



International Association for Media and Communication Research
Asociación internacional de estudios en comunicación social
Association internationale des études et recherches sur l'information et la communication

IAMCR 2016

Religion, Communication and Culture Working Group

Abstracts of papers presented at
the annual conference of the
International Association for Media and Communication Research¹
IAMCR

Leicester, UK
27-31 July 2016



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Id: 11971

Title: Bali Rituals and therapeutic Communication in the traditional rural society in Sri Lanka.

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Bali is a form of classical ritual that makes a sound performance of a variety of psychological and physical treatments for many psychiatric and cultural diseases. It is defined as a form of oblation for gods and deities (Kariyawasam,1982). Bali is determined by the ephemeral cycle of one's life, so that the procedures and practices of a specific Bali performances are planned to communicate with the planetary system, which is based on his/her astrology (Sederaman, 1965). Hence, Bali is made to perform with the use of traditional dance, music and local cultural substances. Bali goes back to the early kingdom of Kotte which started in early fifteen century (Dissanayaka,1994). However, it is considered that the origin of Bali resembles with the Indian Hindu religious cults, so that the Sri Lankan Bali tradition has been transformed by the local cultural and Buddhist religious environment. Objective of this research is to explore the content and identify effects of Bali ritual towards modern society.

As the qualitative research, both textual analysis and participatory observation were used to look at the diversity of the objectives and effects of a performance of Bali in the set-up of real rural village in Sri Lanka.

Finally, this study yields following conclusions. Bali is designed to conduct continuously up to fourteen days. It is traditionally performed by the classical exorcist gurus, who have been trained by the word of mouth by their generation. They are used to recite, sing and dance all the forms of communication on their memory and recalling without any script or written text. Many Bali doctors are used to conduct entire performance with number of classical lyrics and poems with mellifluous musical melodies and attractive rhythms of dance and theatrical performances, which are not yet scientifically classified. Further, Bali is determined by the use of significant characteristics of one's astrology, so that the disease or pathetic situation is the fact that decide the specific Bali style. And also as there are nearly eighty- four thousand Bali, which are for numerous physical and psychological illnesses including variety of mental disorders and sexually transmitted diseases. Moreover, as this study found a very rare Ola leaf manuscript, that describes the entire eighty four thousand Balis, which is called Balipatuna in Sinhala (Contents of Bali) from a traditional Bali custodian in Mathala Laheba Bali Tradition in Sri Lanka. On the other, knowledge and practices of the traditional local medical sciences of parturition health in the pregnancy and child birth is also treated by the faculties of Bali schools. And Also, Bali figures are designed, based on the narration of the Bali lyrics, which explains a group of stars forming a recognizable pattern that is traditionally named after its apparent

form or identified with a mythological figure. However, this has been the source for very colorful temple arts and craftsmanship at the Buddhist temples built up during the era of Kandyan kingdom (1469-1815).

Key Terms ; Bali ritual, Therapeutic Communication, Psychological and Physical Treatments, Parturition Health, Sexual Diseases.

Id: 11973

Title: Framing religion in digital culture: religious identity in online Christian memes

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Digital media have attracted attention of several Media and Religion researchers in the last years. However, previous bibliographical research suggests that the phenomenon known as ‘memes’, one of the key elements of online culture, has not been addressed as often as other issues (Martino 2014).

Mememes have been defined by some researchers as a self-replicating idea, expressed mainly as an image that is recreated with an infinite number of minimal variations (Dawkins 2003; Shifman 2010; 2013). Mememes are a major feature in digital culture, but the existence of religious mememes might be not be as natural as it seems. Some of the key features of mememes – a fast, direct message, structured as an recognizable image covered with a few words, spiced with some humour – might not be seen as suitable for the seriousness of the religious message. However, the number of religious mememes on the Internet suggests that this contradiction has been surpassed.

This paper shows the partial results of a study dedicated to outline the notion of religious identity as presented by the mememes. It stresses that, far from being ‘mere entertainment’, mememes, as other discourses on and offline, can be read as an element to define political and social identity (Peck 2014; Bacalu 2014). Every meme bears in itself the cultural marks of its origins (Johnson 2007); religious mememes, in this case, seems to be particularly useful to address questions of cultural identity related to religion.

How is the ‘religious other’ framed in the religious mememes? Who is the ‘other’ presented in the mememes, and how does it identify a reflexive ‘me’? In order to outline some answers, evidence has been gathered from about 300 mememes from three websites (Catholicmememes.com, mememesforjesus.com, and popchurch.com) Each mememe was then categorized accordingly to its position towards the ‘me’ and the ‘other’. The mememes were then labeled accordingly to the questions mentioned above.

The theoretical background used to inform this research is the concept of ‘framing’, as formulated by Goffman (1974) and later developed by Entman (1993), Scheufelle (2004; 2006) and Reese (2007). It has been employed to highlight the hidden assumptions people use to understand any given situation. It argues that the interpretation of a

situation is prior to any deeper knowledge about it: what one 'sees' depends primarily on notions, or 'frames', used by someone.

Evidence found so far suggests the presence of at least three frames in the religious memes: (a) Proselytise: memes stressing the positive or doctrinal elements of Christianity; (b) criticism/self-irony: memes that defies believers to think about their practices; (c) Negative view of religion: atheist or non-religious memes addressing the contradictions of faith. The paper discusses these findings against the background of the wide use of pop and digital culture references by intertwined with religious content as part of the identity process.

Id: 12089

Title: The Use of Religion-based Rhetoric in Anti-liberation Discourse during Bangladesh's Independence Movement

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: In 2015, five bloggers and publishers were killed in Bangladesh, allegedly for being atheists and insulting Islam. The last decade, especially since the beginning of the war crimes trial against the local collaborators in Bangladesh's war of independence, has seen a rise in violent religion-based politics in the country, one of the founding principles of which was secularism. It may be argued that much of this violence is rooted in the liberation war of 1971. While the majority ethnic Bangali population were fighting for political, economic, social and cultural emancipation from their Pakistani rulers, the Pakistani government, military and its auxiliary forces claimed to oppose liberation for the sake of a united Islamic state of Pakistan.

Throughout history, numerous conflicts have had religious underpinnings. People have gone to war to spread their religion as well as to protect it when they believed it to be under attack. Philpott (2007) and Toft (2007) note the steady increase in religious conflicts – from 19 per cent of civil wars in the 1940s to 36 per cent in the 1970s, 39 per cent in the 1980s and 43 per cent in the 1990s. Since 2000, 50 per cent of civil wars have been 'religious'. Religion has played a key role in many contemporary conflicts and, following the attacks on the World Trade Center in the United States on September 11, 2001, the link between violence and religious faith, especially Islam, has come under considerable scrutiny while, in the context of Asia, India was rocked by communal violence in the state of Gujrat in 2002, with the world's largest democracy still struggling with religion-based politics. The conflict in the Middle East is based largely on faith wars, and most recently, with the rise of groups such as ISIS/ISIL, not only has religion-based conflict become more widespread and become a major issue in the global media, but such groups' use of channels of communication, especially new media, has become more significant than ever.

