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Lina Khatib

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*Lina Khatib*

## Communicating Islamic Fundamentalism as Global Citizenship

*This article discusses Islamic fundamentalism as forming an imagined community functioning within and beyond the nation, and therefore communicating a local/global identity. Through the use of textual and network analysis, the article focuses on the Internet and its uses by various Islamic fundamentalist groups across the globe. The article argues that the Internet is used by the groups as a "portable homeland" that allows them to strengthen their global ties and communicate with one another, and also to communicate with the connected world at large. The article thus looks at cyberspace as another venue for the carrying out of political conflicts. The author argues that cyberspace has become an enabling tool through which Islamic fundamentalist groups protect, strengthen, and communicate their multiple identities. In this way, Islamic fundamentalism is analyzed not as an inward-looking resistant force that opposes globalization but as a glocal force in itself.*

**Keywords:** *Islamic fundamentalism; Internet; globalization; identity*

Debates on globalization have carried with them variable, often conflicting, views on the relationship between the global and the local. On one hand, globalization has been seen as the intensification of relations between different cultures in a time-space compression (Robertson 1997). On the other hand, it has been looked at as the expansion of cultures into the global realm (Featherstone 1995). Both those views articulate the idea that the global and the local are constantly interacting. The result of this interaction has often been seen as either a homogenization of cultures, resulting in cultural integration or unification, or a heterogenization, not only in the sense that cultures are diverse but also that they may clash (Huntington 1996).

At the heart of all this lies a debate about the position of the nation in a globalized world. Some argue that the nation and nationalism are becoming obsolete, with connections being made between cultures and individuals across national boundaries, resulting in cosmopolitanism where the individual becomes a citizen of the world (Naussbaum 1994). Others argue that the nation

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is in fact strengthened in this context, with individuals holding on to their national identity to protect its existence in the face of usurping global forces (Dorris 1994). In other words, this view looks at the global as a threat to the local. In this context, I am using the term *local* to refer to national rather than subnational (Mann 2000) affiliation.

However, the world today is witnessing the emergence of new forms of affiliation that transcend the nation yet that do not necessarily mean that the nation is under threat. Those new affiliations can be seen as a new kind of nationalism, or patriotism. This “new patriotism” describes the existence of intersecting affiliations, local, global, regional, and religious. This article discusses a particular case of new patriotism, that of Islamic fundamentalism as an example of global (not cosmopolitan) citizenship. The article argues that Islamic fundamentalism articulates itself within, and not in opposition to, processes of globalization, defined here as “those processes, operating on a global scale, which cut across national boundaries, integrating and connecting communities and organizations in new space-time combinations, making the world in reality and in experience more interconnected” (Hall 1992, 299).

Attention will be paid to the role of the Internet as an identity tool communicating this global citizenship, as the Internet is a means of self-definition for Islamic fundamentalist movements worldwide (Beck 2000). The Internet is discussed as a means of constituting, representing, and influencing the existence and growth of various Islamic fundamentalist groups in a global context.

In what follows, I will start with justifying my choice of Islamic fundamentalism as new patriotism, followed by a definition of the term *Islamic fundamentalism* as used in this article. I will then explore Islamic fundamentalism in the local (defined as national) and regional realms, followed by a discussion of the Internet as an identity tool. Then, I will discuss Islamic fundamentalist groups’ use of the Internet to communicate their global identity. Finally, I will conclude with an analysis of Islamic fundamentalism as a global force.

## Why Islamic Fundamentalism?

In “Identity Blues,” Ien Ang (2000) looks at cultural identities as being historically grounded but also as being transformable. She argues that identities are not essential, but instead, that at the level of experience, identities “*feel* natural and essential” (p. 2). She says that the focus on identities as constructions diverts attention away from the political realities of identities that are expressed as essentialist (like Islamic fundamentalism). This results in a pathological outlook on those “essentialist” identities while romanticizing the “constructed,” open ones. One reason for this romanticization of identity, she says, is that the idea of open identities is often ascribed to new social movements, from feminism to multicultural movements—movements that have

been seen as progressive and future-orientated. She cites Calhoun's argument that this idea is problematic because it

groups together what seem to the researchers relatively "attractive" movements, vaguely on the left, but leaves out other contemporary movements such as the new religious right and fundamentalism, the resistance of white ethnic communities against people of color, various versions of nationalism, and so forth. (Calhoun 1994, 22, cited in Ang 2000, 3)

Hall (1992) argues that globalization entails the formation of new identifications that are simultaneously global and local. However, he singles out the Islamic fundamentalist identity as being the result of the "tension between Tradition and Translation" (p. 312), or between "ethnicity" and "global homogenization" (p. 313). However, while Islamic fundamentalist movements have often been looked at as being oppositional to global processes, they articulate their identities in a similar manner to the new social movements'. By that I mean that both constitute a new patriotism, conceptualized as the formation of new "linkages between . . . delocalized political communications, and revitalized political commitments," and at the same time provide a means for the production of locality for communities in multiple ethnoscares (Appadurai 1996, 196). Islamic fundamentalism today, namely after the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center in 2001, has been invoked as a threat to globalization, a closed, localized force that challenges our nonessentialist, fluid identities. However, I argue that Islamic fundamentalism is a relativizing force within processes of globalization, not aiming at negating global reality but at shaping it. By that I mean that Islamic fundamentalism is "a way of asserting a particular (group) identity, which in turn is a prime method of competing for power and influence in the global system" (Beyer 1994, 4). In doing so, Islamic fundamentalism transcends nations but is not necessarily oppositional to the nation. The articulation of an Islamic fundamentalist identity is essentialist à la Ang, but that identity itself is fluid and is constructed differently in different contexts. Islamic fundamentalism is experienced locally, but is at the same time a global movement. I will discuss these ideas and their relationship with communication in the sections to follow; but to understand those perspectives, it is first necessary to view Islamic fundamentalism in a historical context.

