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Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version
Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:
Ismail, M. H. (2020). Postmodern Analysis of New Preachers of Islam in Egypt: A Cultural Study of Mustafa Hosni's Digital Media Platforms. *Media Watch*, *11*(1), 145-163. https://doi.org/10.15655/mw/2020/v11i1/49759

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gesis Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften

Mitglied der Leibniz-Gemeinschaft

© *Media Watch* 11 (1) 145-163, 2020
ISSN 0976-0911 | E-ISSN 2249-8818
DOI: 10.15655/mw/2020/v11i1/49759

Postmodern Analysis of New Preachers of Islam in Egypt: A Cultural Study of Mustafa Hosni's Digital Media Platforms

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In recent years, Arab academia inspected the phenomenon of new preachers of Islam, especially in Egypt, predicted on such notions as new liberalism, self-help, and salvation. This study contributes to the scholarship by examining the postmodern characteristics of Mustafa Hosni's discourse, as appears in his new media materials. Drawing upon insights from media cultural studies, the paper examines the mini-narratives of a tolerant, non-violent Muslim discourse as opposed to the customarily hostile Muslim meta-narratives. Further, the study analyses all sorts of pastiche that render Hosni's discourse hybrid, glocal, and coexistent. It uses qualitative discourse analysis to shed light on the nexus between forms of religious discourse and the logic of media consumption in Muslim late neo-liberal capitalism.

Keywords: Mustafa Hosni, Islam, new preachers, postmodernism, mini-narratives, pastiche, electronic media platforms, social media, neo-liberalism

It is possible to reconcile the principles of the Quran with the rules of marketing. Mustafa Hosni[1], the new preacher, believes this, and like US televangelists, he is cleverly mixing religion with making money. He sells products like oral recitations of the Quran for mobile phones or encourages devout kids to compete to be the best child preacher creating a fascinating, safe, and politically-correct look at a new face of Islam.

Although only one study inspected audience of the new preachers like Hosni, it is thought from analyzing their media contents that their discourse, which neglects economic discrepancies in the Egyptian society,' caters religion toupper-middle-class members who are already absorbed in consumerist culture through commodity aesthetics' (Farag & Alazrak, 2016, p. 219). At the heart of those aesthetics, screenplays a central part, and it has been creatively used to the most in almost every single media platform by those 'influential media personalities who are at the same time heads of organizations or venerated institutions of self-help' (Yildirim, 2019, p. 5).

Hosni's discourse coincides with the contemporary discourse of the sublime, which, according to French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard serves as a structural grounding for spirituality in a postmodern context. Images become so prevalent that pastiche has transformed reality, interpretations of truth, and our overall views of the world.

The study examines the 'pastiche' as about the phenomenon of the new Egyptian preachers of Islam. All their texts are hybrid, and so their looks and attire, not to forget fashioning and marketing of the neo-Muslim self. Pastiche is a suitable practical concept to be used in detecting levels of hybridity by using multimodal methodologies for textual and semiotic analysis.

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The new preachers are trying to break the closed circle of Arab Muslim culture by having cultural elements that identify young Muslims with humanity. Meanwhile, those preachers could not help but reconcile their discourse with interests of the transnational capitalist class that dominates the socio-economic media-scape in the world, including but not limited to Egypt.

Mustafa Hosni utilizes every single digital platform to convey his messages to audiences. Not only does he send out messages, but he also publishes books in CDs often distributed with the printed copies. The study deconstructs the notion of a unified Muslim identity, illustrates how the Muslim youths' reconfigure their various senses of self and concludes that identity develops as a product of not only family, peers, ethnoreligious and formal education but also changes in texts of media consumption, such as Hosni's texts, especially after ongoing global conflicts, such as contemporary responses to the extremist ideology of ISIS and similar groups.

Hosni's discourse is consistent with some calls to re-interpret the concept of consumerism as 'consumerism effectively binds the individual to the existential process of shared meaning-making in inescapable ways, and thus connects people to form ever-expanding consumer societies prone to support the ideals of consumer culture. We also argue strongly against claims that consumerist lifestyles are inherently hollow, worthless, and purposeless' (Kurenlahti & Salonen, 2018, p. 18).

Hosni's discourse is also harmonized with what is accepted by religious actors after the coup/revolution of June 2013. His discourse does not contradict the politically correct discourse of president el-Sisi, unlike some of the governmental bodies of Al-Azhar that overseer state religion who frowned upon some calls for renewing the religious discourse, because they question whose have the authority to do that. Hosni's discourse is the idealist response for this call. This is particularly a 'concern for state religious officials who are viewed and instrumentalized as agents of moderation as the new preachers take over the process' (Brown, 2019, p.16).

Additionally, results of other studies suggest religiousness and spirituality are related distinct constructs as online versions of many religions are associated with adjustment through concepts such as social support, well-being, and optimism (Salsman et al., 2005; Bahovec, 2015; Sharma, 2019).

The new preachers of Islam communicate previous concepts through call-in programs, tweets, Facebook posts, and public rallies. They are all over the political map (and some stay off the map by avoiding political topics).New preachers like Hosni set themselves aside from the circle of interactions between the State and the Islamists, concentrating on the individual salvation that suits the neo-liberal economic policies. Hosni's discourse is sharing some features of some networked religions, notably shifting authority and convergent practice (Campbell, 2012, p. 11).

In a sense, Hosni's discourse represents a glocal form of Islam thattakes into consideration globalization and the reconciliation of dissonant hybrid identities by neglecting the traditional Islamic meta-narratives concentrating on the mini-narratives that achieve salvation and self-help.

This study draws from several areas of scholarship in media studies: language and semiotics, multimodality, and cultural analysis, but most centrally from critical discourse analysis. Although much research has been done on the types of discourse to be found on the religious discourse on media, little has been written about the postmodern elements of discourse to be found in any religious programming, and none about the issue of pastiche in Muslim one.

