin Baz in Yogyakarta, Al-Sofwah Foundation and Lajnah al-Khairiyyah al-Musyarakah (the Cooperative Committee for Islamic Charity) in Jakarta, As-Sunnah Foundation in Cirebon, Al-Huda in Bogor, Nidaus Sunnah in Karawang, and the Wahdah Islamiyyah Foundation in Makassar (Noorhaidi, 2005). Besides, the Salafis disseminated the Salafi ideology through publications by publishing As-Sunnah, the first

Salafi magazine in Indonesia, and establishing Pustaka Azzam, a publishing house of Salafi ideologies, in Jakarta (Noorhaidi, 2005).

Moreover, the coming of the information technology revolution in the form of the internet to the country helped create civil spaces for society. The Salafi movement was one of the first fundamentalist groups who welcomed and embraced the internet as a tool to promote their identities and develop networks with other local and global similar groups.

3 THE SALAFI USE OF THE INTERNET

Our exploration revealed that the proponents of Salafism in Indonesia had adopted the internet as a new important resource to pursue their social-religious ideals since the coming of the internet to Indonesia in the early 1990s. Based on exploratory analysis of their use of one of the main Salafi websites, www.salafy.or.id, the Salafis' use of the new media technology can be identified into four forms of internet use as The copyright form is located on the authors' reserved area.

3.1 The Internet as a Medium of Mission

First of all, the Salafis used the internet as a means to promote the ideology of Salafism. The Salafi website states that the Salafis regard the internet as a medium of dakwah salafiyyah (Salafi mission) with which they attempt to spread and communicate Salafi ideas to a wider audience (see "Tentang Kami" section). This missionary use of the internet can be seen in the Salafi website use to publish articles and fatwas on the principles of Salafism and other teachings.

The Salafis employed the internet as a new resource to propagate the principles of Salafism as seen in their posting of articles by Indonesian Salafi authorities with references to Salafi ideologues in the Middle Eastern countries as well as the translated works by Middle Eastern Salafi authorities. These postings are mainly related to the Salafi core teaching of the method of the righteous predecessors (*manhaj al-salaf al-salih*), which is regarded as the best way to understand and practice Islam for it was prescribed and practiced by the Prophet Muhammad and his best generations of Muslims, namely his companions (*sahaba*t), a

generation after the companions (*tabi'in*), and a generation after them (*atba' al-tabi'in*).

Like most Muslims, the Salafis emphasize that the very core of their mission is a call for *tawhid* (monotheism; the oneness of God) and avoidance of *shirk* (polytheism), the main messages of all prophets. They highly emphasize the importance of *tawhid* in Islamic faith and the danger of *shirk* (see 'the place and urgency of *tawhid* in Islam'; 'Beware of *shirk*'; 'About *tawhid*'). But, what distinguishes them from the Muslim majority is their particular strict ways in understanding and practicing the doctrine of *tawhid* in that they attempt robustly to purify in belief and practice the doctrine from all forms of un-Islamic innovations and influences. They believe that the prophet Muhammad began and finished his mission with the *tawhid* doctrine (see 'Monotheism, the mission of all prophets').

In a posted article, the Salafis elaborate the method of Salafism that involves two steps. First, *tashfiyyah* that refers to purification Islam from *bid'ah* (innovations). This step encompasses the movement of purifying Islam from all forms of beliefs, thoughts, and practices that have no basis in the religious texts and no precedence in the practice of the prophet and the early Muslim generations. Second step is *tarbiyyah* that involves education of the pure Islam for Muslims. This aims to educate Muslims with the pure Islam and cultivate them to live their lives with the true Islam (see 'The method of the Salafi mission').

Through their website, the Salafis also attempted to promote other main Salafi doctrines such as *al-wala' wal bara'* (loyalty and disassociation), a doctrine that Muslims should love each other, while show enmity toward non-Muslims including refraining themselves from imitating non-Muslims' way of life such as clothing, and strict behaviors which are regulated by rigid interpretation of Quranic-Sunnahic texts such as growing beard, wearing Arabian dress styles, and strict men-women relationship. Moreover, they disseminated the doctrine of apoliticism, a belief that Muslims are prohibited from involving in practical politics and rebellion against a ruler. Muslims's political participation should be conveyed in the form of advice and pray for the ruler, no matter how unjust he rules, as conducted by the Prophet's companions, the Sunnah followers and Salafi authorities.