## Defining Islamic Fundamentalism

There has been a considerable degree of disagreement over the term *Islamic fundamentalism*. Although in this article I am using the term to refer to various Islamic groups and traditions, it has to be stressed that each should be looked at in a specific historical context (e.g., there is a difference between the fundamentalism of Saudi Arabia and that of Iran; Tehranian 2000). The term has

been defined from various angles and to describe diverse and unrelated movements within a fractured political landscape (Agha 2000; Hall 1992). The term can refer to “the growth of Islam as a religious force and a political ideology and . . . to the desire to reinstate the Islamic legal code” (White, Little, and Smith 1997, 7). The term can also refer to “the emotional, spiritual and political response of Muslims to an acute and continuing social, economic and political crisis that has gripped the Middle East” (Ehteshami 1997, 180). However, it has also been defined as a challenge to America’s position as a global power and its hegemonic interests, a term used by the United States as a shorthand to discredit opponents as irrational and irresponsible (Saikal 2000). At the same time, it has been seen as a challenge to Western ideologies in general like secularism (Mowlana 2000). It has also sometimes been defined (erroneously) as synonymous with terrorism (White, Little, and Smith 1997). The term has caused such controversy that it has been proposed that it should be avoided altogether. This is because it “has become a psychological scapegoat for those who refuse to acknowledge and take responsibility for the real international and intercultural problems” (Tehrani 2000, 217). Those multiple definitions can be traced to the difficulty of aligning contradictory or “dislocated” identities “into one, overarching ‘master identity’ on which a politics could be securely grounded” (Hall 1992, 280).

There are three characteristics that link the various Islamic fundamentalisms, and which form the basis for the use of the term in this article. First, Islamic fundamentalism does not refer to movements that are religious only, but also to political ones that aim at establishing a “polity of believers” (Hamzeh 1998). Second, Islamic fundamentalists believe in Islamic authenticity, juxtaposed with what is seen as Western hegemony, which in turn is believed to threaten this authenticity. Western hegemony is not confined to Western countries; it also applies to secular people in the Muslim world who are seen as even worse than the “foreign infidels” (Faksh 1997, 9). They are seen as “representing the interests of the . . . formerly . . . colonial powers” (Taheri 1987, 16). Finally, fundamentalist groups seem to agree on the necessity of Jihad (holy war) to preserve and expand the Muslim community. However, the groups differ in their interpretation and application of Jihad. While some see Jihad as nonviolent, others like the Islamic Jihad Organization view Jihad as being military.

In this article I am using the term loosely to refer to “a diverse set of competing political opinions held within the Muslim community” (Ehteshami 1997, 179). In short, my use of the term emanates from the fact that other terms (Islamists, extremists, fanatics, etc.) are no less damaging, and also carry their own complications. Thus, I am using *Islamic fundamentalism* in the political sense, to refer to groups that use Islam as a basis to achieve political power. In doing so I will be concentrating on a set of Islamic fundamentalist groups con-

nected (directly or indirectly) through the Internet with al-Qaida, the group led by Osama bin Laden that has gained notoriety after having been blamed for the September 11 attacks.

## Islamic Fundamentalism and Nationalism

From this we can see that Islamic fundamentalism is an example of “the ambiguous expression [of] assimilation into the universal . . . and simultaneously for . . . adhering to the particular, the reinvention of difference” (Wallerstein 1984, 166-67). On one hand, Islamic fundamentalism recognizes its “difference” from the West, and articulates it to replace Western hegemony with its own “hegemony” or, as Robins (2000) puts it, “to create a global civilization on different basis from that which is being elaborated by the symbolic analysts of the West” (p. 200). Fundamentalism’s “shifting hegemony” provides “alternative visions of the global situation” (Friedman 1994, 201) that aim at “the formation of a single world culture” that transcends the nation (Friedman 1994, 100). Islamic fundamentalism’s ideal, the establishment of a polity of believers (or *umma*) conflicts with the idea of the nation-state. For example, Sayyid Qutb—an Egyptian fundamentalist guru with a following among al-Qaida members—has been quoted as saying that a “Muslim’s nationality is his [*sic*] religion” (quoted in Faksh 1997, 10). Indeed, Qutb has himself engaged in an active opposition to the past Egyptian president Nasser’s nationalist-secularist regime, which ended in Qutb’s execution in 1966.

On the other hand, Islamic fundamentalism has not always been oppositional to the nation. Islamic fundamentalism was mobilized in the 1920s to expel the British from Egypt and rally against the Soviets in Afghanistan. More recently, it has been used by Hizbollah to expel the Israelis from South Lebanon. These examples illustrate how “being” (or rather, “becoming”) Islamic fundamentalist is not a matter of subsuming cultural/national difference, but rather of “constituting a *discursive device* which represents difference as . . . identity” (Hall 1992, 297).