Given the importance of televised Muslim new preachers in recent Arab politics, the ubiquitous presence of their media materials in Arab life, and the changing roles of Muslim self in the digital world, a study of the intersection of these trends may be of interest.

The main objective of this study is to discover how semantics represents the postmodern elements of the discourse of the new preachers of Islam, particularly Mustafa Hosni's new media materials, on his official webpage as well as his social media platforms.

Literature Review

Islam and Postmodernism in a Post-Secular World

The concept of post-secularity is taken to refer to a social and cultural condition marked by the resurgence and growing public visibility and awareness of religion, coupled with the changing character and locations of religion and religious life in general. It would appear to be safe to say that developments in the concept of the 'Post-secular and the contemporary nexus,' modern communications media have played a pivotal role in bringing about this situation or state of affairs (Moberg & Granholm, 2017).

Many studies inspected the revivalism of religions in western societies, especially in the private sphere (Guarino, 2011; Bahovec, 2015). Dinges (1996), McAvan (2007), Hall and Delport (2013) examined the common new characteristics of that revivalism inloss of institutional salience, the uncoupling of spirituality from religion, the loss of control over religious symbols, and trans-denominationalism. Theyare not developments directly attributable to postmodernism; they are cultural currents that have emerged from the project of modernity itself. Postmodernism has merely exacerbated these trends.

The particular problem today isthat some of the values at the heart of modernity/ postmodernity—openness, diffusion, pluralism, relativism, anti-hierarchy, anti-bureaucracy, small-scale organic co-ordination—donot generate strong institutional commitment. This is also what takes place in Muslim societies.

The findings of those studies indicated that the postmodern young adult displays a tendency to value conventional religious norms and practices, but the element of choice is of importance, as young adults seem to choose the aspects of religion that suit them. An increased interest in and a need for spirituality or a form of transcendence was found. Guidance by formal structures was favored but did not necessarily refer to 'church' or religious structures. The results illustrated that contemporary young adult explores and experiments in terms of identity and lifestyle.

Views and values seem to be person-specific and based on emotions and experiences with a tendency towards 'own authority' and an emphasis on the self. The rise of individualism, which characterizes the postmodern era, has led to the creation of meaning by drawing on personal resources and own personal moral beliefs and values.

Discourse like Hosni's shares a characteristic with the Protestant preachers, as Hall and Delport suggest, for Protestant thinkers, 'the Word of God became the primary locus of religious belief, as is represented by hostility towards ritualism' (Hall & Delport, 2013, p. 14).The postmodern displays many characteristics that can be seen as sacred. It is s contagious within heterotopia society; it promotes the formation of collectivities that engage in activities concomitant with collective effervescence.

Interactions between religions in western societies brought about some features like pastiching together religious symbols with spiritual texts (Smith, 1997; McAvan, 2007).

This kind of religious revivalism has constituted moderate consumerism and

combated extreme individualism (Rose, 2016; Cabrero, 2018; Kurenlahti & Salonen, 2018). The notions of individual morality, the shared values of communities, and the importance of taking a middle way between excessive state control and an uncontrolled market offered by mainstream Anglican social theology are precisely the themes that contemporary 'late' capitalism most urgently requires from the social institutions which generate symbolic meaning.

The discourse of new preachers in Islam is a part of a major reconstruction of religion, the one that involves the three successful religious movements in Europe, specifically new age, Evangelicalism, and Islam, as concluded by Roeland et al. (2010). They concluded that 'the three are now a days not only embraced much more enthusiastically by the younger generations than any other type of religion but moreover attain some striking features that set them apart from the traditional church-based or mosque-based religion embraced by older generations of faithful' (p. 290).

Ramji (2003), Sandikci and Omeraki (2007), Saleh (2010), and Izharuddin (2012) explored how the dynamics of consumer culture and globalization interact with Islamic beliefs, rituals, and behaviors and revive as well as modify local rituals to fit with modern consumption-driven lifestyles.

The discourse of new preachers in Islam is not an exception as it is directed to upper-middle classes, especially in the holy month of Ramadan. Ramadan turns into a 'glocommodified' ritual (Ram, 2015, p. 27 in Izharuddin, 2012), combining a variety of symbols connoting religious values and beliefs as well as markers of global consumption ethos.

Atia (2012) labels activities of Amr Khaled, the archetype of the new preachers, as pious neo-liberalism that 'draws on a globalized religious discourse of volunteerism and faith and combines it with a pervasive emphasis on economic rationality. The rhetoric of individual responsibility, proactiveness, self-help, choice, accountability, and so on resonates across cultures and places as management speak has become the retort to the escalation of social ills. The malleability of the neoliberal project to varying cultural contexts is marked by the success of global discourses to produce a consensus around shifting responsibility for social ills onto individuals'(p. 16).

A detailed discourse analysis of new preachers of Islam in the Arab world, with Egypt in its center, is a topic that will bridge a gap in recent religious studies from a postmodern perspective.

Religion, Mediation, and Islam's New Preachers

In recent years, studies have been conducted about the role of mediation and the advantages of new media in reconstructing religions and religious experiences. Later, more recent studies reflected an interest in inspecting the phenomenon of new preachers in Islam or *'al-doaa al-judud'*[2]. Put simply, we cannot understand religion today without understanding the media, and the mediation of religion today means that it is increasingly an international and global phenomenon, with domestic and located instantiations of religion acting as sources of symbols, values, and claims which can transcend traditional geographic and cultural boundaries through their mediation (Hoover, 2011).

Campbell (2012) states that 'Religious groups that remain outside the internet communication revolution will become like ghettoes or like some Puritan communities in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, who tried to halt the message of time to preserve tradition..[religious] changes arising from computer technology are irreversible' (Campbell, 2012, p.213). Two major consequences have been heavily studied of 'networked religions': changing authority and convergent practice.