Yet, understanding of the relationship between religion and violence remains incomplete, and the role of communication even less explored. While the channels of communication have grown in variety and form over the decades, the manipulation of religion by groups who use them to serve their cause essentially remains the same. In this context, this study will attempt to analyse how discourse is designed, communication is carried out and the media used to mobilise violence. This paper goes back in history with the aim of exploring the use of religion-based rhetoric during Bangladesh's independence movement in 1971. Through a discourse analysis of media content, specifically, newspaper reports,

editorials, commentaries, features, and poetry published in the Dainik Sangram which was the mouthpiece of the main anti-liberation party, the government-owned Dainik Pakistan and advertisements printed in the West Pakistani daily Dawn, it will give an overview of the use of religious rhetoric in the construction of identities and the nation, and then focus on the instrumentalization of religion in the mobilization of violence.

Id: 12130

Title: Warrior, peacemaker: A study of media depiction of Christian religious actors in Philippine and Kenyan election coverage

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: A growing body of research is pointing to the increasing primacy of media as a source of information about religion, making studies on the journalistic depiction of religious actors increasingly pertinent (Hjavarud 2011). This is especially so in countries like Kenya and the Philippines where religion continues to be central to public life and where previous research has established the key role played by Christian religious actors in democratization processes over the last three decades (Cartagenas 2010; Sabar-Friedman 1997). Yet the nexus of church and media remains largely unexamined.

Our paper is a qualitative investigation of the depiction of churches in the coverage of the 2013 national elections in both countries. We combine the conceptual frameworks of critical discourse analysis as outlined by Fairclough (2013) and Richardson (2007) with journalistic framing analysis. Specifically, we scrutinize the primary power relationships between churches and key electoral actors (politicians, government institutions, voters and civil society) as depicted in a sample of 20 news articles—10 each from the websites of the Daily Nation and Philippine Daily Inquirer, the largest newspapers by circulation in the two countries. We also assess whether the churches are depicted negatively (as obstructive to democracy and the electoral process) or positively (as facilitating democracy and the electoral process).

Our findings contrast significantly between the two countries. In Kenya, Christian religious actors are depicted as peacemakers, maintaining balance in a fragile democracy. Our sample suggests that the churches act through state actors and ultimately defer to the

executive arm when trying to exercise political power. We find that the Philippine churches are portrayed as contenders for political power, willing and able to challenge both government institutions and politicians. Their power is drawn from paternalistic moral authority that allows them to mobilize voters. The nature of their electoral involvement determines the tenor of their portrayal, most critically as threats to democracy, when trying to get their own candidates into Congress.

The differences in the depiction of churches point to the socio-political contexts as well as diversity within the Christian religious community in the two countries. In Kenya, the emphasis on the church as a peacemaker presumably arises out of a legacy of violent elections. In the Philippines, the predominance of the Catholic Church in the religious sphere contributes to its perception as a powerful, sometimes monolithic actor.

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Id: 12197

Title: Interplay of Media and Religion in India

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The media-religion interface occurs at several levels, and can be examined at the individual, social and cultural dimensions of contemporary everyday life inside India. The media is increasingly involved in all the three dimensions, and media messages influence all the domains. As a language, the media moulds religious imagination in accordance with the genres of popular culture. Therefore, the depiction of religion in media is of vital concern as media is the source of what people know about their spirituality, religion, culture and society. On the other hand, religions – both in structured and unstructured forms – are increasingly using media to propagate their message. For example, religious institutions no longer need to send missionaries to proselytize in different countries. A sermon can be uploaded on the internet with one click. The phenomenon has been referred to as ‘trans- nationalization’ of religion. There is no disputing the fact that if any institution wishes to thrive in the present day, it must exist in the media ecosystem. How media portray religion and how religions use media for propagation of their messages becomes a vital question particularly in the context of multi-cultural and multi-ethnic societies. In this age of internet, millions of people are hooked to the net for spiritual reasons. Then, there is television and radio with ubiquitous discourses on religion and spirituality. The advancement in technologies has made the circulation and proliferation of messages of various religions much easier than before. Claiming to be secular itself, media often tends to adopt a patronizing attitude towards religion. It has often been criticized for displaying a bias against the people of faith, who are looked on with suspicion and accused of being intolerant and non-understanding of differences. From sex scandals to corruption in the temples and clergy, media has relished in exposing the flaws of holy men and affairs. Recently a massive intolerance debate raged in the country which was rooted in publication against religion. In India, religion has made deep inroads into the political discourse. The ‘Hinduvta’ versus “secularism” debate is often played out in election campaigns. This paper attempts to look at the media - religion interface in the political discourse in India, and examine the role of media in mediating these messages, and to what effect.

Id: 12232

Title: Cultural Response to Digital Media in Multi-Religious Indian Civilization: A Comparative Analysis

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: In multi-religious Indian civilization, among three modes of religious preaching and knowledge transmission "oral and observational mode" or Laukik Vidya has been considered most acceptable, popular and prevalent means of imbibing Sanatan Dharma (Hindu religion) and to inculcate religious values. In a long and meandering over five thousand years old Sanatan Dharma history, oral, live and visual expressions of act are well accepted and practiced by way of two way exchange of ideas and religious debates. It is aided by live performances of mythological episodes of gods/goddess in their worldly acts on earth as Avatar (birth on earth). It is rooted in a very strong belief of reincarnation and rebirth of Atma (soul). On the other hand, both among Christian and Muslim, the concept of reincarnation and rebirth of soul is absent though oral tradition of religious preaching is practiced.

The ubiquity of digital media have all pervasive and visible influences in the multi-religious setting of modern India. Digital media has accentuated and enlarged the scope and method of religious practices.

The paper analyses digital media influences among Christian, Hindu and Muslim adults above 18 years of age with the help of 'theory of self expression' in a comparative perspective. For this purpose a survey was conducted among 711 smart phone and television users during March-April 2015 in the City of Ahmedabad, India which belongs to three major religions apart from others (Christian 211, Hindu 300 and Muslim 200) of both sexes. Analysis supported the view that self expression was highest among Hindu as compared to Christian and Muslim due to their predisposed notion of reincarnation of soul or lack of such notion and oral and observational mode of religious learning and practices. Analysis showed that by and large around 80 percent respondents regardless of religion used digital media for entertainment. However, only 13.5 percent Hindu watched religious television as compared to 52.0 percent Christian and 46.9 percent Muslim though all of them have had access to religious telecast. The reason could be differences in distinct religious doctrines and philosophical beliefs in three religions and opportunities sanctioned to have religious self expression.

Id: 12233

Title: "Digital Media , Culture and Religious Communication in Changing Asia'

Session Type: Panel Submission

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In changing Asia, oral communication of religion within a given cultural context has played an important role for the continuity and propagation for more than two millennia. After the proliferation of satellite television and digital media Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Jainism, Judaism, Islam, Sikhism and Zoroastrian to mention a few have adopted one form or other digital media. Digital media is being used for preaching and propagating religious philosophy, theology and core values. Digital media has given new ways of understanding of religion, opportunity for individualized religious debates, religious discussions, and new interpretations of religion. Religious ideology and world view, in few cases, have hindered and restricted the use of digital media for religious preaching. What does this mean to a given culture, digital media and religious communication? How do religious leaders perceive their relationships with digital media and politically motivated approaches of religious communication? How religious ideas are being expressed or suppressed in such situations? Are there built in structural auto mechanism and process in the culture that determine, influence or even maintain religion from the onslaught of digital media? How does digital media content influence and affect the life of believers?