3.2 The Internet as a Place of Cyberwar

In addition, the Salafis harnessed the internet as a place to wage cyberwars against individuals and groups considered the enemies of Salafism. Through their websites, they extended off-line enmity and conflict into cyberspace. This cyberwar was also seen in their condemnation of Muslim individuals and groups believed to have breached the Salafi methods of practicing and understanding Islam.

In this regard, in their postings, Salafis employed their website as a medium to attack Syi'ah Muslims (Shiites) due to their beliefs in taqiyyah (concealing one's faith in certain conditions for safety), mut'ah (temporary marriage contract) and the infallibility of Shiite supreme spiritual leaders (imams), Jaringan Islam Liberal (Network of Liberal Islam) due to allegedly their use of reason in understanding Islamic texts, Hizbut Tahrir due to their use of politics to establish Khilafah (a global Islamic state), and Ikhwan al-Muslimin due to its ideology which is strongly influenced by the Salafis' enemies, namely Shiites, Kharijites and Mu'tazilites.

It is interesting to note that the Salafis also utilise cyberspace as a place to wage a cyberwar against other Salafi groups, but believed no longer embrace the true Salafi ways. This use shows that the internet is a place where internal conflicts among the Salafi supporters in Indonesia are extended into cyberspace. The fragmentation among the Salafis began when a group of them were accused of being *sururis*, the supporters of the views promoted by Muhammad ibn Surur, one of the main proponents of politico-Salafis who severely criticised the Saudi government in the case of the presence of American troops in the Arabian soil during the Gulf War. This group developed *dakwah* (propagation) activities by establishing two Salafi foundations, Yayasan al-Sofwah (al-Sofwah Foundation) led by Muhamad al-Khalaf and Majlis al-Turas al-Islami (the Assembly of Islamic Heritage) directed by Abu Nida. These foundations were believed as to have established links with overseas foundations that support Ibn Surur, namely al-Muntada al-Islami Foundation of London and al-Jam'iyyah Ihya al-Turats of Kuwait (see 'A testimony of Ustadz Muhammad Umar as-Sewed'; 'Ihya ut Turats is a deviant foundation'; 'Disclosing the crimes of Ihya Turas, the enemy of the Salafis'; 'The danger of JI network of Kuwait and al-Turas').

Through their website, the Salafis have focused their attacks on these two foundations. Umar as-Sewed in his postings asserts that al-Sofwah

Foundation does not follow the *manhaj al-salaf* as it is closely affliliated to al-Muntada Foundation of London led by Muhammad ibn Surur. Sewed refers to Syaikh Rabi' al-Madkhaly, a Salafi authority in the Middle East, who said that "if the foundation (al-Sofwah) is similar to al-Muntada of London, we think, it will be a major enemy for *dakwah* Salaf movement in Indonesia". He argues that those involved in al-Sofwah Foundation are not the Salafis because they support Ibn Surur and Ikwan al-Muslimin, but they pretend to be Salafis. To supports his arguments, Sewed provides evidence that al-Sofwah's deviation from the *manhaj al-salaf* is seen in its attempts to publish al-Bayan, a periodical that is published by al-Muntada of London, and books written by Sururi authorities, support the activities of groups regarded as *ahl al-bid'ah* (the supporters of religious innovations) such as Tarekat Sufi, Ikhwan al-Muslimin, Negara Islam Indonesia (NII), and Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, and invite the Sururi authorities to give lectures in Indonesia such as Ibrahim al-Duwasy (see 'A testimony of Muhammad Umar as-Sewed').

3.3 The Internet as a Tool of Response

Furthermore, the Salafi community harnessed the internet not only as an instrument to promote their Salafi ideology and practices but also as a medium to express their concern and views about contemporary issues of local and global society. Our investigation on the content of their website revealed that the Salafis used the internet as a tool to show their interest in the current socio-religious issues in Indonesia. For example, in their response to the Tsunami wave that hit Aceh in 2004 and earthquakes in Yogyakarta in 2006, they posted fatwas on some Tsunami-related issues such as how to deal with tens of thousands of bodies of the dead Muslims, whether it was permitted to work together with non- Salafi people in providing help and relief to the survivors, and condemnation on the Christian missionary work attempted by some international aid organizations to convert the victims, mostly Muslim children, to Christianity disguised in a humanitarian aid.

