



Religion, Communication and Culture Working Group
Abstracts accepted for presentation at IAMCR 2015 in Montreal, Canada

Id: 9308

Title: On faith, news and consumption: an analysis of the religious influence on televisual 'flow' during news broadcasting by the Brazilian Record TV Network

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Abstract: Record TV Network, the longest-running Brazilian broadcaster and the second-most popular television network in Brazil in audience share, was acquired in the 1990's by the 'neo-Pentecostal' group 'Universal Church of the Kingdom of God' (hereafter UCKG). Despite the content broadcasting at first essentially aimed to the faithful of the channel's owner, from 2006 Record TV adopted what may be considered a more commercial schedule, thus reducing the airing of religious contents. Such adoption was associated to another one ' as easily noticed also in relation to other Brazilian commercial television broadcasters (free) ', related to a noticeably established (tacit) pattern built upon the Globo TV Network (the audience leader TV channel in Brazil) that covers from visual aspects to the format of programs presentation. This paper analyzes the usage of this pattern by Record TV (particularly in two news programs: a daily TV newscast and a weekly news magazine). While it is plausible to infer that the adoption of a counterpart channel' pattern by broadcasters has close relation with business/marketing aspects (in the case of an audience leader, especially considering a potential goal to increase audience by televisual acknowledgment), in this paper it is developed a hypothesis that complexifies the scenario grounded on the final consolidation of quantitative data collected by the author in a research performed during 2013-2014. It is presented what may be considered indexes of a 'strategy' (Michel de Certeau), on which, in fact, the faithful of the UCKG (both current and potential ones) would constitute the desired target audience (despite the supposed separation between Record TV and UCKG since the adoption of the commercial schedule by the channel in 2006). Complementing the reflections, a proposed classification of the quantitative empirical data enables a qualitative analysis of the televisual 'flow' (Raymond Williams). The analysis considers both news content and commercials aired in the analyzed programs, making evident that despite the visual/presentation resemblance enabled by the adoption of the pattern, on Record TV the 'flow' during news programs presents traces of Prosperity Gospel ('neo-Pentecostal' faith adopted by UCKG): an evidence of the persistence of religious influence in the channel's broadcasting. The conceptual development of this paper uses the notion of 'imagined communities' (Benedict Anderson), combined to 'material culture' and 'theory of shopping' (both by Daniel Miller). This proposed theoretical framework, associated with elements of Prosperity Gospel, allows to identify what may be considered a 'preferred reading' (Stuart Hall) that would lead to belonging elements (cultural identity triggered by televisual aspects) in relation to: (i) the time of exposition to the themes addressed (to the news content) and (ii) consumption alternatives (in the case of the commercials presented during programs' intervals). More than increasing audience, the

broadcaster would be potentially trying to expand the quantity of UCKG's steadfast followers (via the exposition to elements that refer to its 'neo-Pentecostal' faith), even in a 'non-explicit' way and in programs of 'non-religious' contents, starting with the adoption of a pattern that potentially allures the audience using elements of televisual acknowledgment.

Id: 9336

Title: In and Out of Synchrony with Meaning: Boredom, Texting, and Ritual

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Abstract: Boredom has been widely acknowledged as both a symptom and cause of spiritual and social alienation in modern life. As early as 1986 (Klapp), it has been linked in particular with information overload, as boredom is fundamentally an experience of time emptied of meaning, and information overload seems to sweep us up in an oscillation between too many meanings conveyed at once (noise) and nothing meaningful seeming to happen at all (redundancy). In this talk, I discuss a practice afforded by the information society's communication technologies that we use to try to stay in an in-between zone, and which has become socially ubiquitous: texting. I begin by introducing the idea that ritual, being a way of managing time and investing it with meaning, is a lens that can help us make sense of the way we contend with our experiences of boredom in and through the resources of information-capitalist society. James Carey's conceptualization of 'ritual forms of communication,' although now three decades old, applies well to texting, as something that is neither just about transmitting information nor about establishing relationships of unilateral control. Texting can be productively analyzed using 'a ritual view of communication,' which 'is directed not toward the extension of messages in space but toward the maintenance of society in time' (Carey 2008/1989, 15). Indeed, Sherri Wasserman (2011) characterizes texting as not just able 'to foster social connectivity,' but as 'enabl[ing] shared ritual, retention of relationships, and the possibility to re-encounter experiences' (12). But in order to maintain this connectedness, the act of texting must constantly be renewed. The consequence of the frequency of the repetition of this ritual is that 'it breeds boredom' even as it 'breeds expertise' (Chun 2014) in the socially binding functions of messaging technology. This helps to explain why, in staving off boredom by texting, we tend to reproduce some of the conditions that bored us in the first place 'like interminable pauses of dead air, and exchanges of low-quality, trivial information about our days ' and yet seem almost addicted to it. I argue that texting is about both ritual and habit, predicated not just on transcending the overloaded self through acts of communication, but also on the impulse to compile an archive that resists entropy ' 'the archive,' in the words of media archaeologist Wolfgang Ernst (2004) 'suspends the merciless thermodynamic law of physics that all things tend to dissolve into disorder until death occurs' (47) ' and may both symbolically and literally endure human mortality (Baudrillard 2005/1996). My contention is that these coordinated digital mediations, with their socially binding functions but also their compulsive bodily aspects, blend habit and ritual ' a concept for which we might neologize the blend-word 'habritual' in order to capture both the rote and the important psychosocial aspects of the pattern texting tends to engender. The concept