The main theme of the proposed session will be to try to answer some of the questions raised by selected Asian media and communication researchers and experts of various religions who are involved in media studies. Also the panel members will attempt to answer and analyze: How digital media have influenced intercultural communication within and between multi-lingual religions of Asia.

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Id: 12349

Title: Panel: Culture, religious communication and media in a changing Asia

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: Paper title: Keeping and contesting faith: the liberating ambiguities of women's online conversations about religion

Traditionally, religious discourse has been confined to a male dominated public sphere, with women's voices relegated to the margins or confined within domestic spaces. The availability of dialogic and participatory spaces online—blogs, social networks, discussion forums, chatrooms—has made it possible for more women to enter into and engage with a larger conversation on religion. Women's blogs and their presence on social media has been the subject of research, some of which has pointed to the alternative politics that are made possible by the nature of online participation. Online spaces are said to offer anonymity and refuge from what is often an oppressive and limiting offline life, encouraging the articulation of forbidden questions and the exploration of ideas from what are thought to be exclusive realms. While there are several popular and critically acclaimed blogs by feminists who locate themselves within the Islamic or Christian faiths, there are few self-proclaimed Hindu feminists in the blogosphere, although several Indian women bloggers from the country and its diaspora do refer to ritual or religious practice in their discussions of their everyday lives, but often in a decidedly (or self-consciously) cultural, sometimes spiritual, rather than religious vocabulary. This needs to be read against the very visible politicization and radicalization of Hinduism (or "Hindutva") that has alienated liberal and moderate voices from within the broad outlines of the faith. There is a growing body of work, and by extension, a large community, of feminist scholars and activists who practice a religion and engage deeply with matters of faith, and in their doing so, bring a new sensibility into the discourse around their particular religion. This paper explores the ways in which religion, the politics of the everyday, and feminist ideas intersect in a selection of Indian women's blogs from across religious backgrounds. We seek to argue that the porous borders of the blogosphere allow women to express and sometimes resolve the conflicting demands of their roles as homemakers and holders and transmitters of family/community tradition with their feminist beliefs and resisting impulses against patriarchal mores. We also

explore the role of religion and faith as mediators/moderators in the online lives of these women bloggers.

Id: 12376

Title: Contribution of religion to media ethics. An approach to user's media ethics from the side of Catholic Social Teaching

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: With their concrete actions, media users directly contribute to achieving the objectives of freedom, quality and responsibility that society expects from media and content services. Media consumption must be viewed as a social practice that involves moral choices and decisions (Hamelink, 1995). If so, the most important question to be asked is which criteria can be proposed to guide the moral choices made by users. Couldry (2010) comes to the ethics of virtues to try to build an ethical framework inclusive for all citizens, whether they act as producers or consumers or if they indistinctly adopt both roles. The central question to be raised from this approach is how should we act in relation to media and communication so that media processes contribute to the achievement of lives, both individually and collectively, worthwhile of be lived. The answers that have been given to this question are very limited and do not go beyond isolated proposals. There are no formal codes of conduct for media users and consumers similar to those that exist for journalists and media professionals or those adopted by some media. In this context, the Social Doctrine of the Church (SDC) contains elements that can guide and inspire possible action of individuals and groups in the field of media and communication services and which can be summarized in three main principles: discernment, selection and participation. While the first two principles are focused on individuals as users and consumers of media and content, the principle of participation stands for citizens involvement in the promotion and prosecution of media's contribution to the common good.

This paper analyzes the content of these three principles as they can be traced in the texts of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church, and draws conclusions concerning media policies and regulation.

Id: 12466

Title: Social Media Use and the Catholic Church: Fostering Positive Relationships amidst "the Smell of the Sheep"

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: This study represents one of the first forays into how the American Catholic Church is using social media for the organizational purposes. Through the lens of Jenkins's (2006) theory of convergence culture and the public relations strategies surrounding relationship maintenance (Ledingham and Bruning, 1998), this study examines how lay Catholics and members of Church hierarchy within a Diocese in the Midwestern region of the United States use social media space for relationship maintenance. The findings suggest that there is desire for connectivity among lay Catholics and parish priests and that social media space does provide a great avenue to foster these connections. However, there is an overwhelming sense that the connections are very slow to be made at this time because of generational differences in the ages of priests and their parishioners. Nevertheless, the study suggests that there is positive momentum in this endeavor.

In light of the Social Age (Azua, 2010), religious institutions, and most notably the Catholic Church, have been making efforts to use social media to harness the faith of their flock. Through a mixed method approach, this study found that lay Catholics and priests surveyed and later interviewed do report that social media spaces can provide a platform for religious expression and growth. Those who engage in these spaces report experiencing several dimensions of relationship maintenance that Ledingham and Bruning (1998) outline as positive public relations practices, including increased investment, trust, interdependence/power imbalance, shared technology, structural bonds, and social bonds. These experienced dimensions of relationship maintenance among church-goers and their pastors suggest that using social media can be another way to foster positive relationships with one another. In short, this study suggests that using social media could fulfill, for priests especially, Pope Francis's suggestion that they be "shepherds living with the smell of the sheep."

Finally, this study also proposes that the Church's willingness to embrace this kind connectivity between Her own priests and parishioners is one of the first steps that can be taken toward more positive interreligious and ecumenical discussions which are a necessary component to the rapidly changing religiocultural landscape of the world today.

Id: 12678

Title: Bringing out the memory of the sacred through grotesque transparency

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Theoretical premises: In this paper we will discuss the return of the sacred - and the profane as its opposite and complementary category-, to the public sphere of the so-called secularized western societies through the grotesque transparency strategy. This strategy is defined as the disclosure mechanism used by different public and private organizations focused on the display of the “realistically” visually disturbing, out of norm or “realistically grotesque” (Bakhtin, 1984), in order to achieve an objective. By defying norms and conventions, the grotesque transparency raises the question of the limits of the representable. What can be shown? Everything should be disclosed to achieve the well being of people, prevent a disease or make the public aware of a risk? The tension between what should be visible vs. what should remain invisible (Rancière, 2007) can also be seen as a contradiction of the sacred vs. the profane (Eliade, 1957/2013). The sacred is the dimension that should remain separated, distant or inaccessible; the profane represents the sensible that is accessible to the eyes or even touchable (Tessier & Prades, 1991). Case study: We will analyze three cases representing different forms of grotesque transparency in order to illustrate how the memory of the sacred reemerges in the secularized public sphere: Isis radical Islamist propaganda, Health Canada campaign for tobacco control policy, and corporate social marketing to promote anorexia awareness. These cases show, with different levels of legitimacy and ethical considerations, that the grotesque transparency has two contradictory consequences: by disclosing shocking images (all of them associated with death), the organizations are making the sacred visible to the public. But by doing so, the organizations are “desecrating” them. Discussion: We will discuss how the transparent performance rearranges the communication space because it shortened the distance or even obliterated the distance between the public and those “sacred spaces” that were not visible to them. The disclosure of the “horrible truth” – following in some way the same disclosing narrative mechanism of horror films (Carroll, 1990/ 2004) - these organizations, with different levels of legitimacy, are entering into the realm of the profane. We will also identify the stated motivations behind such “profanation” mechanism, and analyze the practical and moral implications of such strategy. In that regard, sometimes openly as in the case of radical Islamists, sometimes implicitly as in public health campaigns, the grotesque transparency brings back the “obscurity” of the religious (Girard, 1972/2010). Finally, we will consider how digital networks, where images are produced, diffused and consumed in millions, shape public discourses where the “realistically grotesque” blurs

the frontiers between the “real” and the “imaginary” (Safranski, 1999).