Studies of (Campbell, 2012; Tsai, 2015; Cloete, 2016, Hjarvard, 2016) suggest a shift occurring within traditional religious power structures through the institution of new gatekeepers and authority roles and structures online. This means authority within a networked structure creates challenges between new and old authorities, as offline leaders seek to solidify their position and control in the face of newly empowered sources, raising issues of legitimacy, authenticity, and status within the social sphere.

The blending of religious rituals and information from multiple sources in ways that build a self-directed form of spiritual engagement online is well examined in religions like Christianity, where aspects of orality and literacy are combined into a new, hybrid form of communication (Lovheim, 2006; Fakhruroji, 2015). Analyzing all sorts of pastiche in Hosni's discourse will reveal these convergent practices in Islam that create new possibilities for highly individualized and hybridized traditional-innovative forms of practice and modes of knowing.

Much of the contemporary literature on religion and young people suggests that popular culture is the main place of sacred meaning-making among youth. Gordon Lynch (2002), for example, identifies 'active engagement' with popular culture as a significant characteristic of young religiosity' (p. 65). Winter (2017) draws on Lynch's view that 'popular culture may not be the scripture that provides meaning to a passive audience, but a complex and colorful array of building blocks out of which, individuals may construct part of their understanding of life' (Qt in Winter, 2017, p. 87). Guion (2008) touched upon the postmodern consequences of these global cultures on all religious experiences suggesting that 'the sublime allows for solace and pleasure' (p. 11).

Chiluwa (2012) and Evolvi (2016) explored the influence of new media on Christian identities; some studies inspected the hybrid identities of Arab and Muslim youth in diaspora that played a crucial role in emerging the discourses of new preachers in Islam. Wannas-Jones (2003) deconstructed the notion of a unified Canadian-Arab identity, illustrated how the youth reconfigure their various senses of self and concluded that identity develops as a product of not only family, peers, ethno-religious, and formal education but also of changes in national policies, such as Canada's multicultural policies.

Another factor that plays a role in the emergence of new preachers is the growth of religious service provision directed at the Muslim diaspora in western countries, and this has led to 'greater professionalization and pluralism within youths in Muslim countries' (Laurence, 2014, p. 5).

Also, Mincheva (2014) explored the practice of a western-Islamic public sphere (which is secular but not a secularist and which is Islamic but not an Islamist), within which a critical Islamic intellectual universe may unfold, dealing hermeneutically with texts and politically with lived practices.

One of the approaches on which studies were based in is an attempt to explain the phenomena associated with new preachers, notably the use of innovations to reach a kind of politically-correct and accepted version of Islam, especially in the West. As traditional preachers of Islam received media demonization describing them as 'hate preachers' (Altikriti & Al-Mahadin, 2015), new preachers are often compared to American Christian televangelists (Farag & Alazrak, 2016).

Another trend of research has pointed out changes in the media discourse of those new preachers. The messages they convey 'are not meant to reform Islamic theology but rather sound like a religiously framed self-help manual promoting ambition, hard work, self-awareness, and salvation through social activism. They promote spirituality and development through faith stressing ethical values and advocating for

de-radicalization' when studying college students in Egypt (Farag & Alazrak, 2016, p. 220). Further audience studies are needed to identify in detail the demographics of new preachers' youthful fans and followers.

Soliman (2008) revealed the positive attitudes of Egyptians towards the use of Egyptian colloquial Arabic in the discourse of those new preachers, in a context that was supposed to disfavor it most. The results of the questionnaire and the interviews revealed that the Egyptian audience now a days regards the use of Egyptian Arabic to be 'more practical,' 'simpler,' and 'more influential' than classical Arabic.

Ethnographic discourse analysis is employed to examine the propagators of Islam's spoken discourse strategies in managing and maintaining involvement when interacting with their clients during the Q&A session of the event. The analysis reveals that 'new preachers, to propagate Islam, they engage in politeness strategies, topic management strategies, code-switching, and humor. Their humor would normally include figurative language and anecdote' (Ariff, 2012, p. 320).

Browns (1993), Mason (2005), Hosterey (2012), (Krok, 2014), Laurence (2014), and Fakhruroji (2015) consider therapeutic nature of the religious postmodern discourse as a trait of new social identification of the self, meaning that they try to make lives of their fans as enjoyable and fulfilling as possible by securing mental health. Hosni's discourse also will be examined in light of that factor.

Arab new preachers' counterparts in Indonesia, as (Shan-A-Alahi & Muhammad Nazmul (2017); Slama, 2018) show, see themselves as role models within their communities to technology use and expertise; this is mostly associated with the 'prudent, effective use of new media to connecting with their followers. This includes using social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook. Besides, the Internet is a repository of preaching materials and a platform for focusing attention on issues relevant to Muslims but neglected by the mainstream media' (Muchtar & Ritchey, 2014, p. 370).

Establishing the arguments on digital media platforms among Muslim community, it directs the discussions not only on Muslims, but also media and marginality. While exploring the representation of Muslims in talk shows of CNN and BBC, Hayat and Wahab (2016) find that geopolitical issues of the Middle East and North Africa has a large amount of coverage. The researchers also claim that the western media has not stereotyped the status of Muslims. Cutting across geography and the platform of communication, Sreekumar, and Rivera-Sánchez (2016) unearths that the amount of negotiation in using digital media in Asia.

Studying Hosni's new media platforms will shed light on the networked Islam, in a new self-fashioningway that reflectsa new mediated authority as well as its hybridized practices.

Problem Statement

Although some studies saw the postmodern possibilities of Islamic discourses in a philosophical way (Laurence, 2014; Bazzi, 2015), no empirical research has been done to inspect in detail the postmodern elements in a media discourse of new preachers especially when it uses the new media platforms.