summarizes a framework that suggests a very different way of thinking about a behaviour that is typically treated like a highly contagious social tic.

Id: 9402

Title: Framing 'Halal': Mass Media Representation of the Religious Ideology

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Abstract: The study examines how the religious groups are framed in the media of the inter-religion conflict in the multicultural Sri Lanka. With the ending of thirty years long-lasting war in 2009 we expected to form a society of inter ethnic and inter religious harmony. In contrast, a series of threats and frightening followed by violent incidents targeting at religious beliefs and religious symbols came into battle as in the post war context. It was emerged as a campaign initiated by the Sinhala Buddhist community, which consists of 69.1% of the population in the country against the 7.6% of Muslims. It is clearly visible the campaigns that have been organized against the 'Halal' symbol of the Muslim community created unrest among masses through Social and Mainstream Media. The aim of this study is to examine the behavior of Mass Media in the context of religious unrest. Multiple methods like, in-depth interviews, content analysis of media texts and questionnaire survey methods were used to collect the data. The findings indicate two types of understanding. The assistance given by the Sinhala Buddhist forces to eradicate the war which had been existing in Sri Lanka for a few decades was able to form hegemony in Sri Lanka at the end of the war. The hegemony was based on the ideology for a Sinhala Buddhist State. Thus, religious violence of Post War Sri Lanka was covered by the media based on Sinhala Buddhist hegemony. A monopoly was formed in the society for a tenacious ideology and only one kind of ideology and one side of maltreatment were heard. Secondly, it was understood that the Sinhala medium media practitioners behave within the religious conflict according to a way of building a monopoly in the social structure and that behavioral pattern projects his or her frame of ideology that he/she denotes towards other religions. In addition, the evidences in the study reveal that the media and religion fulfill a crucial function when the people were being organized for a certain ideology. In this context an increase of the trend of religious fundamentalism can be found in the arena of Post War Sri Lanka.

Id: 9474

Title: Your God, Our God and My God: An Analysis of Inter-religious perception of Religious Broadcasting

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Abstract: Multi-religious sociological framework affords ample platform for sharing of religious sentiments across the religious boundaries. The magnitude of such inter religious communication might happen at different levels from sharing of personal religious experience in a friendly circle to the actual visiting of holy places of other religions. The elements like theological framework and the religious composition of particular religions would be rigorously filtering the whole process of such communication. In a liberal religious structure, the reciprocal communication among religions is easy while monolithic and orthodox religious systems dissuade inter-religious sharing. India enfolds diversity in every kind and religion is one among them. The fabrics of Hinduism allow adaptations and assimilations from other spiritual traditions extensively as a direct consequence of its theological framework. Christianity, on the other hand, believes on the need of evangelizing 'others' as the salvation is associated with an exclusive faith. It is important to observe the response of the Hindus towards the Christian preaching. Since the early years of printing and education system in India were largely influenced by Christian missionaries, many of the ideals and values of Christianity had penetrated into the society in a natural way. But the recent Indian society has started to judge every event under the scanner of religious divide and therefore, interreligious interactions have become a composite task. The plethora of television channels in the neo-liberalized Indian social terrain formed a significant space for religious channels. The virtual temple/church/mosque feeling in ones visiting room through religious broadcast furnish the possibility to get connected to other religious messages guarantying one's safe/secret religious identity. The television way of overcoming religious divide had been proved effective in India through two Hindi television serials on Hindu mythology (78 episodes of Ramayan 25 January 1987 ' 31 July 1988 and 94 episodes of Mahabharatha 2 October 1988 ' 24 June 1990) which broke into different segments of the society above the religious divide. Religion related programmes on mainstream media function as information connect among religious sections and groups. The proposed study is an attempt to examine the inter-religious communication through television against the growing communal divide. The study is limited to the Hindu response to the Christian broadcasting in the state of Kerala and questionnaires will be used to collect the responses of the Hindu regular/occasional/non-viewers of Christian broadcasting.