Id: 12789

Title: Cultural reproduction and storytelling in the United Arab Emirates: The Case of Freej

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Stories are an integral part of human history and culture, narratives that carry myths, beliefs, and traditions, glory of the past and hope for the future. Over time, stories reproduce different aspects of the culture and reinforce our cultural self-esteem. The Arab world has given the world many popular folk stories, including Aladdin's Wonderful Lamp, Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves, and The Seven Voyages of Sinbad the Sailor. Characters such as Nasrudeen, Ali Baba, and Sindbad, who lived in Arabia many centuries back, remain immortal.

Over the years, the Arab tradition of storytelling started to lose relevance as lifestyles changed and exposure to external media content increased. Few new characters or stories appeared from the region for a long time. In recent years, a new story that has emerged from the region is 'Freej' from the United Arab Emirates. The highly popular series highlights a well-orchestrated attempt at storytelling, which revives the feeling of nostalgia and folklore. The series Freej was conceptualized to create characters to be the role models for the Emiratis by representing their cultural values and traditional lifestyle. It celebrates Emirati cultural traditions through a series with four characters in present day Dubai; they share their conflicts in a changing world, symbolic of the ongoing clash between tradition and change, especially with Dubai's unusual growth in a short span of time.

Academic research on this subject holds the potential to explore the circumstances and needs that led to the creation of the Freej series. We aim to study key values of cultural

narratives being reproduced, with specific conversations amongst the characters. As the story content of Freej utilizes contextually and culturally relevant interactions amongst characters, we aim to apply Conversation Analysis to analyse conversations amongst the characters in order to understand which dominant Emirati cultural values are part of larger cultural narratives and how they have been reproduced through trans-media story like Freej. As issues of narration and articulation are part of all storytelling, we also intend to study key narrative questions, as well as the forces that characters overcome in the series.

Id: 12811

Title: Commemoration and Cultural Memory: Perceptions of Christian Signifiers

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Culture and memory intersect on both individual and collective levels, particularly in relation to our understanding of the past. Shared cultural agreement on the meaning of images and symbols used in visual forms of commemoration informs our responses, but this is mediated through many filters, such as individual and family experiences, cultural background and historical knowledge. Narrative commemoration expressed in a purely visual form can particularly create a 'plural text' (Barthes 1974) in which a multitude of codes are mobilised, generating divergent readings from viewers. From a limited range of visual signifiers many signified meanings can be generated in addition to those intended by the creator/author.

This paper explores the concept of collective cultural memory in relation to Christian images and symbols within a visual narrative of conscientious objection in WW1 (created as a series of textile panels). Perceptions of praying hands, the cross, Fleur de Lys and crossed keys are examined as signifiers of faith, providing evidence of both shared understanding and individual variance in the iconic and symbolic meanings of these signifiers to viewers. Associated images, such as the white feather as a symbol of conscientious objection, are also discussed. The work was displayed without a title or content description in galleries and museums, a banking headquarters and a church. Over 450 responses on the meaning of the narrative and the images within it were collected in the study.

Id: 13085

Title: Framing Pope Francis: A Study of Media Framing Between Argentina and the United States

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Since the inception of his Papacy, Pope Francis, the 226th Pope, has been framed differently from his predecessors Pope Benedict XVI and Pope John Paul II by the global media. As a Jesuit Pope from the global south, the Pope has focused on social justice issues and has been constructed as the “Pope of Change” charting a new course for the Vatican and the Catholic Church. The central question that this paper seeks to address is: how was Pope Francis portrayed in the Argentinian media compared to the United States media during his recent official papal visit to the United States? The study presents a content analysis of The Buenos Aires Herald, the Clarín, and La Nación, from Argentina and the New York Times, CNN and Fox News from the United States. It analyzes the portrayal of the pontificate throughout the month of September 2015 during the Pope Francis’s visit to the United States. The study examines the nature of coverage in terms of ideological bias, tone, national context and geographic proximity in framing Pope Francis by examining the similarities as well as differences in the portrayal of Pope Francis by the media in Argentina and the United States. While Pope Francis received mostly positive coverage during his six-day visit in America, there were some differences between the two countries’ coverage. Overall, Pope Francis was framed as “The People’s Pope,” and his views were framed as modern and progressive, nudging the Catholic Church and the rest of the religious world into a new and positive direction. The Argentinian news sources had an overwhelmingly positive representation of the Pope and his visit. On the other hand, in United States, while the coverage was relatively positive, all the news outlets criticized various aspects of the Catholic Church, the papacy at large, as well as specifically Pope Francis and aspects of his visit to the United States. The findings from this study hopes to shed light on the nature of media in framing critique and consensus in the construction of global icons and the significance of religious leaders as global actors as part of the dialectics of globalization

Id: 13120

Title: Israeli Rabbis and Mass Media: Between Theology and Practice

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: This paper attempts to throw light on attitudes of rabbis to mass media and to journalists, and seeks to evaluate whether rabbis today reflect traditional Jewish views on mass media. It examines through a survey of 300 rabbis in Israel carried out by the author whether ancient teachings in Jewish sources about mass media are reflected in rabbis' attitudes today. Despite the strictures in Jewish religious law (halakhah) about social gossip (loshon hara), the survey found that rabbis were not deterred from agreeing with the principle of the right to know - which has such a fundamental place in contemporary Western society. And yet rabbis, in particular Haredi rabbis, but also modern Orthodox rabbis, did not give carte blanche approval to it but did so in a limited way. Moreover, despite the important place which the freedom of the media principle enjoys in Western culture, rabbis gave it a slightly lower rating than the cardinal question of the right to know - an allusion to rabbis' dissatisfaction with the state of the media. It did not stop Orthodox rabbis, and, albeit lesser so, non-Orthodox (Conservative & Reform) rabbis from expressing acute concern at the influence they believe the media has on the standing of religion and religious values in contemporary society.

Id: 13181

Title: Comparing religions in secular state: A search for common grounds or justifications for differences

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The India with its secular constitution is the biggest democracy in the world. The followers of almost every religion live in India. In Indian society the religion is a private and personal matter. But, India is also a country where Hindu Muslim riots outbreak from time to time and not only bring in human tragedies but people have to bear the financial losses too. In such a society the importance of TV programs which focus on the topics of comparative religions increase manifolds. Dr Zakir Naik has established himself as a scholar of comparative religion in India and other Muslim countries. Dr Zakir Naik's programs are usually recorded in India and telecasted on Peace TV India and his program "Truth Exposed" is one of the popular programs of this TV channel. He is also a popular and most watched scholar on comparative religions in Muslim community of India. Given this backdrop, this study intends to investigate two hypotheses. First the program "Truth Exposed" focuses more on finding justifications for differences; and second the program "Truth Exposed" focuses more on differences than common attributes of religions".

The content analysis will be used as a methodology and the episodes of "Truth Exposed" which were telecasted on Peace TV India in the last quarter of 2015 will constitute the universe of this study.