On another level, the Islamic fundamentalist identity recognizes the national nature of conflicts yet projects them beyond the nation. An example is Palestinian group Hamas, which targets its activities against Israel and yet engages in rallying support in other countries (like Britain), where it hails the suffering of Palestinians as a global issue rather than a localized one. As we can see, Islamic fundamentalism’s fluid identity has taken different forms according to the historical context, moving from being nationalist to a challenge to nationalism to a mixture of both. The spread of fundamentalism as a “national” form “divorced from territorial states” (Appadurai 1996, 169) has prompted Appadurai to label its identity “postnational.” He also uses the term to refer to fundamentalism’s emergence as an alternative form “for the organization of

global traffic in resources, images and ideas.” However, while Appadurai also maintains that this implies that nation-states have become obsolete, the above discussion alerts us that we cannot make generalizations about Islamic fundamentalism as being essentially oppositional to the nation, and as seeing the concept of the nation-state as hegemonic and anti-Islam.

### Islamic Fundamentalism as a Regional Force

Islamic fundamentalism does not only have a local character but is also regional. Islamic fundamentalism as a regional force is seen in the Islamic world, but is perhaps most visible in the Arab world (although that view is currently being challenged with the increasing exposure of groups in places like Kenya, Indonesia, and Chechnya). The Arab world has gone through stages in which its regional identity has been put forward and withdrawn. During the rule of Egypt’s Nasser, for example, there was a resurgence of pan-Arabism. This can be seen as a reaction to colonial (British, French, Italian) presence in the region, as well as to the formation of the state of Israel in 1948. However, Nasser failed at establishing Arab unity. This is because, first, pan-Arabism underwent tensions between the demands of the state and those of collective action (Smith 1997), and second, because the different political regimes within it are ultimately national (Fanon 1994).

Moreover, the advocacy of a national identity (whether local or regional) has been in conflict with the views of many Islamic fundamentalists in the Arab world who argue for an Islamic identity (Al-Ahsan 1992). The existence of Islamic fundamentalists in the Arab world and elsewhere can be seen as an example of the failure of the nation-state system to create a truly national identity (whether local or regional). However, what seemed to partly resolve this identity crisis in the Arab world is the problem with Israel, as Arab countries have attempted to unite against this common enemy (Al-Ahsan 1992). Yet this unity was short-lived, catalyzed by Egypt’s and Jordan’s signing of peace agreements with Israel. Not only did the peace treaties go against popular opinion across the Arab world, they also added to the dismay of Islamic fundamentalist groups, who regard Jihad against Zionism as one of their motives. In this sense, Islamic fundamentalism has arisen as a kind of substitute for a failing Arab identity.

Today, Islamic fundamentalism can also be looked at as a global force articulating the three sides of globalization: the material (flow of trade, local/global happenings and repercussions), the spatio-temporal (interregional meetings across time and space), and the cognitive (transformation of power relations beyond the nation) (Held and McGrew 2000). Al-Qaida (literally, the base) is an example of the multiple construction of Islamic fundamentalist identity “across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and



positions” (Hall 1996a, 4). Al-Qaida is a network of movements operating worldwide, with converging yet variable political agendas. The movements are united in their opposition to Western hegemony, yet the way they implement this antagonism differs in different contexts. While the movements agree in opposing Israel, for example, not all of them engage in anti-Israeli missions (such missions seem to be conducted mainly by the Islamic Jihad and Hamas in Palestine). The movements thus are global in the sense that they function within a disembedded institution (interestingly, al-Qaida does not have a recognized physical base), “linking local practices with globalized, social relations” (Giddens 1990, 79).

Hall (1996a) argues that identities are constituted through representation; the Internet is a “system of cultural representation” (p. 292) that mirrors “the weakening of homogeneous identities, and the multiplicity of identities which we are able to live in and inhabit” (Hall 2003). The Internet narrates the Islamic fundamentalist imagined community, reflecting the groups’ principles and aims, and representing their shared experiences (Hall 1992).

### The Internet as an Identity Tool

The Internet has been argued to be a medium of possibility, where the individual can go beyond his or her social self (Turkle 1996; Hjarvard 2002). It also blurs the boundaries between the spaces in which those who are connected exist (Freeman 1999). Cyberspace has created communities that are not necessarily physically or nationally bound but which transcend the sacred boundaries of home and nation (Morley 1999). However, that is not to imply that the Internet is detached from the realities of the social world. On the contrary, as Shohat (1999) argues, cyberspace is another space and not a substitute space. Existing local and global power relations are thus extended to this (new) space, rather than being displaced from the physical one. Cyberspace is another zone in which conflicts are carried out and that is connected with the corporality of its users.

Today, after the September 11 attacks, we are becoming more aware of the connections between Islamic fundamentalism and cyberspace, with more unearthing of Islamic fundamentalist cyberactivities (such as al-Qaida’s messages on its Web site al-Neda [[www.alneda.com](http://www.alneda.com)] supporting the attack and calling for an all-out war between Islam and the West [OutThere News 2002]). However, even before the attacks, this relationship had already been cemented and recognized. The Internet has been a site of political struggle through the use of chat rooms, e-mail, and various Web sites. Not only have people with clashing political opinions battled over the Internet, political conflicts have been carried further through practices like hacking and raids on ISPs. For example, the Lebanese group Hizbollah’s Web site was hacked in 2001 after



Hizbollah captured three Israeli soldiers at the border in South Lebanon (Scheeres 2001). Its Lebanese service provider, Destination, also had its home page hacked by a group of Israeli teenagers (Weisman 2001). Six days before September 11, FBI and other agents raided InfoCom Corporation in Texas, crashing five hundred Web sites with Arab or Muslim connections (Whitaker 2001).