Id: 9492

Title: Is Religion Newsworthy' A Case Study in Israel

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Abstract: Is Religion Newsworthy' A case study in Judaism and the Israeli State Yoel Cohen Ph.D School of Communication, Ariel University Journalists have an important role as news gatekeepers and agenda setters. To verify the level of news interest in religion, a poll of Israeli Journalists was carried out by the author. (250 responses received). SUMMARY: Religion has a low news interest among journalists. Judaism was most newsworthy. In quantitative terms, journalists expressed satisfaction with religious media. Even though Israel defines itself as the Jewish State, the very low rating for news interest in religion contrasts with other news categories is noteworthy. 32% and 8% of journalists gave religion a 'low' news interest rating or 'none at all' respectively. 35% gave it an average rating. Only 16% and 9% gave religion a 'high' or 'very high' news interest rating respectively. By contrast, politics and military had far higher ratings. 41% and 47% of journalists gave Israeli politics a 'high' or 'very high' news value rating respectively. Moreover, 17% and 76% gave military matters a 'high' or 'very high' news rating - reflecting the conflict situation in which Israel exists. Given Israel is the Jewish state, it was little surprise that news about Judaism has a 28% and 26% 'high' and 'very high' news rating respectively. Bt contrast, 28% and 12% gave Islam a 'high' or 'very high' news rating. Further, Christianity was regarded with 'high' or 'very high' news interest by only 9% and 4% of respondents. Of all religion-related themes, most newsworthy were: the status of marriage and religious law; army exemptions for the ultra-orthodox haredim; the question of public entertainment on the Sabbath; government budgeting for yeshivot (religious colleges); and public statements by rabbis. Lowest news interest ratings were for: religious experiences; inter-Jewish disputes; religious public figures; Jewish religious law rulings; and new religious trends. In quantitative terms, Israeli journalists expressed most satisfaction with religion reporting in religious media: daily newspapers weeklies, radio, and news websites. It contrasted with secular media: weeklies, television , and news websites; satisfaction with secular radio, and daily newspapers was incrementally higher.

Id: 9676

Title: The Karbalization of Lebanon: Karbala as lieu de mémoire in Hezbollah's Ashura narrative

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Abstract: From the work of Maurice Halbwachs (1992) and Pierre Nora (1996) to Jose van Dijk (2007) and Andrew Hoskins (2009), much attention has been paid to the materiality of memory within the discursive framework of the nation-state. In the absence of a unified Lebanese nation-state, however, accounts of the past are left to the discretion of smaller communities. Within this context, Lebanon's Shiite Hezbollah has succeeded in constructing a narrative of its past which is both rooted in the present and oriented towards the future, a narrative which speaks directly to its current military, political, religious and socio-cultural goals. This article draws on the unique backdrop of Lebanese socio-political history to explore a lieu de mémoire (Nora, 1996) that figures centrally in the rhetoric of Hezbollah around Ashura, the tenth night of the commemoration of Imam Hussein's death at Karbala. Using an analysis of the speeches of Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah on Ashura, this article examines the party's rhetoric around the battle of Karbala, and the revered Hussein's death, through the three dimensions of lieux de mémoire as identified by Pierre Nora, the symbolic, the functional and the material. Particular attention is paid to the role of mediatization in the materiality of memory and to the co-evolution of memory and technology, to borrow from Hoskins (2009). Through a close reading of Nasrallah's rhetorical utilization of the battle of Karbala as self-contained in terms of meaning and morale yet porous to contemporary retroactive interpretations of symbolism and function, this paper shows that that lieux de mémoire can in fact emerge in the absence of a nation-state, despite Nora's testament to the contrary. Methodologically, this paper draws its analysis from Nasrallah's Ashura speeches between the years of 2008 and 2013. This selection is based on major regional events in which Hezbollah was embroiled following the 2005 creation of YouTube, which facilitated access to Nasrallah's speeches in countries where Hezbollah's Al-Manar television channel is banned and granted the Hezbollah leader visibility to a wider global audience. In an attempt to translate and trans-culturate, as accurately as possible, the discourse and frameworks the party itself constructs in Arabic, this paper employs Hezbollah's own vocabulary and positions as reflected in the rhetoric of its leader. All translations are the author's own.