Key words: Islam, Hinduism, justification, differences, common attributes

Id: 13216

Title: Tibetan and the 14th Dalai Lama's images on Western and Chinese social media

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: With China's rising status and the increasing of media exposures on Tibet issues, Tibetan and the 14th Dalai Lama's images studies have become a hot research topic in communication studies. China is the most-frequently studied nation in Asian mass communication research. The past Tibetan and the 14th Dalai Lama's images studies mainly focus on Western mainstream newspapers, due to the fact that these newspapers are well established and frequently read by policy-makers and other influential individuals. If we say the image of Tibet and 14th Dalai Lama as represented by Western mainstream media is 'hegemonic', to borrow a term from Gramsci (1971), can Western social media offer a 'counterhegemonic' image of them? Do social media publish information of Tibet or 14th Dalai Lama generally not seen in the mainstream media, from a perspective generally not accepted within the mainstream press, and in a way generally not found in mainstream content? With this as a foundation, the current study aims to explore how Tibetan and the 14th Dalai Lama's images are constructed by Western social media. The components that contribute to 'image' can be classified as political, economic, cultural, social images, etc. by their association to the accompanying news content. Therefore, this study will analyze Tibetan and the 14th Dalai Lama's images (as represented in Western social media) along the dimensions of the news items' political, economic, cultural, social, technological and religious contents.

The research aims to address the following main research questions:

First, what are Tibetan and the 14th Dalai Lama's images as they are represented via Western social media? What sorts of their content (images, video, news and so on) are reproduced via Western social media?

Second, do Western social media present images of Tibet or the 14th Dalai Lama that are different or 'counter-hegemoni' from that presented by the mainstream news media? Do Western social media publish Tibetan or the 14th Dalai Lama's different contents, from a different perspective, or in a different way from that of the standard Western mainstream news outlets? What are differences between images of Tibet and 14th Dalai Lama on Western and Chinese social media when discussing the same event or topic?

Third, what are the sources of Tibetan and 14th Dalai Lama's contents that are reproduced via Western social media? Who is generating these contents? Does the content originate from China's news outlets or from the traditional Western mainstream media and its news workers?

Id: 13276

Title: Looking back, looking forward: British Muslim media 15 years after 9/11

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Muslim media began to take shape in the UK around 1989 at about the same time that a more pronounced British Muslim identity was beginning to be articulated. Editors had identified several issues of interest to Muslim communities that mainstream media were not covering sufficiently. This emerging source of news and information offered a platform for discussion and alternative readings to current debates that Muslim communities applauded. The events of September 2001 and July 2005 inevitably had an impact on Muslim media and both established readers and new audiences viewed them as an initial reference point and a means through which Muslims could express their views.

Numerous studies have looked at the representations of Islam and Muslims in the media since 9/11, with most concluding that anti-Islamic and anti-Muslim rhetoric is clearly evident in the media. However, this paper focuses on the Muslim media itself and examines how discourses have changed over time, reflecting the geopolitical climate and the concerns of Muslim communities, mainly in the UK but also elsewhere.

The study examines the coverage of news and issues in selected British Muslim publications before and after 2001 and reflects on changes and developments that have taken place. The data consists of content and discourse analyses of the publications and supplements these with interview material from editors. It also examines the role Muslim media is playing in countering the predominantly negative representations of issues involving Muslims and Islam and helping Muslims develop a deeper understanding of their faith.

A critical aspect of media is its immediacy and relevance to current issues. However, historical context and future possibilities cannot be ignored when analysing the purpose and objectives of Muslim media in Britain. It is this 'looking back and looking forward' that enables us to understand the key role it plays in engaging audiences with issues of increasing relevance to society. British Muslim media has made considerable progress in providing the public with different perspectives on local and global events and looking forward it will continue to occupy an important position in the religious media landscape and provide a possible bridge between different communities.

This paper is both an examination of the developments that have taken place in media

discourses but also a brief personal reflection on how being a Muslim has changed since I completed my PhD fieldwork at Leicester University more than 15 years ago. Young Muslims at that time were generally positive about being both British and Muslim. The world has changed considerably since then, particularly if it is gauged through media coverage of events relating to Islam and Muslims. Thus, this paper presents findings of an empirical study as well as reflections on the past and thoughts for the future.

Id: 13343

Title: THE ART AND BUSINESS OF STORY TELLING IN THE MEDIA CONVERGENCE AGE+-+/-

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Stories in every culture across the world have remained an integral part of life. A story was born the day man was born on this earth. The stories in this world – imaginary or real – have been revolving around characters, plots, settings, conflicts and themes. The tales of human caravans have been captivating, enthralling, bewitching, entertaining, educating and instilling moral values since ages. The mesmerising lullabies sung by the mothers to their children, the gripping stories told by the grandparents to their grandchildren and the scintillating narratives that came to us through our folklores became our lifetime memories. Each one of us got amused by the fantasies entwined around sun, moon, clouds, rivers, mountains, fairies, monsters, heroes, warriors, kings, kingdoms, queens, voyages, souls good and bad, deities, gods and goddess and so on heard at various stages of life especially childhood.

With the changing times the art and science of storytelling has been evolving more as art and business. Today, in the media convergence age we are abound with stories coming to us through all means of communication. Media itself is nothing but a storytelling business. Everyone is in a race to master new technologies. Media has been opening new vistas everyday. Sociology of storytelling is of profound importance in the media convergence days. This survey based study revolves around nearly two hundred adolescents in the age group of 13-19 to find out how do they find themselves in the realm of stories. Indian homes throw a peculiar light on how do the children grow up in those homes where the elders grew listening to Ramayana and Mahabharata. Religion specific stories told to children in culture pluralistic societies like India have been intriguing the sociologists, anthropologists and educationists alike to undertake cultural studies in order to understand cultural relativism.

The present years on the contrary have witnessed the transformation as never before due to fast changing media technologies. 'Network or no network'- this is what exactly has been making difference to our lives. Either there is faster connectivity or no connectivity at all. We are living in many paradoxical situations today. We are actively socializing through social media but still not socializing in real situations. Our children exist in a virtual world which is a world away from the real world. Living in two world simultaneously is itself a challenge.

Id: 13516

Title: The British Broadsheet Press and the Representation of Mosque in post-7/7 Britain:

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The role of the mosque has become increasingly vital, particularly in contemporary societies such as Britain, where both the place and status of religion in public life is constantly discussed and debated. This study argues that in the contemporary period of our history, the role of the mosque has several dimensions, ranging from a social space, educational and cultural exchange and community cohesion centre to a knowledge hub. In the context of historical developments, this paper suggests that a mosque should be understood and seen as an independent institution that is inherently free of any influence by governments, elites, social and political groups or individual preferences. Using a thematic analysis of items in The Guardian and The Telegraph over a period of two years (8 July 2005-7 July 2007), it finds that in the aftermath of 7/7 the mosque as a religious place and an institution for British Muslims is largely seen as incompatible and a threat to secular British society and that it is linked with radicalisation and terrorism.

According to Quranic text and revelations, it is indeed a fact that mosques are open to all. This is logical since God's mercy, love and forgiveness are for all of mankind without any distinction, which is perhaps why the mosque has been the sacred house of God Himself. The aim of this paper is to reveal the development of visible hostility in some sections of the British media and political campaigns. It also intends to trace the determination and idea of the mosque as a religious place and an institution for British Muslims. Finally, this paper will discuss the role of the mosque in promoting community cohesion and mutual understanding between among Muslims of other communities.