This study examines the religious discourse of new preachers and the neo-liberal economy through a postmodern analysis of mini-narratives and the pastiche. It is not simply a top-down description of a set of contents. Rather, it deploys postmodern concepts through specific methodological techniques as well as practices of glocal and hybrid governance that operate on individual subjects.

Methodology

In religious studies, Lovheim and Campbell (2017) state the need for more sophisticated theories about change, agency, and power. If religion, in the wake of a post-secular turn, has become more visible in the public spheres of secular societies, we need theories that can capture religion as a resource for individual agency, as well as for religious groups to assemble capital and partake in the social and political development of society. Their study concludes with notable qualitative methodological and theoretical challenges in need of further exploration, especially media hybridity.

The theoretical approach to this study and the results of previous studies revealed the importance of examining in detail the postmodern elements in the discourse of new preachers of Islam in a memorable case study. In this context, the study is interested in identifying the influence of glocalization upon the discourse of Mustafa Hosni, the new preacher, through analyzing the mini-narratives versus the traditional Muslim meta-narratives as well as analyzing all types of pastiche.

Hosni occupied a high ranking in the annual year book of the world's 500 most influential Muslims from 2014 till 2019; he was 37 in 2019 report[3]. The study tries to answer the following questions:

RQ1: What are the ideas that reflect the mini-narratives of Islam coexisted in the discourse of Mostafa Hosni?

RQ2: What are the types of pastiche used in the discourse of Mustafa Hosni's written, audio or video representations?

RQ3: How those types of pastiche represented in his look, attire, and content of his official webpage and social media platforms? and

RQ4: What are the global or western intertextual features in Mustafa Hosni's discourse?

Machin and Mayr (2012) provide the theoretical framework of multimodal critical discourse analysis, a social semiotic approach, for interpreting the lexical elements, the nonverbal communicative movements, and the optics of each video (if taped) to uncover the embedded power relations of the sermonic discourse and the myriad ways in which the chosen preacher carefully constructs personas for accomplishing certain rhetorical aims.

In the field of religious discourse studies, an increasing number of studies have applied multimodality analysis to investigate the discursivity of text, interaction, and social context, to explore the relationship between language and ideology, and to examine how the discourse reveals stereotypes, pre suppositions, hegemony, power and ideological stances (Ramanathan & Tan, 2015).

Mustafa Hosni's discourse harbors predispositions, orientations, and commitments. It beholds religious symbols, and these symbols give meaning to his followers' lives, help them construct reality, and provide them with security and a sense of belonging. The study sought to answer the above four research questions by using the following tools:

- The study relies on survey methodology using a qualitative cultural analysis of mini-narratives and pastiche as on the preacher's webpage, as well as on his social media platforms. The duration of analysis lasts three months, from the beginning of March 2019 till the end of May 2019.
- Critical qualitative semantic/linguistic analysis to identify, analyzes, and interprets the postmodern elements of Mustafa Hosni's discourse, namely its mini-narratives and types of pastiche.

- Qualitative semiotic analysis to inspect the visual and non verbal elements of the media materials.
- The study has two units of analysis: the slides and the video segments.

Findings

Postmodern Characteristics of Hosni's Discourse

Mini-Narratives vs. Meta-Narratives

The primary characteristic of postmodernism is the logic of consumption that emanates in the written discourse of meta-narratives. The first key facet of the postmodern man's religion arises from the famous collapse of meta-narratives of modernity. Jean-François Lyotard in 'The Postmodern Condition,' stressed the idea that 'the entire culture of contemporary man is marked by skepticism towards the big myths of modernity: reason, science, progress, and so on' (Lyotard, 1984, p. 15). This means that the cultural power of atheism collapses. Postmodern man belongs to an era of cultural agnosticism where the very ambiguous idea of 'spirit' or 'spiritual' offers a useful mediator between two poles: faith and unfaith (Wuthnow, 1992).

Lyotard defines postmodernism as combating the Enlightenment ideals of truth and knowledge, which he terms meta-narratives. Meta-narratives are concepts that keep society in check (Truth, God, Self), and to Lyotard, the term postmodern involves an 'incredulity toward meta-narratives' (Lyotard, 1984, p. 17). Youth are turning away from the meta-narratives because they are 'old fashioned and oppressive. They look instead for new, innovative, and challenging ways to approach philosophical theories' (Guion 2008, p. 4).

Bazzi (2015) stated that 'the great religions of the feudal world, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism, institutionalized this narrative knowledge, and monotheism invested the narrative with a unitary extramundane subject as the central agent. It was Feuerbach who exposed how the Christian narrative was not an explanation but a legitimization of the norms of Christian society' (p. 70), and this also takes place in Islam. To illustrate, Miller frame the meta-narrative of Islam; he says," If you confess with your mouth and believe in your heart that Allah is better, and so is Muhammad his messenger, along with striving with all means in your power to do all the right things and avoiding the bad, [Arabic: *al-amr bi-l-ma rufwa-l-nahy ani l-munkar*] along to convince the whole world in any way, peaceful or violent, about this, then you are perhaps on the straight path to the Islamic paradise" (Miller, 2010, p. 502). Consequently, Islam makes the promise, 'Do All of This and Maybe Live.' The ethical behavior of you and the Muslim community will be dictated by: What would Muhammad Do?

The discourse of new preachers avoids stressing any meta-narratives; instead, it stresses on the mini-narratives of a young generation of Muslims. It is not nihilistic postmodernism. Instead, we can create a term called 'believing postmodernism.' Comparing the meta-narratives of Islamic State (IS), for example, with counter meta-narratives of new preachers, will reveal how the latter is pragmatic and politically-correct.