The events of September 11 catalyzed more cyberwar activities. Al-Neda's messages to rally support against the United States prompted its hacking by an American in 2002 (Di Justo 2002). Visitors to the Web site today are greeted with the slogan "Hacked, Tracked and Now Owned by the USA." However, as we will see in the next section, other militant groups still have a presence on the Internet.

The next section examines the various ways Islamic fundamentalist groups use the Internet to articulate their global/local identity. This covers political, commercial, ideological, linguistic, and communicative/interactive uses of Web sites. The analysis poses the following questions: How is the Internet used by Islamic fundamentalist groups to express conflicting ideologies toward the nation? How is the Internet used to communicate a Pax Islamica in and outside of the Middle East? How is it used to respond to a changing political climate? What kinds of cyberwars are taking place and among whom?

To answer those questions, the article will analyze the Web sites' commercial and fund-raising activities, organizational and communicative uses, choice of languages, selection of news published, and interactive sections and hyperlinks with other sites. This will be done through the use of textual analysis, comprising discourse and thematic analysis, combined with network analysis. Those methods are important due to the complex nature of the Internet and the structure of Web sites. The combination of methods helps reveal the structure in the Web sites' interaction, as the units of analysis in this research project (the Web sites) are embedded within a system of related sites (Garton, Haythornthwaite, and Wellman 1997; Jackson 1997). The analysis will concentrate on the sites' content but will also refer to their design and structure and how those factors are linked with the related groups' activities in the social world. Due to the vast number of Web sites related to Islamic fundamentalist groups, the project will limit itself to thirteen sites connected with the al-Qaida network through hyperlinks.

## Communicating Islamic Fundamentalism

The use of the Internet by Islamic fundamentalist groups reflects an outward vision combined with a global target audience, while also paying attention to local issues. The Internet has many uses for the groups. It is used to post

messages about the groups' mission statements. It is used to relay photographs, audio and video messages, and footage about the groups' activities. It is often used to post the latest news related to the groups and their affiliates. It acts as a convenient way for collecting money donations. It allows group members and supporters to find out about the groups' latest actions. It also allows them to communicate via e-mail and chat rooms. The Internet is also used by the groups to sell books, tapes, CDs, and other materials. The groups can also use the Internet to respond to current political situations.

The groups' Web sites differ in their design and ease of use: some are mainly text-based (like Jihaad'ul'Kuffarin, [www.jihaadulkuffarin.jeeran.com](http://www.jihaadulkuffarin.jeeran.com)), while others are more sophisticated, resembling multilayered news portals (like Taliban Online, [www.muslimthai.com/talibanonline](http://www.muslimthai.com/talibanonline)). Some Web sites are directly affiliated to specific Islamic fundamentalist groups, like the Lebanese Hizbollah ([www.hizbollah.org](http://www.hizbollah.org)), the Afghani Taliban (Taliban Online), the Pakistani Tanzeem-e-Islami ([www.tanzeem.org](http://www.tanzeem.org)), the Palestinian Hamas (under the name Palestine Information Center, [www.palestine-info.co.uk](http://www.palestine-info.co.uk)), the Chechen al-Mujahidoun (under the name Qoqaz.net, [www.qoqaz.net](http://www.qoqaz.net); and also Qoqaz.com, [www.qoqaz.com](http://www.qoqaz.com)), and al-Muhajiroun (a Salafi Islamic fundamentalist group connected to the Taliban, [www.almuhajiroun.com](http://www.almuhajiroun.com)).

Other Web sites are slightly more ambiguous about their affiliations, such as Jihaad'ul'Kuffarin, which is connected to the Islamic Group (Jama'a Islamiyya) led by the Egyptian Sheikh Omar Abd-el-Rahman, and Supporters of Shareeah ([www.shareeah.com](http://www.shareeah.com)), which is the site of Sheikh Abu Hamza al-Masri and his followers in Britain. Other Web sites do not have any overt affiliations, such as Jannah ([www.jannah.org](http://www.jannah.org)), as-Sahwa ([www.as-sahwah.com](http://www.as-sahwah.com)), Beware of Shiaism ([www.bewareofshiaism.8k.com](http://www.bewareofshiaism.8k.com)), and Maktabah Al-Ansar ([www.maktabah.net](http://www.maktabah.net)); however, they are connected through hyperlinks to other recognized sites like Shareeah.

I will now move to a brief description of the content of the Web sites discussed and how it reflects their global/local identity or new patriotism.

## The Expression of Conflicting Ideologies toward the Nation

Globalization is characterized by the transformation of power relations, where the established (new) world order is challenged by forces like Islamic fundamentalist groups (Held and McGrew 2000). On one hand, the groups' Web sites pay attention to local issues in the countries in which the groups operate. On the other hand, the Web sites advocate a kind of global ethics that links the groups together in their aims and goals (such as the establishment of a Pax Islamica) (European Community Studies Association [ECSA] 2003).

This multifocal approach reflects how the Islamic fundamentalist identity “is perceived as a shattered repertoire of mini-roles, instead of a nucleus of hypothetical sense of self” (Canclini 1998, quoted in Network EICOS 2003).