Id: 9694

Title: Media Coverage of Religion in Ferguson, Missouri: A Normative Approach
(working title)

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Abstract: This study seeks to examine the media coverage of the recent racial tensions and police action in Ferguson, Missouri following the grand jury decision, with a focus on stories which include religious leaders, religious comments, or those that take place in community churches or religious centers. Through a mixed-methods approach of critical discourse analysis and a normative analysis of the coverage, the research attempts to bring understanding of the role religion plays within the media, and provide suggestions as to how the media can cover religion more effectively not only during times of unrest, but on a more regular basis. From a normative approach, the ultimate goal of this paper is to think about the reality that is, and work towards the ideals of what should be. A two-week time period was chosen to examine broadcast stories from FOX News, CNN, and St. Louis Public Radio. The dates coincide with the day the grand jury decision was made public regarding the Michael Brown case, and the aftermath. Concerning FOX News, research offers a portrait of a channel centered on offering specific narratives, which conform to ideological and political agendas. This information leads to FOX News and its ideologically opposite partner, MSNBC, being regarded as partisan source, while CNN often is viewed as relatively neutral regarding content distribution. Considering this, the comparisons for this study will focus on comparing news stories by both FOX and CNN. As a counter comparison, stories that aired on St. Louis Public Radio (National Public Radio) were also analyzed during the same time period. This study will use critical discourse analysis and textual analysis as a way of examining the text and its meanings. Critical discourse analysis does not limit its analysis to specific structures of text or talk, but systematically relates these to structures of the sociopolitical context. Hegemonic representations will also be investigated within the text of the stories found. These representations may vary in the extent in which they are asserted or assumed. The use of intertextuality can open up the difference. It is useful to understand which texts and voices are included, which are excluded, and what significant absences are there. Fairclough's methodology of using textual analysis in reference to hegemony, the universal and the particular will inform this work greatly. A normative analysis of the stories found will include looking at them from the monitorial, facilitative, radical, and collaborative roles. According to scholars such as Dr. Clifford Christians, all of these roles apply in particular ways and at particular times. On any given day, and with different stories, most media play multiple roles as will be examined. Once again the goal of this study is to examine the role of religion in three different types of mainstream media where it pertains to societal and racial unrest such as the Ferguson, Missouri case,

as well as to provide recommendations to the media on how to better cover religious issues.

Id: 9760

Title: TOWARDS "ISLAMIC JOURNALISM" MODEL: A REVIEW OF VARIABLES.

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Abstract: TOWARDS 'ISLAMIC JOURNALISM' MODEL: A REVIEW OF VARIABLES. ABSTRACT: This article attempts to review key variables for the conceptualization of 'Islamic journalism'. Firstly, talking about Islamic sciences, under which the concept of 'Islamic journalism' originates, requires that we take the issues of Islamic methodology as the starting point. Likewise, 'Islamic journalism' is reviewed through the Islamic system of 'Maqasidu- Shariah'. Being a system adopted by Islam to explain the basic essence of human existence and activities from the shariah point of view. Thirdly, the concept of journalism culture is reviewed. And lastly, journalism ethics is reviewed from the Islamic perspective to gain understanding of 'Islamic journalism' model. In fact, it is seen that the increasing interdependence and connectivity of today's world requires global perspectives when assessing the changing system of news journalism. This actually sees journalism as culturally diverse thereby calls for more comparative journalism studies. Meanwhile, as there is no one agreed upon universal journalistic code of ethics gives an indication that there will be slow movement towards the realization of common 'Islamic journalistic model'. As it is this model does not claim universality in relationship with Islamic journalistic practices, but could go a long way to assist further studies towards universal conceptualization of 'Islamic journalism theory'.
Keywords: Journalism, Islam, culture, ethics.

Id: 9799

Title: Does God have an email' Faith and Religious Consumption in the Digital Era

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Abstract: It has become something of a commonplace in internet studies, religious or otherwise, to comment on the recent birth and remarkable growth of the computer technology that makes the internet and its sweeping cultural impact upon us possible (Castells 2000, Mansell and Steinmueller 2002, Terranova 2004, Dawson and Cowan 2004: 5). In most religions, technology itself is perceived as a potentially friendly tool, or at least as a must, in order to disseminate religious texts and religious studies internally and externally. Cyberspace is dynamic in nature, fast and easy to access, providing users with more discretion, power and wealth of communication possibilities (McNair 2006: 3, 4, 9). These characteristics have rendered to the internet a special value among religious believers (Barzilai-Nahon & Barzilai 2005: 37). Internet-based Christian- and not only- communities have flourished dramatically since the early 2000s in response to the rise of more sophisticated social media and the emergence of free access virtual worlds. These communities are one example of a new kind of loosely networked religious practice that blends local and online resources, practices and connections, offering digital forms of education, spiritual experience and social ties that generally complement local church membership rather than replacing it (Hutchings 2011: 1118-1119). Still, the use of internet and the online environment for religious purposes has not been without doubts. One can distinguish two main categories of 'skepticalisms': the first has to do with the 'grammar' of the new medium, hence the structure and the functional characteristics of the internet itself. The second category has to do with the possible 'dissimilarities' between the offline and online religious experience, and the possible consequent degradation that the online religious experience might provoke to the relationship between the worshipper and her/his religion. Employing a large survey and a qualitative study of a purposively sampled European community of internet users, the present study develops ideas and themes about the online religious consumption. The study aims to answer to the following questions: 'If the internet is a 'free for all' tool, would it be suitable for using it for religious purposes' 'Why do people pray using online websites' 'Is the religious information accessed or received through the internet reliable' 'Can the Internet be considered a credible medium for communicating the doctrine and teaching of religion'