In its messaging, the Islamic State deploys 'four overarching arguments: (i) the war against Islam, (ii) winning [on the battlefield], (iii) the caliphate state-building project, and (iv) the imminent apocalypse. First, the Islamic State contends that its leaders and members are the only people truly following the original interpretation and practice of Islam from the time of the Muslim prophet Muhammad and the *Sahaba* (Muhammad's

companions). Therefore, they are protecting Islam against its enemies who are attempting to destroy it'(Zelin, 2016, pp. 20-22).

In no particular order, IS, as a militant Salafi-Sunni faction of Islam, claims these groups of entities are non-Muslims and must be fought to preserve Islam: '*rawafidh* (a derogatory term for Shi'a); *nusayris* (a derogatory term for Alawites); *taghut* (tyrants), a term to describe Sunni leaders who are viewed as apostates.

Moreover, '*munafiqin* (hypocrites), a term to describe Muslims that do not live up to their religion in the eyes of IS; *murtadin* (apostates), those who have left Islam (since IS has a very narrow definition of Islam, this encompasses many ordinary Muslims); and *Sahawat* (awakening), a term that originally referred to the tribal awakening in Iraq against the Islamic State's predecessor organization last decade. Further, it has taken on the symbol of any Sunni insurgent faction that goes against IS on the battlefield: *Silibiyyin* (Crusaders), a reference to western countries, and *Sahyuniyyin* (Zionists), a reference to Israel' (Zelin, 2016, pp. 20-22).

Whereas the new preachers' discourse, which is not antagonistic or hostile, has the following propositions that offer a breathing space to communicate with the world. Analyzing the content of his episodes in three months reveals the following mini-narratives:

Coexistence with Egypt's Copts is more important than uniting or consolidating with any other nation, which changes the concept of a 'nation' or 'Ummah.'

Islam is intrinsically, neither political nor belligerent.

Islamic jihad (i.e., warring against nonbelievers) must be geared toward improving the self rather than combating any injustices.

Living in conformity with social and economic injustices is a possible means of self-refinement/discipline.

The best jihad is the one that makes you better and congruent or in agreement with the world; the only enemy is one's soul.

Suppressing heresy (Beda'a), a Salafi priority is not a Muslim's call; the other way around is.

No 'us-them' dichotomy; Islam is not against Europe or the world or anyone.

Non-Muslims are not infidels; rather, they are our fellow humans.

No othering or in-group/out-group dichotomy

No need to comfort the self with any feeling of superiority; modesty is a healthy attitude.

With the destruction of the grand/meta-narratives of Islam notably believing that Islam is the 'true' religion, 'any other religion is not accepted by God, and the main ontological task for Muslims is to convert others to Islam, there is no longer any unifying identity for a subject or society. Instead, individuals are the sites where ranges of conflicting moral and political codes interest, and the social bond is fragmented'(Miller, 2010, p. 505).

From his very beginning, Mustafa Hosni avoided politics and set himself apart from any dispute with the Muslim Brotherhood, nor did he align with the Egyptian army that seized power after June 30, 2013. He did not comment on the victims of the violent crackdown of *Rabaa* and *Nahda* square sit-ins, nor did he respond to the fanatic ideology or the extremist group of 'Supporters of Jerusalem' that had a guerilla war against the army in Sinai, and which had an alliance with IS. He did not get himself involved with those developments.

Unlike Mustafa Hosni, Amr Khalid[4] sided with the army after the coup (revolution) and lost some of his popularity among a segment of the Egyptian youth. He was denounced

by some Brotherhood figures who admonished him as a hypocrite, as he offered pretexts for the Egyptian army to fiercely attack and onslaught the Rabaaand Nahda sit-ins, a massacre in the eyes of the Brotherhood.

Producers of Mustafa Hosni's programs are the channels whose most likely reason d'être is to destroy the ideals of the Egyptian revolution of the 25th of January, which was sought to change approach to power and wealth in Egypt. Owned by a mysterious businessman, Mohamed Al-Amin, the channels were suspected of receiving money from the UAE and the family of Safwat Al-Sharif, the former minister of information in the long years of Mubarak's regime.

In complete defiance of 'the feelings of the revolutionaries and the Egyptian people, the satellite channels, like *al-Nahar* channel, have embraced media personalities who have been rejected by Egyptians and by the revolution. They have imposed 'these personalities on viewers through new programs, without even a commercial justification, since even novice businessmen do not expect to sell commodities that have been rejected by the general public. This confirms that we are dealing with a political plan that has nothing to do with media or even with economics' (Nasser, 2012, p. 3). This reflects the postmodern notion 'Co-existence is better than knowing the truth while experiencing uncertainty.' Before *al-Nahar*, Hosni's programs were being streamed in Saudi Arabia, a country that frowned upon incidents of the Arab Spring and its objectives altogether.

Like Amr Khalid, Hosni presides over charity campaigns to raise funds. Such policy is consistent with other state policies, which helps decrease public expenditure in dire economic situations. Hosni is a board member of salvation as well as social and personal development projects: *Inhabitants of the Earth, Life Without Smoking, Together*, and *The River of Goodness*[5], as Khalid is a board member of *Makers of Life* association[6].

Some analysis of his titles for the last five years reveals a thorough concentration on the mundane or our life on earth rather than on the hereafter or life after death. Each year, in the month of Ramadan, the holy month of fasting in Islam and ironically one of the major prime time of watching TV contents, Hosni hosts a series of episodes with one central theme. These include: *Art of Life, Think, New Man, Inhabitants of the Earth, The Magic of the World, Live the Moment, School of Love, The Best Life,* and *The Lost Treasure*[7].

Other titles, though fit-out for the life hereafter such as On the *Road to Allah*, *Love You, God*, *On the Gate to Paradise*, their content is focused more on self-help and social development. By training on the *Art of Life* and improving the self, no need is there to believe in meta-narratives. Nor is there any privation as to include critical speeches that would lead to imprisonment or to complete frustration.