The Web sites’ adherence to the nation can be seen in the way they pay attention to particular issues in particular nation states. Thus, Tanzeem is mainly concerned with Pakistan; Qoqaz.net and Qoqaz.com with Chechnya; Taliban with Afghanistan, presenting information about the Taliban, the history of Afghanistan, and a list of Taliban enemies (including the United States); and Hizbollah with Lebanon, reporting the latest attacks by Israel on villages in the South. This localization can be seen in the sites’ mission statements, which contain sections highlighting their accomplishments, military and civilian. Hamas contains a “Glory Record,” summarizing a list of the group’s anti-Israeli activities both inside and outside Palestine, starting from 1988 and ending in 1994. Hizbollah contains video clips of the group’s attacks on Israeli targets and photographs of victims of Israeli violence in Lebanon and Palestine.

At the same time, the Islamic fundamentalist global outlook illustrates an antagonism toward the nation, with sites like Shareeah declaring that one cannot be a British Muslim because national affiliation contradicts the concept of *umma*. The sites seem to recognize the heterogeneity in the articulation of how Islam is understood in light of interweaving political beliefs and practices like nationalism (Eade 2003). Hence, some sites like as-Sahwah contain articles interpreting Islam as antinationalist, like “A Muslim’s Nationality and His Belief” by Sayyid Qutb.

The sites also mirror the groups’ global scope of operation and cooperation. Articles on Jihaad’ul’Kuffaarin contain the Jamaa Islamiyya’s position on various international events, with headlines like “Mujaahideen Attack Russian Army Base in Dagestan [Chechnya],” “Arab Veterans of the Afghan War,” and “The Moro Jihaad: Continuous Struggle for Islaamic [*sic*] Independence in Southern Philippines.” Taliban Online boasts headlines like “There is Taliban-like movement in Iraq’s Kurdish area” and “Anti-Americanism alive in a friendly country” (referring to Kuwait). Shareeah has a “Projects” section, containing items with titles such as “Department of Education Schools for Girls” and “Food Distribution Program” (in Afghanistan). However, the links to the body of the sections are inactive, leaving such “projects” ambiguous.

However, one way in which the sites link together the local and the global is through their language use. The Web sites use English as their primary language, with Arabic being the second most popular. Web sites like Shareeah, Hizbollah, and Taliban Online use both languages. While the use of English can be seen as an example of “hegemonic globalization” (ECSA 2003), it can also be interpreted as reflecting the groups’ “growing mobility across frontiers” (Robins 2000, 195). Shareeah also has an option in Bosnian, while Hamas’s Web site, the Palestine Information Center, uses Malawi, Urdu, Per-

sian, and Russian, in addition to Arabic and English. The Web sites thus seem to aim at an audience beyond the Arab world. They also hint at the fact that the members and supporters of the various groups belong to several nationalities or live in different countries. Yet the sites' outlooks are localized through the inclusion of Arabic terms within English language sentences (*umma*, *zakaah*, *shaheed*). This can be seen as an illustration of how "global encounters and interactions are producing inventive new cultural forms" (Robins 2000, 196). The sites are also localized in their subject matter, as the content of mirror sites in different languages sometimes differs. While Hizbollah's Web site seems to offer identical information in Arabic and English, Shareeah's Bosnian option takes you to another Web site altogether with more specific information related to Bosnia. This suggests that the groups' primary affiliation remains to the countries in which they are based.

### The Communication of a Pax Islamica

The Web sites reveal the solidarity of vision among the groups as they converge in their agreement on the establishment of a Pax Islamica. This Pax Islamica is communicated through the Web sites' statements on the necessity of Jihad, their commercial activities, and their interactive sections and hyperlinks. The agreement on Jihad can be seen on Jihaad'ul'Kuffaar, which contains an article claiming that the notion of Jihad refers to *qital* (military fighting) and not linguistic or other forms of Jihad. This is mirrored on al-Muhajiroun's Web site, which in its Q&A section affirms that "jihad as divine terrorism is obligatory in Islam." Tanzeem-e-Islami's mission statement declares that the group is replacing Sayyid Abdul A 'al Maududi's Jama'at-e-Islami in Pakistan and continuing its Jihadi mission. Hamas contains biographies (along with photographs) of major Hamas figures, beginning with its founder Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, and clearly describes the group as Jihadi. Shareeah's mission statement traces its allegiance to Islamic fundamentalist groups in Egypt and to people like the late Hassan Banna and Sayyid Qutb, two of the early founders of the Islamic movement in Egypt who are known for their pro-Jihad views. While al-Muhajiroun describes the group as a mere Islamic movement with no overt mentioning of politics, the group is affiliated to the Taliban, also known for their agreement on Jihad.

The Web sites also allow the groups to engage in a global flow of trade to materially sustain this Pax Islamica (Held and McGrew 2000). As Appadurai (1996) argues, electronically mediated communication creates "virtual neighborhoods" that "are able to mobilize ideas, opinions, moneys, and social linkages that often directly flow back into lived neighborhoods" (p. 195). The sites engage in limited commercial activities to help sustain their funds. Shareeah offers users a section dedicated to downloading lectures and Quran interpreta-

tions for free, but it also sells lectures and *khutbas* on tape, video, and CD. Topics covered are global in scope, with titles including "About the Jihad in Bosnia," "Afghanistan, the Return of Islam," and "Intifada, Blessed Hijacking, the Tricks of Shaytan [devil]." The site also offers books, with titles like "Defence of Muslim Lands by Shaheed [martyr] Abdullah Azzam" (in Chechnya).