Key Words:

Mosque, Media, Social Space, Community Cohesion

Id: 13667

Title: Reinforcing dominant representations of laïcité and Frenchness: Investigating the use of memories in newspaper articles

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The notion of laïcité (i.e. the separation of Churches and State in France) has been increasingly depicted as a "French exception" since the 1990s. Media, political and popular discourses typically convey representations of laïcité as a pillar of French society. The far-right party (Front National) in particular has linked laïcité to the themes of nation, identity and community. The representation of laïcité as an intrinsic French feature raises questions regarding processes used to construct – and maintain – this association as seemingly natural and unproblematic.

This paper explores strategies supporting the prevalent association of laïcité and France by examining discourses of laïcité from the national newspaper *Le Monde*. As a significant actor in constructing national narratives, media discourse provides relevant data to explore which national representations are selected and for which purposes (Anderson, 1991; Durham & Kellner, 2009). Specifically, this study pays attention to memories as a significant ingredient of national storytelling conveyed in the media (Hoskins 2001, Meyers, Zandberg et al. 2009) by exploring which memories are made relevant in discourses of laïcité.

Data consists of articles (N=59) about laïcité and relevant to the notion of “memory”. All articles were published in the leading French national newspaper *Le Monde* between January 2011 and December 2014. This time frame made it possible to cast light on recent discourses of laïcité following the widely studied and polemical 2003-2005 period and preceding the year 2015 marked by terrorist attacks in France. Data was analyzed using Qualitative Content Analysis and aspects of a Foucaultian approach to discourse.

Results indicate ways in which memories can be used to stabilize meanings and legitimate the object of which they talk, namely laïcité. Memories conjured up in data are mostly historical landmarks. This study argues that the use of such imagined memories tends to (i) reinforce the symbolic status of laïcité and (ii) reinforce the “objectivity” of the narrative in which laïcité is embedded. Results also suggest that distant memories are used to uncover and brandish the essence of laïcité. This study discusses implications of the association between imagined memories, imagined community and the search for the essence of laïcité. Findings suggest that pinpointing the essence of laïcité through

memories is also used to pinpoint the essence of Frenchness by highlighting the key values and events that define the national imagined community.

Findings from this study find a significant echo in last year's events in France when laïcité was put to the forefront and waved as the solution to construct a united nation following the attacks in Paris in January 2015. Findings also have implications as regards Le Monde which is often regarded as a quality newspaper that endeavors to set the agenda in the public debate (Le, 2010). Findings suggest that on a topic like laïcité, and during the studied time period, the newspaper's use of memories supported dominant views of laïcité and Frenchness by relying on status quo representations.

Id: 13669

Title: Framing the Sacred and the Profane: Russian Media Coverage of Pope-Patriarch Meeting in Cuba

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The Sacred and the Profane are closely related because of the highly emotional attitude towards them. As Durkheim pointed out, the distinction between the two cannot be determined then once and for all, it varies according to different religions and cultures.

Durkheim defined religion as a "unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden." (Durkheim 1915, 47) His Sacred–Profane dichotomy - widely recognized, criticized and developed - has two contextual challenges in post-communist societies: the enforced atheization during the Communist time and, after it, religious revival in the context of secularization.

The dynamic interplay between sacred and profane during social turbulence led to the sacralization of the profane (Communist rituals) on one side and to the profanation of the sacred (reconstruction of Churches into dancing halls, burning icons). Some profane objects and social practices have been sacralized, some traditional religious ceremonies and sacred objects have been profanized.

The last two decades became a time for continuous sacred-profane remapping in post-communist countries.

The historical meeting of Pope Francis and Patriarch Kirill on 12 February 2016 (some journalists in Russia called it "the meeting of the Millenium") from the very first announcement was not described as a doctrinal discussion on sacred things - its agenda was mostly focused on social and political issues (to stop conflicts, to prevent injustice and poverty etc).

After two hours of conversation the Pope and the Patriarch signed the "Joint Declaration" - a very important document for understanding of Christian leaders' perception of the world, which has evident invocations towards the Sacred ("We give thanks to God, glorified in the Trinity, for this meeting, the first in history", "...let us with hope turn to the Most Holy Mother of God" etc). At the same time the Pope and the Patriarch stated that they met "to discuss the mutual relations between the Churches, the crucial problems of our faithful, and the outlook for the progress of human civilization".

The proposed paper will examine how Russian mainstream media frame the "Joint Declaration" in a wider context of the historical meeting: what subjects are overexposed and what subjects are underexposed, what is stressed and what is ignored, what is covered correctly and what is misinterpreted. The research will be based on the content

analysis and trace-study methodology.

Id: 13773

Title: Algorithmic Absolution: The Case of Catholic Confessional Apps

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: When ‘Confession: A Roman Catholic App’ was first launched in 2011 it elicited a mixture of sarcasm and sneering. Marketed as an ‘aid for every penitent... [through] a personalised examination of conscience’, the user is invited to confess and declare contrition, where after their smartphone screen confirms the receipt of absolution, displays a prayer for further reflection and imparts advice for a devout life in accordance with the ten commandments. Despite being derided as inauthentic, the App remains popular across a growing number of platforms and similar applications have proliferated with the same formula of sorrow, confession, absolution and penance followed in the traditional rites. These Apps sit within a larger body of confessional platforms whereby users admit to moral deviations with varying degrees of publicity and anonymity. The act of confession is essentially a ritualised demarcation of the self (and how that is publicly performed), and it is striking that such platforms should prove so popular. They invoke us to question why confession remains such a persistent form when formal religious practice is retreating and Western society is increasingly secular. This article is concerned with understanding how the use of confessional Apps constitutes part of an increasingly diverse range of religious practices that often fall outside traditional thinking. In terms of the confessional, I ask what role Apps play in locating the self in the ethical spectrum. More broadly, the article asks how they are felt to be authentic, and how we should conceptualise them when an algorithm imparts absolution: when penance is assigned by computational code. This study follows an increasing body of literature that questions the impact of digital media on traditional religious activity (see Campbell 2012, Helland 2013, Lynch 2012), and my own work on online rituals (Scott 2015). These rituals combine grounded human practices with new forms of cultural appropriations, representing hybrid spaces of human practice fused with technology that reconfigure time, space and participation. Confession - like all ritual - is dependent on the perception of authenticity, and if users report these practices as authentic then we must take them to be. We need to move beyond questioning the legitimacy of hybrid digital rituals and instead question their role in personal religious practice and interrogate the implications of having a computational agent within such a moral custom. This approach is in opposition to Hjarvard’s (2010) influential paper on the mediatization of religion, which argues bluntly that religion is being subsumed by the logics of media in terms of regulation, symbolic content and individual practice (2011). Instead, I argue that these are not substitutions but rather adaptations and renegotiations: of traditions, authenticity,

authority and meaning. In this article I set out an argument for approaching the confessional app as part of a wider realigning between the Catholic Church and its congregation as they negotiate a shared sense of the sacred across apparently conflicting conceptions of authenticity, authority and legitimacy.

Id: 13846

Title: Religious and spiritual foundations of youngsters' self-identification in social media: a case of Russia

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Self-identification of modern Internet users is becoming acute topic of research in Russia while Internet penetration is growing, media activity of young people is high and methodology is diversified.

Proposed paper is based of the results of empirical study dedicated to self-identification of social media audience in Russian segment of Internet (Runet), in particular – Instagram social network. In terms of users' age the major audience of social media is represented by people 18-34 years old. According to statistics, women younger 35 form the most active part of Instagram users. This network allows the youngsters community to present their identity in more complex way using different sign systems and semantic fields.