Postmodernity itself is the era of experts in 'identity problems,' of personality spiritual healers, and how-to-assert-yourself writers; it is the era of 'counseling boom.' Therefore, postmodern religion claims a 'meta-experiential' function performed today by numerous 'self-improvement movements,' deriving their seductive power from their promise of developing the experiencing of soul and body through exercise, contemplation, self-concentration, and others. Postmodern man is a spiritual chooser, whether by his preference or by necessity (Vitel & Damian, 2010).

Hosni's media materials explain the 'therapeutic nature' of his discourse and a new social identification of self through which he attempts to make the lives of his audience gratifying and joyous. Combating emotional and mental stress and skilling the art of relaxation[8] as well as improving interpersonal relationships, both at home[9] and work[10], are frequent themes in Hosni's discourse.

Know Yourself is a questionnaire that reflects on the personality of his followers. It is a daily practice test following each of the 30 episodes in the *Art of Life* series. For each

episode, a set of 5-7 questions is given. Then the answers are offered with an assessment and advice with hope and encouragement at its core. It is interesting to note that the number of questions in women's tests is more than those in men's.

One of Hosni's followers notes that society seeks those declamations since some people have come to view Islam as prohibiting fun things that are thought to be enjoyable. The new preachers, however, assert that 'Islam can be a way of life, and it is the best way to reach your goals' (Farag & Alazrak, p. 224).

With an abundance of materials that provide therapy and self-help, Hosni is more like a director of a center for the treatment of mental and physical diseases. Yet, he is more affordable and more accessible. He is the one psychiatrist/spiritual healer who works in harmony with a group of his fellow specialists.

Analysis of Pastiche

While trying to reconcile Islamic morals and values with the modern lifestyle, Hosni engages in encouraging dialogue with the western world. Competition in this domain comes from those celebrities, whose followers on social media are testimonies to the power of intense mediation (Farag & Alazrak, 2016). Introducing examples of written, audio, and visual pastiche from texts of Mustafa Hosni himself is one objective of this study.

Postmodern literature's celebratory mode of experimentation found new impetus with the usage of parody and pastiche. While a parody imitates the manner, style, or characteristics of a particular literary work/genre/author, and deflates the original by applying the imitation to a lowly or inappropriate subject, pastiche means to combine, or 'paste' together, multiple elements. Pastiche, thus, can be seen as a representation of the chaotic, pluralistic, or information-drenched aspects of postmodern society. It is intertextual by nature, and in Hosni's discourse, it pays homage to past styles (Bowie, 1987).

Pastiche is an imitation of a narrative or film genre. It is similar to a parody but more gentle and respectful to the original, even flatter to the original.Pastiche in Mustafa Hosni's works is a self-fashioning technique to insinuate [post]modernity, cutting edge, and practical way to understand and express a new acceptable version of Islam. Merging a Quranic verse with a citation from a Huffington article, for example, reflects a kind of anti-ethnocentrism.

Three kinds of pastiche can be found when analyzing media platforms of Mustafa Hosni: written, audio, and visual.

Written Pastiche: One of the units of analysis is the slide that resembles Power Point slides. It is an amalgam of graphics and texts ranging from 15 to 25 words. In the written slide, Hosni twined the Quranic verses together with quotations from new studies, mostly western, as if he wants to introduce elements that Islam share with other cultures or with the entire world. The quotations include western and international statistics, perhaps because the statistics of Egyptian society are so dire and serious thatit is recommended not to share them; otherwise, the western source is considered more credible.

Slides contain quotations from studies with citations such as Harvard University, Forbes magazine, American living website, *Daily Mail* newspaper, Bradley University, and World Mental Health Organization. Other sources of information may include the Conference of the Muslim World League, Decision Support Center, Center Gallup, World Health Organization, Harris Research Center, Journal of Social Psychology at Northwestern University, and Huffington website.

Another type of written pastiche can be found in Hosni's official webpage in the form of questionnaires or quizzes associated with each episode of the series '*Think*.' There

is always an integration of questions of religion and Islamic history with questions of geography, astronomy, and questions about scientists, etc.

Moreover, written pastiche can be found in a mixture of definitions of Islamic concepts that have been twined together with definitions of natural phenomena. For example, Islamic values such as 'Lowering the Gaze' can go alongside with the 'Black Holes' or the 'Tsunami' phenomena or with sciences such as 'Anthropology'[11].

Hosni's homepage of his official webpage divides into the following sections, which together create a sort of written pastiche:

(i) The latest topics or series, the series the *Art of Life*.
(ii) Then videos of the same series running for 5 to 15 minutes.
(iii) Some competitions from 30 episodes of the second season of '*Think*' series that include Questions of religion and Islamic history are often integrated with others from geography, astronomy, sciences, etc.
(iv) Text and pictures or group of slides are: Know yourself, Info-graphic - my words and updated with each series.
(v) The videos of *du'aa* or prayers.
(vi) Think and identify (simple definitions of Islamic concepts with definitions of natural phenomena such as black holes, Tsunami, and the dust of the Bays as well as definitions of sciences such as anthropology.
(vii) Ideas changed the world extracted from the *Think* series. It is about all digital inventions in almost all areas. The presentation of a graphic film does not exceed 40 seconds each. They deal; with almost all scientific fields like Biology and biochemistry technology etc.
(viii) The story of an invention about the inventions (screwdriver, photocopier, electric stairs, electric bell, etc., integrated with info videos about Muslims in the contemporary world. The presentation of a graphic film does not also exceed 40 seconds.
(ix) Social networking sites: Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.
(x) A photo album that has the same images associated with words in the slides section.
(xi) The sidebar contains more sections like Instagram and the special page of the *Art of Life* series on Facebook.