Id: 9824

Title: The Role of internet data bases on enforcing the religious beliefs among Tehran's University students

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Abstract: The present article is scrutinizing the role of internet data bases on enforcing the religious beliefs among Tehran's university students. To search this, survey method And Documents and Archival method has been used to demonstrate internet as a new medium has a significant role on enforcing religious values in them. Researchers of this domain are always interested to recognize the human being's effort regarding understanding religion, and its different aspects, and their impact on life, and also the strategies and effective elements on strengthening or weakening religious values . in this modern era in which we have globalization and on the other hand we have pluralism, the role of media finds a significant place. Specially internet which is the most important media in this global village. Carrying out this study will clarify the importance of internet in spreading religious beliefs and strengthening it. This media is regarded as one the most important vehicles not only in politics, social issues, economical and cultural but also in religion. So students refer to it to find answers to their religious questions and different facilities, attractions, and facilities and different attractions of internet in spreading religious beliefs can have a significant role. **Keywords:**Internet ,data bases, Religious belief, Cyber religion, On line religion, Digital tribune, On line pilgrimage

Id: 9956

Title: The Concept of 'Social Communication' and the Communication of Religions

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Abstract: The concept and expression 'Social Communication' originated from the Catholic Church during the Second Vatican Council where it was used as a title for a document on Communication for the Church. It was later accepted by sociologists (Braga) as well as Psychologists (Steiner). The reasons given for the new expression were that terms like 'mass media,' 'media of diffusion' and even 'audio-visual means' do not sufficiently enunciate the concern of the Catholic Church (Eilers, 2014). But it was not explained by the Church itself nor by other Christian denominations. Some of those involved in proposing the term have in fact reverted to 'mass media' (Baragli) and similar expressions. The new expression seems to move away from mere technical use to one that include all ways and means of communication in human society. Social communication is thus understood as the communication of and in human society. Social communication is more the process of communicating rather than encompassing just the means used. This can be located and seen on three levels and directions:1. Since the beginning of humankind people communicated in interpersonal ways which soon became reflected in communication forms like stories, songs, dance, drama and similar communicative expressions. This is a first dimension of social communication comprising interpersonal as well as cultural communications since the beginning of human history. Here, the participants become and develop as producers and consumers in the process. Slowly developing from speaking (Orality) the 'technique' of writing progressed, which over centuries was done by hand especially in 'scriptorium' of monasteries. Only after centuries did it develop into the technical means of printing with movable letters (Gutenberg, 1450) first used by the Catholic Church and later especially utilized by the Reformation through Martin Luther and his followers (after 1517). 2. At the end of the 19th century, film followed with the Brothers Lumiere (1895) who even produced a 'Film' on Jesus Christ. Later, broadcasting followed with the discovery of sound waves (radio) and moving pictures (television). All these technical developments, however, did not eliminate interpersonal and cultural communication. Neither did they develop within Christian religions only. Other cultures and religions also utilized these means to further their unique purposes. The book plays a special role in Judaism and Islam. The spoken word as well as rituals and images are used in social and cultural life.3. With technical developments, however, the communication networks from of old ' groups and relations developed through interpersonal communication (Standage) ' have become stronger. Internet and today's wireless technology connect people beyond borders of space and

time. This must be considered a special section of Social Communication. While in the second stage the participants are somehow passive receivers, they become Pro-Sumers (producers and consumers) similar to the original stage of social communication. These three dimensions are to be applied also to the communication of and in religions which are based on their thinking, teaching and practice of interpersonal/cultural as well as media and social network communication.