Some Web sites also invite the supporters to donate money, either indirectly like as-Sahwah's call for Muslims to give *zakaah*, although the site does not explain where the money donated would go to. Others blatantly ask for donations, like Indonesian group Laskar Jihad (Jihad Troopers) which had been connected to al-Qaida. Its Web site has been noted as stating, "It takes a lot of fund, equipments [*sic*], and facilities for the daily needs of the Laskar and refugees. Consequently this becomes a responsibility of Moslem society as a whole for the glory of Islam and its believers" (Scheeres 2001). Shareeah also has a section that asks for donations to be made through sending checks to its provided London address. Hall (1992) argues that such "global consumerism" creates "the possibilities of 'shared identities'—as 'customers' for the same goods, 'clients' for the same services, 'audiences' for the same messages and images—between people who are far removed from one another in time and space" (p. 302).

The Pax Islamica is also supported through the Web sites' interactive sections. Stuart Hall argues that the Internet has enabled the formation of a global consciousness through its expansion of "the possibilities of sharing conversations across . . . different divides" (Hall 2003). Most fundamentalist Web sites enable this via providing e-mail addresses through which visitors can contact the webmasters and the groups behind the sites. This is important for maintaining contact between visitors of the Web sites and the groups. The sites also give the supporters a chance to meet through cyberspace. Al-Muhajiroun offers—besides e-mail—members' mobile phone numbers (in the United Kingdom), fax numbers, and a London mailing address, while as-Sahwah contains a discussion board where people can post their opinions.

The Internet's time-space compression is best demonstrated by Taliban Online, which seems to be the most technologically sophisticated Web site analyzed. The site includes a no-registration-required chat room: the user just needs to choose a nickname to join the conversation, and there are no private chat rooms. The site also contains a "Support us!" section, which has three options: an option enabling the user to add Taliban Online as a link to another Web site of their choice, an option with information about the site designed to be downloaded for mIRC chat, and a "tell a friend via e-mail" option.

Another way in which the Internet helps sustain this Pax Islamica is through the Web sites' hyperlinks. The hyperlinks reflect the groups' local and global political affiliations as well as ideological expressions. Hizbollah's

hyperlinks, for example, are centered on institutions within Lebanon that are connected with the group, but the site itself is hyperlinked from Tanzeem. Taliban Online is hyperlinked to few Web sites, including al-Muhajiroun and al-Neda, both of which are inactive. Shareeah contains a large number of hyperlinks divided into sections like "News Sites," "Discussion Boards," "Dawa Sites (Non/Muslims)," and "Chat Sites." Most of the hyperlinks mentioned are active, but some are those to Web sites that do not exist anymore or that have been closed down. It also has hyperlinks copied from Jannah, a news portal. Jannah's hyperlinks include sections like Business, Education, and Community, but also sites like Tanzeem and Hizb-ut-Tahrir (a site run by a Jihadi political party based in Palestine, [www.hizb-ut-tahrir.org](http://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.org)). The latter two are also hyperlinked to each other. In addition, Tanzeem is hyperlinked to the Algerian F.I.S. ([www.fisalgeria.org](http://www.fisalgeria.org)), the Lebanese Al-Moqawama al-Islamiyya (the Islamic Resistance Support Association run by Hizbollah, [www.moqawama.tv](http://www.moqawama.tv)), the international Muslim Brothers (Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimoun, [www.ummah.net/ikhwan](http://www.ummah.net/ikhwan)), and the Pakistani branch of the group ([www.ikhwan.org.pk](http://www.ikhwan.org.pk)). The availability of the Web sites listed here has fluctuated over time.

Hyperlinks are important because they enable the site visitors to find out about other affiliate groups and therefore to further increase their global connections. The hyperlinks' international scope is another way in which the various Islamic fundamentalist groups maintain and communicate their global presence. The content of the Web sites thus challenges the notion of Islamic fundamentalism as having an essentially localist nature. In fact, the groups utilize new media effectively and thus are able to form a global network that goes in tune with their global outlooks and aims.

## The Response to Changes in the Political Climate

The groups use their Web sites to respond to global and local politics. The Web sites are thus an example of how local happenings can also have global repercussions and vice versa (Eade 2003). For example, after the September 11 attacks, Taliban Online claimed that the Taliban do not support the attacks and that Osama bin Laden denied any involvement. After the raid by British police on the Finsbury Park mosque in London in January 2003, where Abu Hamza preaches, his Web site Shareeah covered the story on its homepage, defending the mosque as a mere place of worship, and ignoring the terrorist allegations that the raid was based on. The Web sites' presentation of such alternative news can be seen as an attempt at decentralizing a West-focused flow of information (Network EICOS 2003). The presentation of alternative news is, as Kevin Robins (2000) argues, an "aspiration to create a space within global culture" (p. 200).



The groups also aim at strengthening their position in global politics through the use of interactive sections, namely opinion polls. Taliban Online's Survey, for example, has posed questions like, "Do you believe the Taliban will defeat Army of disbelievers by the Grace of Mighty Allah?" referring to American presence in Afghanistan. The survey claims that 98.8 percent of votes (equaling, according to the site, 3,768,982 votes) said yes. In this way, the Internet functions as a tool for "speaking" from "positions within the global distribution of power"; as Hall argues, "Because these positions change and alter, there is always an engagement with politics as a 'war of position'" (Hall 1996b, 237).