Sample of the study includes the massive of 380 texts (7500 statements) marked by hashtag #20factsaboutmyself. That gives the reason to analyze the form, the structure, and typological specifics of youngsters' identification in new information and communication space. Methodology of the study was based on the one hand on sociological approach implying multidimensional analysis of texts, on the other hand it implemented structural and functionalist (E. Durkheim), social-psychological (M. Scherbakov) approaches taking into consideration several levels of self-identification – family and clan, national and territorial, evolutionary-specific, gender identification, religious and ideological spiritual levels.

Paper examines the phenomenon of self-identity in its religious and spiritual aspects. The religious belief itself is reflected to certain extend in analyzed texts – in the majority of cases users can ascertain, but do not discuss the question of belief. Almost the same happens with the religious denominations as the way of self-definition. Firstly, the reflection about obtained results let to note that the belief appears in narratives related to spiritual growth of young people. Secondly, we may assume that Internet publicity complicates personal identification through its religious and spiritual element but at the same facilitates other segments of private and taboo segments of consciousness. Thirdly, the spiritual foundations of youngsters' identification make diversity in the portrait of personality. The users explain their relations with God in all available ways and – what seems important – write almost nothing about the Church or any institutionalized form of belief. Finally, it is possible to suggest that complex methodological approach would be successful in the study of above mentioned aspects of self-identity.

Id: 13931

Title: The varied intersections of popular music and religion: The case of the West Memphis three

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: This paper joins neo-Durkheimian concepts, such as “collective effervescence,” the sacred, ritual, and the power of social performance, with the evolving framework of moral panic, in order to better grasp the ambivalent, or “double-edged,” nature of popular music fandom, as well as its imbrication with changing notions of sacrality in the late modern United States of America. This paper takes the events following the 1993 murder of three second-graders in West Memphis, AK, which resulted in the wrongful conviction of teenagers now known as the “West Memphis Three,” as well as the subsequent post-conviction efforts championed by numerous popular musicians as its case study. After a brief description of the May 1993 events, the paper summarizes evolving “moral panic” scholarship, with an eye toward those aspects that prove useful in contextualizing the episode of satanic panic in West Memphis:

1. The paper first demonstrates the ways in which local news coverage drew together categories of popular music and religious affiliation so as to “other” heavy metal fandom as both pathological and Satanic. Such local coverage was pegged to classic “moral panic” tropes, reified various Fundamentalist Christian community norms, and adversely affected the courtroom proceedings, as revealed in both voir dire records and allegations of juror misconduct;
2. Second, the paper demonstrates the way in which prosecutors mined both heavy metal fandom and its subcultural commodities in order to suggest a motive at trial; their instrumentalism in doing so relied upon stubbornly literal interpretations of aesthetic items and cast them as the “signification spirals” evident in moral panic theory;
3. Third, the documentary *Paradise Lost: The Child Murders at Robin Hood Hills* (1996) re-presented the popular music of Metallica onscreen so as to emphasize before a broader geographical media the types of claims popular music cannot substantiate, as well as to demonstrate the types of flourishing that it can engender. The onscreen use of popular music by Metallica, a band notoriously careful of infringements upon its trademark and copyrights, comprised an element of subcultural capital, that helped to encourage the involvement of multiple popular musicians as well as establish a mediated community who agitated for post-conviction efforts;

4. Popular musicians of multiple genres enacted a series of extra-legal counter-performances, foreclosing upon errant motivational claims of Satanism and remanding the argument to the secular-sacred terms of “justice.” Their actions demonstrated communicative power, aptly manipulating performance ritual in order to prise open a space whereby popular music could maintain attention and generate capital to further rational jurisprudence, thus revealing the constrained power of popular music in effecting social justice.

Each stage relates distinctively to the concept of “moral panic,” and each stage draws differently on the nexus between popular music fandom and religion.

Id: 14017

Title: Protestant visuality in Brazil: iconoclasm and the production of images by the Audio Visual Evangelical Centre 'CAVE

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: CAVE (Audio Visual Evangelical Centre) was a media agency that operated in Brazil between the 1950s and 1960s, producing audio and visual works. Its focus was on the technology for projection of images, by then, novelty in the country. CAVE's main interest was in producing visual works for a social group that was opposed to the religious use of images. One of the arguments used to redeem this feature by the agency refers to ancient Christian debates about images: the teaching function. Another argument was the power of seduction in the images, understood themselves as capable of attracting an audience composed of people with low levels of education, and a huge number of illiterates. Since its production started before the popularization of the television in Brazil, the projections would also be capable of bridging the differences of class and education for the audience of CAVE.

This paper is divided in two parts. First, we address the theoretical and historical debate on iconoclasm among Protestants, analysing the case of Protestant minorities in Brazil. The analysis of iconoclasm linked to politics and power developed by David Morgan (2005) helps to raise questions on the common use of the concept. The strategy of substitution on the iconoclast action does not annihilate the broken image, or what it signifies. According to Antonio Gouvêa de Mendonça (2008), the history of Brazilian Protestants reveals that the group built up its identity in opposition to Catholicism, the religious majority. We affirm it was the same with images. It was necessary for them to build their identity in contrast to a majority, to distinguish themselves from it. The fact that they did not use religious images became part of their identity, stressing its difference from an abundant visual aspect in Brazilian Roman Catholicism.

On the second stage, we present the results of empirical research conducted on the archives. By the beginning of this research CAVE's files were not yet cataloged and properly archived. For this reason, research had to be divided in four stages: 1) Exploratory research; 2) Descriptive research; 3) Organization of the whole archive and collection by products; 4) Digitalization. Descriptive and Quantitative results of the research were gathered in a Table of contents file. The digitalization of material generated 3.596 computer files, divided in 117 folders, amounting to 5.77 GB.

Finally, the paper presents part of the Qualitative results of the research. The analysis of the documents collected generated a full historiography of CAVE, focusing on its institutional and religious design. The analysis of the visual products considered patterns, standards and examples over a relation of image-text. This relation is considered key to access the conceptual framework chosen previously, concerning iconoclasm and its logic of substitution on the choice and value given to texts, as opposed to images. The analysis of the archive contributes to explain the tension between text and image among Brazilian Protestants, their iconoclastic perspectives and restrictions on the use of visual material and visuality.

Id: 14098

Title: 'Mallam Nuhu Goes to School': Using Interactive Radio Instruction to Counter Violent Extremism in North-East Nigeria

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: This paper explores the nature and impacts of a USAID-funded Interactive Radio Instruction program in Northeast Nigeria. Named 'Mallam Nuhu Ya Je Makaranta' in the local Hausa language (Mallam Nuhu Goes to School), the program uses drama, local folk songs and story telling to teach basic numeracy and literacy to Almajiri (young boys between age five and sixteen that leave their parents to live with an Islamic cleric to learn about the Islamic religion) and other out-of-school children. Targeted at some 20,000 children within this category, the program is complimented by work books and 750 listening centres across four local government areas. The listening centres are led by a trained Facilitator who gathers the children in groups of six to 10 to listen to every episode of the program on Mondays and Thursdays.