Id: 10001

Title: The Relationship between the fantastic monstrous narratives and reality in a semiotic study of selected sayings and works by S. A. Dast-gheib, a contemporary Iranian clergy

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Abstract: To what extent the monstrous belongs to reality' According to the methodology of empirical sciences it is a preposterous idea and categorized as an uncanny concept. In literature it becomes a common element in fantasy and reveals an aspect of the wonderland. On the other hand, semiotics of the fantastic monstrous narratives opens a corridor to the realistic phenomena and what some people believe in religiously. Documenting events based on such beliefs makes monsters be present in different media formats, including fictions, lyrics, memoirs and folklore narratives, even known by heart and retold in ages. It is of notable importance that whether we consciously encounter the symbolic role of the monsters and consider them as Freudian concept of the uncanny or our collective unconsciousness puts them equal to the real world elements. Here is presented a report from a semiotic study on such prodigies regarded exactly as the reality by the collective unconsciousness in my homeland, Iran. These fantastic narratives are effectively supported by traditional media and religious tribunes. Thus, they are subjected to real social and cultural encounters. The study focuses on narratives documented by my townsman late contemporary religious thinker and clergy, S. A. Dast-gheib, whose name means a man with psychic hands.

Id: 10055

Title: OCCUPATIONAL REFLECTIONS IN NIGERIA GOSPEL VIDEO FILMS

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Abstract: OCCUPATIONAL REFLECTIONS IN NIGERIA GOSPEL VIDEO FILMSALAWODE, SUNDAY OLAYINKA Ph.D+234 803 388 1520 alawode_yink @ ahoo.com sunday.alawod @ asu.edu.ngOLUKAYODE, JIMI +234 803 3534894 jimikayod @ mail.comTIFASE, TAIWO +234 802 307 3781 tifasetaiw @ mail.com LAGOS STATE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATIONABSTRACTHuman life is characterized by a lot of attributes including religions, culture, occupations or work, play and entertainment, fashions, among others. Occupation is classified as an activity or task with which one occupies oneself; usually specifically the productive activity (service, trade or craft) for which one is regularly paid; a job. Occupation as work is effort expended on a particular task, occupies adult life and subsumes the best part of man's life with prior preparation for instance, socialization through schooling and vocational training and spends the remainder of life after work resting from active occupation. If occupation thus occupies the totality of human life as very significant, how is this activity depicted in religions (gospel video film) which is itself a permeating life-long activity steeped in beliefs and interaction with the sacred' Religions or gospel video films is a scion of the thriving popular Nigerian video films industry called Nollywood and it is a fast growing off-shoot specifically to offer gospellers a platform through which Christianity is orchestrated with its doctrine and liturgy. This study content analyses prominence, dimensions of occupations or work and the light in which such are portrayed in thirty gospel video films between 2010 and 2015; how often occupations are depicted as religion and how often religions are seen as occupations. Settings, figures, duration, working wife, working husband, vocations, religious work, traditional work, and location are few of the content categories analysed in the study while Goffman's Frame Analysis

and Gatekeeping theory underpin the study. Framing is the way a communication source defines and constructs any piece of communicated information, and it is an integral part of human communication seen as a slice of life in the gospel video films. The findings of the study have implications for occupational perceptions, religious co-existence as well as film production and regulations. Word count: 304. Key words: Occupation, Gospel, Video film, Reflections.

Id: 10180

Title: Discourses of laïcité in news texts: A critical intercultural analysis

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Abstract: Laïcité refers to the French secular model. Beyond the separation of State and Churches, numerous meanings are attached to this concept and are intertwined with societal, cultural and political aspects of French society. Using a selection of news items published between 2011 and 2014 in the newspaper Le Monde, this study looks at the variety of meanings attached to laïcité. The main aim of this paper is to understand which of these meanings are empowered, and with which implications as regards power relations between communities in France. Specifically, this study explores mechanisms through which cultural references are used in news texts as means to empower and normalize their content. For this purpose, this study builds on literature from Critical intercultural communication which focuses on ways in which power and culture are intertwined. Scholars from the discipline regard culture as constructed and saturated with power. Critical intercultural communication examines differences between discourses of culture ' and thus, subjects and practices of which they talk ' in terms of visibility, legitimacy and power. Following this tradition, this paper focuses on the cultural resonance of laïcité in order to understand what further power relations are embedded within discourses of laïcité. This study uses an eclectic methodological framework, which combines aspects of Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) and Foucaultian approach to discourse. Both approaches are coherent with the aim of this paper which is to explore what is said about laïcité, how culture is made relevant in that process, by whom, and with which implications. That is, examine mechanisms through which knowledge, power and discursive practices come to be intertwined. Combining their strengths also helps explore as well as possible the different facets of discourses of laïcité. Data was collected inductively using the keyword laïcité through the newspaper Le Monde search engine. All types of articles mentioning laïcité were initially collected (N=895) and used to gain a general understanding of the use and recurrence of the term. Following this first phase, specific news items were selected for closer analysis based on their relevance to laïcité as well as relation to events that happened over the time period used for data collection (2011-2014). Findings reveal different mechanisms through which representations of laïcité can be empowered. Besides journalists, voices traditionally regarded as legitimate (e.g. researchers, politicians) are used to name laïcité, which enhances the representation of laïcité as a practice and value of the majority. Furthermore, cultural references tend to be national and emphasize ideas of uniformity. Minorities' experiences and perceptions have very little visibility and are mostly presented through voices of the majority. Findings reveal numerous tensions in the representation of laïcité as both a local and universal practice which aims at bringing people together while being a source of