## Cyberwars

The Internet has been a theatre for the groups' political actions. It has been alleged that the September 11 attacks were coordinated mainly through e-mail (Norton-Taylor 2001). It has also been alleged that some of the groups' Internet chat rooms had been circulating rumors of an assault before the missile attack on an Israeli airliner in Kenya in December 2002 took place (Butcher 2002). The response to this increased exposure of the Internet as a tool in the hands of terrorists has varied from posting messages on the groups' Web sites appealing for information about potential terrorists (as the British MI5 did in October 2001, posting "contact us" messages on Qoqaz.com) (Norton-Taylor 2001), to surveillance and retention of e-mail records (Byrne 2002), to actual closing down of sites. During the course in which this article has been written, the al-Muhajiroun Web site was hacked (allegedly by the United States) and repaired. Al-Muhajiroun and al-Neda sites were among the links available on Taliban Online, but the Links section on Taliban Online later stated that it is Under Construction. The site had also been linked to another titled Beware of Shiaism, which contains anti-Shiite information in English and Urdu. This overtly reveals how the groups seem to use the Internet to fight with one another (as the Taliban belong to the Sunni sect). However, Figure 1 shows how the groups are at the same time indirectly hyperlinked to Hizbollah, a Shiite group, which reveals the contradiction in their appeal.

The Internet is also used by the groups to respond to attacks outside cyberspace. Shareeah's articles are compiled in an online magazine titled *al-Jihaad*. After the raid on the Finsbury Park mosque, and with rumors that the British government is going to close down the Web site (Rant on website 2003), al-Jihaad posted a disclaimer on its first page, stating: "Supporters of Shareeah does not take responsibility for all the content contained in these articles. And neither to claim to agree with all of the content contained in these articles or that it is representative of our views and beliefs." The articles present in al-Jihaad are listed under a "Contributed" section to refer that their writers



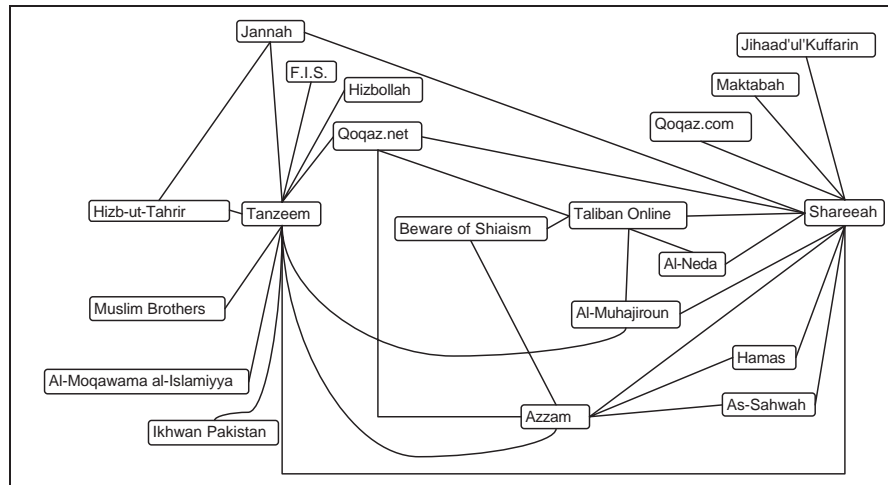


Figure 1. Hyperlinks between Islamic Fundamentalist Web Sites

are not the people behind the Web site, and have titles like “Tyrani [*sic*] in Pakistan,” “Anti Israel Reports,” and “Stupid Bush.” Shareeah was later closed down following the British government’s decision to try to expel Abu Hamza from Britain due to his controversial preaching at Finsbury Park.

The fluid nature of the Internet has also been utilized by the groups to avoid being forced to disappear from cyberspace through hacking. The Web site of Azzam Publications ([www.azzam.com](http://www.azzam.com), a Chechen site linked to Qoqaz.net) has now been closed down (allegedly by the United States), but just before that it published a news posting containing fifteen points informing the site users of what to do after the Web site disappears. The posting urged users to copy material from the Web site and publish it on their own Web sites and through discussion boards and e-mail lists. It also advised them to access the site “via proxies or anonymous services, such as <http://www.safeweb.com> or <http://www.anonymizer.com>.” The posting also encouraged users to utilize the Internet to disseminate information and news about Jihad (Shareeah also encourages visitors to publicize its existence), and informed them that Azzam’s products would be available to buy from Maktabah Al-Ansar Bookshop.

Indeed, Maktabah’s Web site is selling the products (books, audio and video material, posters, as well as items like perfume and clothing), while Azzam Publications News Postings can now be accessed on as-Sahwah. The case of Azzam illustrates the difficulty of controlling content on the Internet and the range of possibilities available for the groups to exist in cyberspace.

The instantaneous nature of the Internet means that the groups can immediately adjust their web presence according to the political climate. Shareeah’s site, for example, contained a link to al-Neda, which disappeared following the

raid on the Finsbury Park mosque. As-Sahwah's "Zakaah Calculator" and the "Click to Give Zakaah" option also disappeared after the raid.