Baseline Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and Early Grade Maths Assessment (EGMA) tests are followed with questions that seek to measure the opinions and attitudes of the older boys toward the religious Other, western values, education and women. After exposure to contents of the literacy and numeracy programs - beneficiaries' comments about the topics are re-recorded and measured to explore variances between post-exposure opinions and attitudes and pre-exposure opinions and attitudes. Findings from this ongoing research project will provide insights on whether creatively designed Interactive Radio Instruction as a tool for literacy can also contribute to changing attitudes and behaviours of target audiences toward the Other.

Id: 14145

Title: A New Vision of Reality for Communication Research: Call for a paradigm shift to systems view of life.

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Thesis:

In the digital era, communication scholars should focus on integrating the biological, cognitive, social, and ecological dimensions of life into one unified vision.

Abstract

Recent concerns on the “unbearable lightness of communication research” (Servaes & Anderson, 2015) have signaled the unsatisfactoriness among many communication scholars. Lack of creative imagination and uncertainty about the meaning of “communication” might be reasons for this dissatisfaction.

In a heuristic study, Craig (1999) found seven “traditions” of communication which is a mere fraction of the total communication output of all living systems inhabiting our planet/universe.

Adducing evidence from Buddhist phenomenology, Gunaratne (2015) contends that to understand the meaning of “communication,” a researcher must have a grasp of the beginning of life that goes well beyond the emergence of humans. This proves that communication began with molecular/prebiotic evolution millions of years prior to the first living cell (Capra & Luisi, 2014: 216ff). Thus, bio scientists speculate that the origin of life on Earth was the result of a sequence of chemical events that transpired on the basis of the laws of physics and chemistry while adhering to nonlinear dynamics of complex systems.

Now, it should become obvious to the current breed of communication researchers that “communication” covered every aspect of cyclic existence (samsara) going back to the time when planetary life emerged from the first bacterial cell. Without “communication,” It would have been impossible for the vesicles/bubbles to evolve into DNA, proteins and the genetic code in the primeval oceans.

Gunaratne (2010, 2015) has already illustrated how the nonlinear dynamics of complex systems illustrated in the paticcasamuppada (PS)/dependent co-arising paradigm, which summarizes the crux of Buddhist phenomenology, could serve as a metamodel for understanding communication dynamics considering the limitations of the dominant Newtonian-Cartesian paradigm still widely used by communication researchers, including those who express umbrage over “unbearable lightness.” Classical science glosses over part-whole/system-environment relationships, presumes a world of distinct

dependent and independent variables, venerates objectivity and measurability/testability, disregards nonlinearity, and pays little regard to the Four Noble Truths and its tripartite concomitant marks of cyclic existence: unsatisfactoriness (dukkha), inconstancy (anicca), and insubstantiality (anatta).

Whereas the Newtonian paradigm reflects the Cartesian matter-mind separation thereby placing emphasis on [measurable] matter, including the brain, at the expense of [immeasurable] mind, the PS paradigm emphasizes both mind and matter (namarupa). The PS paradigm holistically examines the interconnectedness of all living systems by illustrating the nonlinear interactions of the Five [interdependent] Aggregates (whereof all beings and things are composites) to explain the arising of unsatisfactoriness reflected in becoming, birth, and decrepitude-and death through the conditioning of desire/greed and attachment/clinging. The Five Aggregates--matter, feeling, perception, dispositions, and consciousness--contain all the elements that enable communication, which marks the beginning of life.

Capra and Luisi's (2014) systems view of evolution is an extension of the PS paradigm. Communication researchers should redefine their field to cover the evolution of life on the planet.

Id: 14204

Title: Framing Discourse and Representation of Muslims in Indian Cinema post 9/11

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Indian cinema is one of the famous film industries in the world. Its reach and influence is increasing tremendously. After 9/11, worldview about Islam and Muslims has changed globally and has become stereotypical in one way or the other. Studies have shown that Indian hindi cinema popularly known as Bollywood (and the media in general) is not representing Muslims and Islam in a very pleasant light. A decade before the incident of 9/11 i.e. the era of nineties saw various incidents in India like the uprising in Kashmir (1990), demolition of the Babri Masjid (1992) and then the Kargil War (1999), all of which charged the political climate of India and the fallout led to the changes in the social setting of the country as well. Therefore a considerable shift took place in the portrayal of the Muslims in Bollywood. Hindi cinema (Bollywood) of the nineties increasingly began to depict Muslims as ‘terrorists’ and a potential threat to the sovereignty of India. India and Pakistan have been involved in the cross-border confrontations in 1948, 1965, 1971 and the Kargil war of 1990s served as a painful reminder of the unresolved disputes between the two nations. At the turn of the 21st century, Indian cinema went global and the industry reached out to the international audiences.

India has had its share of terror attacks in Mumbai, Delhi, Malegaon, Hyderabad among other places, and the Godhra riots in Gujarat, in which large number of Muslims were killed. Bollywood, which by now was getting corporatized as far as financing is concerned, probably saw a ‘selling opportunity’. Soon the industry produced films that increasingly depicted Muslims only as ‘terrorists’, followed by ‘good Muslim’ and ‘bad Muslim’ films. The film ‘My name is Khan’ is an example of how the media plays an important role in transforming public opinion and molds the viewers perception about what should and should not be reality. This paper seeks to understand the way Muslims are portrayed in Bollywood and the changes that the Muslim characters have undergone a decade after 9/11 as a wave of ‘Islamophobia’ engulfed the world. It is done by analyzing the presentation and content of the movies selected for analysis. Bollywood has classified

Muslims into different categories and has been using certain frames to represent each category. The dominant discourses emerging from the framing analysis provides an understanding at how Muslims are symbolically used in Hindi cinema. The paper will also attempt analyze the changes the Muslim character has undergone over the past decades in films in India.

Keywords: Hindi Cinema, framing, muslims, stereotyping, dominant discourse

Id: 14205

Title: Online Digital Media, Religion and Communication: A Study of Selected Hindu Cases from India

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The history of religion on Internet can be traced to the 1980s when religion enthusiasts began to explore ways Internet could be used to promote religion, faith or belief. Online religious communities are groups that facilitate interactions with believers of common religion and faith though separated geographically. Media is used for sharing common religious themes, and experience, and also for interaction and connection. Today every religion, no matter how small or unusual has a presence online. Online digital media is interactive and effective medium for religious communication. For millions of believers, the digital media has become a platform where one can easily find God-or at least his followers and participate in public spaces in a private and free manner.

The aim of paper is to carry out qualitative and descriptive analysis of three cases of Hindu religion in India. These include Shridi Sai Baba temple at Nasik, Udupi Krishna Matha (temple complex), Udupi and Bihauti Bhawan temple, Ayodhya having devotees primarily belonging to the eastern part of India.

Shridi Sai Baba temple is visited by Hindu and Muslim devotees alike and considered as one of the highly visited pilgrimage. Udupi Krishna Matha is a well-known pilgrimage site, particularly famous among the Hindu Vaishnava sect and visited only by the Hindu. Lately Udupi Krishna Matha has attracted international devotees from foreign land spread in those countries where there is ISKCON membership The digital media presence has enlarged the size of devotees in each of three temples. The case studies of the temples has been analyzed to answer and understand the ways in which digital media are being used for the promotion of religion. Further how digital media is efficient and effective among the devotee users and in what way has digital media aided religious practices and beliefs. The analysis of case studies has helped throw new light to examine the central question as to how digital media empowers and challenges religious institutions.