conflicts and gaps between us and them. Findings found an echo in the discourses surrounding the attacks in Paris this January 2015 which brought laïcité to the forefront once again, highlighting its significance as a narrative that feeds and is fed by cultural references.

Id: 10205

Title: Communicating Religiously in Mass Media: Francis of Rome as a Telling Example for Practice with the Resource of Time

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Abstract: Communicating religiously in mass media seems best delineated as part of the power of time 'to present matters from the beginning and from the end in the present', even in the conditions of the mass media industry. From within time, communicating religiously can offer both a critique and an advance on both hegemony and resistance. The paper will outline factors involved in the alignment permitting this current resource. Physics and mathematics have confirmed and specified the continuity given by time which philosophy has explored from ancient times, and which is an essential part of religious living. The shift in media technology from a bias of extension (place) to one of immersion (time) specified in geopolitics by Innis, as culture by McLuhan and Carey, and in the area of religion by Babin, has been confirmed by developments in social media. These media changes coincide with a new fluidity in international power centers and relationships since 1989, but also with the decline in that capacity of the media to mount a frame and a cohesive designation of the current situation for its publics, whether of hegemony or resistance. As a result, the ways religion was located and co-opted within other logics 'economic, political and mediatic - has receded in a way that permits its specific character to emerge with some clarity. Jorge Bergoglio, or Francis I, suits this opportunity for communicating religiously in the contemporary situation, both in his intent and media presence. While he does conform to classic models of media presence as 'star', as prophet with message, as corrective-, compensating-, and/or antithetical-condition for other contents, he seeks to sidestep such institutional 'places and spaces' and be part of the movement of time. He writes: 'Time governs spaces, illumines them and makes them links in a constantly expanding chain'we need to give priority to actions which generate new processes'(Evangeli Gaudium, 223)'. Nor are words his primary resource for a time where the media is one of immersion. For example, his 'presence' at an institutional self-congratulatory celebration is as an empty chair: a 'no-show', an absence. His presence is by immersion in a flashmob of three million at Cococabana Beach, or with 6 million in a park in Manila. When he does speak, he speaks by the logic of a person who lives (again) from immersion in a scrum, wearing a rain coat like everyone else, by coming out of the scripted to ad lib. Given the ubiquitous character of mass media influence, the current manner of communicating religiously has a bearing on any number of religious practices. The author will draw on his own experience with adolescents, to illustrate how evocation of time with so much more of its richness as signaled by social media, could be a necessary part of understanding the religious among youth today. It is from just such practices as these, that the religious in mass media

qualifies and informs all hegemonic ideology and innovative efforts of resistance with novelty and the unpredictable given in time.

Id: 10337

Title: The conversion of 'Immortals-playing Drama' in Taiwan's Taoism Religion: An impact by new media representation

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Abstract: Taiwan is a multi-religious country. Religious activities of Taoism are particularly rich in Taiwan folk culture. 'Immortals-playing Drama' is the common ritual of various Taiwanese ceremonial celebrations, and has become an important component of Taiwan cultural activities. People believe that they could receive the grace and blessing through the 'Immortals-playing Drama'. Therefore people can get spiritual solace and happiness by appreciate it. Taiwanese opera troupes were flourishing due to the social needs of the 'Immortals-playing Drama'. But there is a decline now in performance opportunities by reason of the advancement of film, television and Internet' new media entertainment patterns. In this research, through in-depth interviews with folk troupes and field observation, found out that the demand of 'Immortals-playing Drama' still exists. However, new media has those distinguishing characteristics such as low-cost, easy copy, and saving human resources. All of them depress the live performances opportunities of traditional Taiwanese opera troupes. Traditional cultural activities have the qualitative change to resist the hegemony of new media with low-cost pattern. By playing the movie version of "Immortals-playing Drama" after sunset just show the minimum of religious activities type. But the connotations of religious cultural have been greatly simplified and lose some important parts. New performance type with new media undermines the effect of the religious and culture activities that people are looking forward to get fortune from the ceremonial drama. New media is undoubtedly a shock and killer to keep the religious and cultural activities of "Immortals-playing Drama" last longer. Key words: Immortals-playing Drama, Taiwanese opera, new media, Taoism.