The Salafis' response to local issues can also be seen in their postings on the issue of al-Qiyadah al-Islamiyah, a new group that declared its leader had received a revelation and was appointed by God a new prophet. The Salafis view that that al-Qiyadah al-Islaiyah is a misled group because its supporters believe in a new prophet after the Prophet Muhammad and the religious unity of Judaism,

Christianity and Islam, reject the Hadis as a valid religious text, and interpret the Qur'an not based on accepted methods (*tafsir*) as practiced by the Salaf. There is no doubt that, the Salafis assert, these doctrines promoted by the new group are unacceptable and a serious contravention of the principles of Islamic faith (*aqidah)* so that the group's presence in a Muslim society can incite social disorder (see 'The new prophet is al-Masih al-Maw'ud – al-Qiyadah al-Islamiyyah is a deluded group'; 'The new prophet's teachings have incited social disruption in Yogyakarta'; 'The new prophet's Quranic interpretation – disclosing al-Qiyadah al-Islamiyah').

In addition, the Salafis make use of cyberspace as a tool to respond to international issues. Their postings showed that they were aware of global issues and events, particularly those are concerned with Islam and the Muslim world. Responding to the crisis of the Muslim world such as in Lebanon, Palestine, and Iraq, the Salafis used the internet as a tool to communicate their belief that crisis resulted from the Muslims' negligence of the true Islamic teachings so that they are not under the God guidance. This has made Muslims weak and provided enemies with opportunities to dominate and destroy the Muslim countries.

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over the enemies is that Muslim must return to the pure Islam as practiced by the prophet and the first generations of Muslims (*the salaf*) (see 'A fatwa on the crisis in Libanon part 1-2'; 'Syaikh al-Luhadain: Hizbullah is hizbusy syaithan (the party of evil)'; Hamas is a deviant jihad fighters'; 'On America in Iraq').

3.4 The Internet as a Medium of Linkage

Lastly, our investigation revealed that the Salafis utilised the internet as a medium to establish networks and sustain solidarity among local, national and global Salafi supporters. Through this, a global Salafi network in the Middle East, for example, can have an impact on local Salafi networks as well as a local Salafi network in an Indonesian city, for instance, can influence a transnational Salafi network. Through their website, the Salafis developed links to other local websites that also promote the ideology of Salafism. They have built affiliation with ten local websites operated by the supporters of Salafism located in various cities in Jawa, Sulawesi, and Kalimantan. The affiliation can be seen, among others, in their reposting articles or news previously posted by other Salafi websites, such as As-Syariah Online Magazine (www.asysyariah.com).

The Salafis not only developed networks with local proponents of Salafism but also with global Salafi supporters. Their website indicates that the Salafis have developed links with global Salafi websites in various parts of the world. They include nineteen Arabic websites and eighteen English websites, which located in the Middle East (sixteen websites), Europe (thirteen websites) and USA (eight websites).

Most of these are privately operated websites, but some are state-owned ones, such as http://quran.al-islam.com and http://hadith.al-islam.com, that operated by the Saudi Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Endowment, and Propagation. These websites are clearly dedicated to propagate the Salafism worldwide. They range from the personal webs of the Salafi authorities in the Middle East, such as the sites of Ibn Baz, Utsaimin, and Rabi al-Madkhali, to online Quran and Hadis services. Based on this, I argue that building links with other websites enables the Salafis to communicate with other local and global Salafi groups and enforce the propagation of the Salafism through cyberspace to a wider audience across the regional and national borders. It also suggests that a local Salafi community (the purist Indonesian Salafis) can have a global impact in that they constitute as part of global network of Salafism and at the same time the global Salafi network can have a local repercussion as its presence is needed to enforce the existence of a local Salafi community.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Contrary to the conviction that the internet presents harmful effects to religious communities as suggested by some studies, this paper has shown that the internet plays a new important medium and useful resource for religious communities facilitating the needs and interests of religious users. It might be true that to some degree the internet undermines the traditional structure of religious communities. But, religious communities are active agents who can employ opportunities resulted from the internet for their own needs and interests. In other words, the positive effects of the internet outweigh its harmful consequences. The fundamentalist movements like Salafism are not only able to survive, but also transform modernity products like the internet to make them serve their religious purposes and needs.

The Salafi use of the internet confirms the process of "cultured technology" by religious fundamentalists as proposed by Barzilai-Nahon and Barzilai. It shows ways how the Salafis as an Islamic fundamentalist group used the internet and make it as part of their culture. This process involved the Salafi adoption and adaptation of the internet, as well as adaptation into it, to the interests and purposes of their community.

In addition, the ways the Salafis employed the internet represent what Campbell calls "spiritualizing the internet" as they adopted the new media technology and put religious legitimacy on it to make its use religiously acceptable. In certain ways, this involves endorsement and utilization of the new media technology for the Salafi social-religious interests within a worldview that is rich with spiritual meanings and values, which are absent from the new media adoption by non-religious groups.

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