## Implications

The Internet has been celebrated as a place of dialogue, perhaps too optimistically as stated by Nathan Gardels (2000): "As the realm of the global mind grows, it will necessarily enroach on all enclosed spaces—political, national ethnic, linguistic or psychological. Openness and transparency are its bywords; closure of any kind entails the risk of isolation and failure" (p. 2). Ronfeldt and Arquilla (2000) are also prematurely celebratory about the workings of cyberspace when they describe it as a space allowing "peace through knowledge" rather than "peace through strength." They argue for increased freedom of information on the Internet, as that is seen as an essential element toward achieving this peace. Such views neglect other players in the socio-political realm like Islamic fundamentalism—players that are part of the "global mind" but are excluded because of their pathological associations.

However, now attention is being paid to Islamic fundamentalism as a global player that destabilizes the existing political status quo. Toffler and Toffler (2000) describe it as a "global gladiator." They point out that such "new forces, now are linked by the Internet, global telecom nets and other advanced technologies . . . and they come accompanied by . . . fund raisers . . . media manipulators and volunteer computer hackers" (p. 26). The change that forces like Islamic fundamentalism will bring, they argue, is a change in the political representational system, whereby the United Nations will become obsolete as nations are undermined. Thus, the debate seems to center around the idea that Islamic fundamentalism (and Islam in general) is necessarily oppositional to the nation.

But this denies Islamic fundamentalism its role in the building of nations as mentioned earlier in this article, and also undermines the existence of Islamic fundamentalist nations like Iran. Of course, Islamic fundamentalist groups, like the Muslim Brotherhood that has branches in more than seventy countries under different names, are advocating a Pax Islamica. The Internet for these groups provides what Sloterdijk (2000) terms a "portable homeland" (p. 16), a tool that enables the existence of the multispatial self—an ethnospace. Islamic fundamentalism then is a force that is "located within and beyond the borders of the nation-state" (Moallem 1999, 324). Barber (1992) has argued that Islamic fundamentalism is an example of the fragmentation of the nation into smaller groups. He argues that this is in contrast with what he terms *McWorld*, or "an emergent, transnational cultural uniformity" (Grosby 1997, 82). But the situation is more complex than homogeneity/heterogeneity. I see Islamic fun-

damentalism as an example of glocalization, bearing elements of the local and the global in its outlook and operation.

Islamic fundamentalism is not a nativist movement merely “entailing a ‘localist’ character” (Abaza and Stauth 1990, 218). Abaza and Stauth argue that “the Islamic religious ethic is directed toward world domination by means of world conquest” (p. 210). Islamic fundamentalism seems to have exclusively adopted this ethic, and therefore should not be confused with other Islamic movements, such as that of the Nation of Islam in the United States, which is a separatist movement, aiming at isolating the Muslim community from the “existing social order” (Kepel 1997, 54), even though the two movements share certain aspects like “bottom-up Islamization” that offers services to the community to attract common members of society (p. 72). Islamic fundamentalism’s advocacy of jihad is also characteristic of its global nature. In the early days of Islam when jihad in the name of religion was declared, the aim was not only to protect the Islamic umma and to “redraw boundaries” (Barber 1992) but to expand it so that the whole world (if possible) would be Muslim.

The existence of several Islamic fundamentalist groups across the globe adds to the globalism of this network. Some groups are in opposition, such as the Jamaa Islamiyya and the Ahabash in Lebanon; however, the groups themselves do not see a need to unite under one name. Al-Muhajiroun argues that “Allah (SWT) obliges groups to exist in order to maintain unity. Groups are a method of uniting the Muslims rather than dividing them.” I argue that the existence of several groups is necessary for the protection of the transforming Islamic fundamentalist identity and its survival vis-à-vis opposition by global powers like the United States. The existence of several groups in different countries is also necessary to cater for the local issues the groups encounter in the countries they exist in.

Castells sees the Islamic fundamentalist identity as a resistant one and describes it as an expression of “*the exclusion of the excluders by the excluded*” (1997, 9). He sees the Islamic fundamentalist identity as being defensive against the dominant institutions/ideologies. He argues that the world is divided between the “Net and the Self” (1997, 3) where there is an opposition between “abstract universal instrumentalism” (the global) and “historically rooted, particularistic identities” (the local). While he argues that the Net “emerges from interconnected developments in new communication technologies . . . the emergence of mediated ‘real virtuality’” (Saukko 2000), he casts Islamic fundamentalism as local and as resistant to the Net.

This is somewhat similar to arguments on cosmopolitanism and patriotism as oppositional. Martha Nussbaum’s (1994) procosmopolitanism argument in *Boston Review*, which advocates being a “citizen of the world,” has generated various responses from thinkers like Barber (1994) and Dorris (1994),

who argue that this global citizenship is too demanding and overwhelming, and Beitz (1994) and Wallerstein (1994), who say that cosmopolitanism need not reject patriotism but that the two can be sustained together. This article has shown that none of those arguments can be simplistically applied to Islamic fundamentalism. It may have resistant characteristics, but it is not oppositional to global forces. It is neither an example of cosmopolitanism nor of patriotism but articulates a new patriotism that is relational and negotiative within the processes of globalization.

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*Lina Khatib is a lecturer in world cinema at the Royal Holloway, University of London, where she teaches media theory and international cinema. Her research interests include media representations of Middle Eastern politics, Middle Eastern cinemas, and postcolonial theory.*