Besides that written pastiche, texts, pictures, and sounds, a mixture that appears when you are hastily browsing the official website of Mustafa Hosni, are a landmark of our age and the logic of media consumption.

Audio Pastiche: Video clips (5-7 minutes) are extracted from full episodes broadcasted in *al-Nahar*, an Egyptian satellite channel. The written scripts of those clips or other graphic movies do not exceed 40 seconds each. They are a mixture of the history of inventions and ideas that have changed the world, such as a screwdriver, a photocopier, electric stairs, electric belts, and those in almost every scientific field such as biology and biochemistry. These are integrated with Islamic morals or with brief information on contemporary Muslims of Indonesia, for example, the largest Muslim country in the world.

If we move to audio pastiche in Hosni's lengthy episodes, we can introduce an example of an episode titled: 'The Art of Relaxation' by dissecting it into segments. The first segment of the episode begins with a five-minute introduction by Mustafa Hosni, followed by a panel discussion in which one participant tells her story about the need to relax and how her life has changed after learning about the art of relaxation followed by a comment from Hosni. The story is addressing outmoded people who do not know how to rest or find a 'break of the warrior' as described, butit is not addressing the unemployed or the underpaid people.

In the second segment, Hosni presents some statistics and research findings followed by a quote from the Quran and another from Prophet Mohamed's biography. The segment ended with Hosni quoting from Stephen Covey's famous book titled: 'Seven Habits of Success,' a paragraph about 'corruption of the concept of comfort in the modern world.' The segment ended with a break featuring some western flute music.

The third segment begins with Hosni reading out a verse from the Quran. It reads, 'our Lord laid down the comfort side of the work of blessings.' Then Hosni comments on the 'balance between diligence and comfort.' A speech expert host Yasmin Farouk teaches the skills of life and quotes Ibrahim el-Feki, a famous self-development specialist, from his book *Life without Tension* who describes how relaxation and sleep improve relationships, and also how people control the ideas and not vice versa. Farouk uses English phrases that reflect her modern culture and ends the segment with another quotation from 'The Art of Relaxation' by Abdel Latif Morsi.

Then comes another section entitled: 'NomaHaniea' or 'happy sleep,'

telling the story of *Omar bin al-Khatab*, the second *Khalif* or successor of Prophet Muhammad, who have been seen by a commander of the Persians while sleeping without guards when that commander visited Mecca. The commander had a very famous remark in Islamic history: 'Oh Omar, you have achieved justice, so it is natural to sleep once you have felt safe deeply.' Hosni remarked: 'Focus on work, achieve a goal, and then you deserve comfort that serves as a reward for your well-done work. Even a leave (i.e., a break) is necessary to be comfortable, not burdensome'.

The final segment begins with Hosni telling a story from Prophet Mohamed's biography about him playing with his beloved wife, Aisha. It then comes Hosni's counsel to wives: Do not talk about problems before bedtime. Hosni says a prayer with a flute melody in the background, and another young man says 'Amen,' and starts chanting a song.

The whole episode is in Egyptian colloquial Arabic, while classical Arabic only used when quoting from the Prophet Mohamed sayings or '*Ahadith*' and verses from the Quran.

On Sound Cloud, audio files are divided as The *Fikr* series; the *Think* episode; inspirational songs; the reading-out loud or recitation of the *Art of Life*.' Episodes from *Fikr* of the second season in audio follow along with episodes from the first season. These are all customized to fit users of Sound Cloud as short files for their playlists.

Visual Pastiche (*Visual pastiche in slides*)**:** The slides on the webpage are an intermixture of Quranic verses, relaxation tips, and graphics. The slide includes a visual text in a light purple to gain the favor of the target audience, who are mostly females, as suggested by a previous study (Farag & Alazrak, 2016). The slides contain thin and elegant motifs closer to the branches of the trees and leaves at slide corners as well as the series' name or its title in both Arabic and English, such as the series titled: 'the art of life' along with the info-graphic/slide number.

Moreover, the slide includes Hosni's web address where the slides are exclusively advertised as well as an iconic metaphor of a relaxed person sleeping or sketching information about the importance of relaxation, and icons of physicians wearing glasses and a stethoscope. The slides show iconic pictures of a man and a woman, including hearts, which means they are in love or dialogue or case of disagreement, it shows the man shouting and the woman crying. There are also photos about anxious men holding head or about individuals praying in a mosque.

Visual Pastiche (*Long episodes*): The last segment of a long episode and during repose, it features Hosni in prayer with music in the background, and Islamic art calligraphy

featuring, for example, the first revealed verse from the Quran: "Read (proclaim!) in the name of your Lord who created man."

Other segments have pastiche also on the semiotic level. One of Hosni's associates, Yasmin Farouk, a trainer on communication and life skills, shows on screen wearing the *hijab* (or Viel). In the meantime, she uses air or finger quotes, virtual quotation marks formed in the air with one's fingers when speaking, a mainly western gesture.

Then the video of *du'aa* or prayers sees Hosni uttering the prayers with a background of flute melodies played by a musician; something is heavily criticized by both formal state-hired Sheiks and Salafi ones as well.

Elements of the Look of Mustafa Hosni: The slides present Hosni wearing casual clothes, cotton or linen, having grey, beige, blue, and fuchsia colors. Often the shots are medium, showing his smiling face down to the waist. There is no pose of the man standing; instead, he is often shown sitting at his disk. On top of the desk, there stands an atlas-like book and an alarm clock, both of which look elegant and neat.

There are no dress codes or ties, but rather blue jeans and T-shirts for summer wear or other casual wear for winter, which means targeting an age category ranges from 18 to 25, or perhaps younger.

This is very important as the atmosphere reflects modern surroundings that might suit any religion. For example, behind Hosni are paintings of landscapes, showing the tower of Eiffel, a picture of a young man who could be a Muslim, a Christian, or even an atheist. Photos are not religious; no Quran verses are quoted. Rather, the pictures are true indications of contemporary life indulgence with no sign of cringing to a specific culture, not any portrayal of ethnocentric features. Then cultural stance reflects an acceptance of the other as well as integration into globalization.

Other elegant mugs, wall clocks, lamb stands, as well as heart-shaped and apple-shaped vases. Hosni rests on a modern sofa in light blue color with orange beige and dark blue stripes. Flowers in vases reveal modern global image derived from the western culture, which is very acceptable because it is successful.

Hosni wears a leather-belted youthful hand watch and funky platinum or silver wedding ring with an elegant black ornament in the middle. Hosni grows a light beard not because he is religious, but because it is more masculine and attractive for both sexes, especially the opposite one who is also attracted to his young mescaline hairy arms. Commentators called him the Islamic 'Tamer Hosni' because he resembles the most famous Egyptian pop-singer with the same last name and looks.

The change of Hosni's look, a decade after his first appearance in 2006, tells he has gone through a hair transplant as previously done by his mentor and model example, Amr Khalid.

Each social media platform of the preacher has its visual pastiche. For instance, Sound Cloud is the newest look Hosni's pages and followers reached 56,100 on March 19, 2019. Therefore, it has the newest look of Mustafa Hosni after he has gone through his hair transplant associated with a text announcing that his newest series *Think* is exclusivity broadcasted on *'al-Nahar'* channel.

On his YouTube page, here is a banner where an old picture of light-haired Mustafa Hosni in the foreground placed by his picture after his hair transplant, which suggests that his YouTube account is older than his Sound Cloud. A religious wisdom quote twined together with wise sayings of successful people, appears in short and long video files. The Number of followers increased up to 755,82 on March19 of 2019, and the number of views was 103,435,102.

Finally, Hosni's page on Google Plus had 55.864 on March 19, 2019, converting episodes into campaigns such as *Think* campaign that has 99,660 members. The page

contains posters created by followers and medium-length videos that run from 12 to 15 minutes. Photographs of Hosni are taken in the open air with greenish landscapes, not inside the studio.

Conclusion

Through qualitative cultural analysis of new media platforms, this study sought to examine some specific questions related to the postmodern characteristics in the discourse of Mustafa Hosni, the new preacher of Islam. Due to using a case study, the author does not presume to offer a comprehensive picture of new media use among new Islamic preachers in Egypt. However, this study does provide some insights into broad attributes and logic surrounding such use, and it may spur further, more in-depth examinations of this major topic.

In Hosni's discourse, the discursive formations that take shape through that landscape of mediated Islam, as appears in Hosni's discourse, contribute to an apocalyptically informed religious-political subjectivity that identifies mini-narratives of civic and political engagement as an expected active choice and responsibility for attaining *Sadakat* (salvation) and self-help.

Close examination of the discourse content in various settings reveals a great deal of pastiche: written, audio, and visual types. The discourse is packaged (framed, structured) in a more meaningful glocal way to serve a culturally-relative urban context than an ethnocentric one.

In doing so, this case study contributes to understanding better the increasingly complex relationship between religion, media, and politics in the Middle East. It contributes to a growing literature concerning the role of mediated religion in public life by advancing a discussion of the complex intersections between apocalyptic discourse, salvation, and evangelical-like Islamic governance.

Content, conformance, and compromise are the political responses of Hosni's discourse. For the naked eye, the discourse seems apolitical, but it is not. The unspoken things are most important. Salvation is an approved policy by the Egyptian government after the 30th of June 2013 coup/revolution. The dire economic situation forced the Egyptian president to repeatedly claim the necessity that the people should help their country, and not the other way around.

A postmodern analysis of mini-narratives and pastiche of Hosni's discourse, a painstaking 'structure' of discursive practices was constructed and deployed over more than a decade. Distinctly different from media content analysis, the theory of cultural analysis grounded the media messages of Hosni in 'gradual' glocalization of hybrid and peaceful version of Islam as abstract notions that found concrete embodiment in the preachers' discourseto fit each locality or culture in a specific manner.

With the new preachers rising to fame by using western neo-liberal methods while preaching holy Islamic principles, the controversy over the group is predictable. Modern global communication has lent itself well to these individuals to introduce a tolerant risk-free version of Islam to youth in the age of mobile media. The neo-preachers have secured their careers by having close relations with security apparatuses in Egypt, which allowed them in true capitalist fashion, to rise from humble middle-class professionals to superstars.

Notes

[1]Mustafa Hosni (born 28 August 1978) is an Islamic preacher and televangelist from Egypt. Hosni received a diploma from an Islamic Studies Institute. In 2000, he graduated from Ain Shams University with a bachelor's degree in commerce. He went on to work in sales but later decided to pursue preaching. https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Mustafa_Hosni

[2]Egypt's "New Preachers," *or al-du'ah al-gudud*, are so named because their styles of televisual Islamic da'wa – which draw on globalized media genres such as dramatic serials, music videos, and reality television – are unprecedented within the country's Islamic Revival. AmrKhaled is undoubtedly the most famous of these television preachers.

[3]The World 500 Most Influential Muslims 2019, the royal Islamic strategical studies center, Amman: Jordan. Pages.45, 104, 124.

[4]See mocking parody of Amr Khalid, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PiSgN3t2Mg

[5]See details about Hosni in English, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mustafa_Hosni,

[6]See http://amrkhaled.net/ar

[7]See http://mustafahosny.com/

[8]To see the complete episode of relaxation and renewing agility see: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ARH1asJbjXQ

[9]Episode titled: How love increased between spouses, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o7upLkhiM8M

[10]Episode about solving problems among friends, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NjE1va58E1I

[11]See http://mustafahosny.com/

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