Id: 10464

Title: Public space, Virtual space, religious sensitivity and resistance: The case study of Shahbagh movement in Bangladesh

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Abstract: The Shahbagh movement in Bangladesh was started by the bloggers for the demand of justice, to bring all the war criminals of 1971 under trial and then give them capital punishment. Obviously, the movement therefore was not on issues of economic crisis or for toppling the existing government. Establishing a platform named 'Gonojagoron Moncho' (Stage for People's Uprising) and naming the area of Shahbagh Square (and surroundings) 'Projonmo Chottor' (Generation Square) that relinked the spirit of 1971 liberation war of Bangladesh were few of the achievements of the movement. Thousands of supporters chanted slogans, painted murals on the road, drew cartoons, recited poems, performed drama, showed films on liberation war, hanged effigies of war-crimes suspects and they vowed to continue the demonstrating until their demands were met. However the question is how much of this are hegemonic in nature and was resistance for social justice. One of the basic point is, the social media played an important role in this movement to engage people. In addition, the movement rejected mainstream political culture. And finally, such organic and nonviolent movement could not avoid to be 'labelled' as a movement of Nastik (Atheists) and was opposed the highly religious and somewhat orthodox Islam followers in Bangladesh. The dichotomy of 'atheist 'believer' was used rampantly in the Social Media as well. The people who opposed it also used social media platforms like tweeter and blogs to disseminate misinformation. At the peak of the movement on 15th February 2013 architect blogger Ahmed Rajib Haider, who was one of the principal activist leader of Shahbagh movement was brutally murdered by religious fundamentalist. It is really remarkable that thousands of people joined the Janaja (Islamic funeral prayer) of their martyr fellow at Shahbagh. The context is contradictory indeed. In addition, the space of Shahbagh area also has its own importance along with the historical and cultural context as well. This paper would like to see the relationships of these factors in the movement. On the basis of ethnographic data, interviews of at least 15 activists, critic, and scholars who were directly involve in the movement this paper presents the movement from the perspective of notions of Public Space (here, the Shahbagh Square) and role of Virtual Space (Social Media/Internet) in Social Mobilizations and its relation with religious sensitivity as well.

Id: 10492

Title: Religion, Politics and Media Relations in Turkey: Overview to the Production of Meaning of the Media on Secularism

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Abstract: One of the ideological foundations of Turkey established as a latecomer nation-state in contrast with Europe is secularism. Secularism as source of legitimacy of the new state is a vital principle. Secularism has been necessary in order to deplete faith-based legal structure connected to Islamic values in Ottoman period and to exclude Islam from the new-political identity of state. Secular society includes a social order and legislation which is standard and monistic government which is citizens can belong to every religion and gender and can have equal conditions. It is clear that the secularism is identical to the structure of centralized society and in this way will be carried out. In Turkey, there is a tension between the Islamist-conservative and the secular-modern segments of society from the past to present. Whereas the religion is seen as a resistance against to progress in terms of modernist-Kemalist and leftist ideology, the Islamist approaches are characterized by being against to Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, who is the secular/modernist founder of modern Turkey. In this study, it is aimed to problematize the secularism discourse and the ideology of media than secularism, and to discuss the viewpoint of the media on religious and secularism. As a result of the politicization, news media have a position pro-government or anti-government. When reporting the issues such as secularism practices and the restrictions of freedom of religion, media consider the economical and political structure. The narratives of news are shaped by the ownership structure and the position of media in the face of political power. For example, whereas the Islamist-conservative media praise the prohibition of alcoholic beverages in public space, the secularist-modernist media criticize it. In addition, the other problematic issues such as the increase of religious high schools (imam-hatip high school), compulsory religion classes, the freedom of headscarf in the public sphere, in other words, the increasing social visibility of religiosity have been discussed in different ways in media.

Id: 10503

Title: 'Hegemony and Resistance' Ambiguous Power of Communication'

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Abstract: Proposal for IAMCR2015 Ahsan Akhtar Naz, PhD.
(Associate Professor, Institute of Communication Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan.) I have analyzed the main theme of IAMCR2015-'Hegemony and Resistance' Ambiguous Power of Communication' According to my personal understanding recent events around the world is neither the results of any single development and nor these have simple background. For instance, Occupy Wall Street was an ultimate result of US wrong internal and external economic policies. Ultimately US had to borrow loans. Secondly, Arab Spring was also a natural result of very brutal and lengthy dictatorships. Now days, the Arab Spring is going to paradigm shift and become a headache for the whole world. It seems that ISIS is the superlative degree of extremism. The Muslims are fighting and killing other Muslims. No religion allows even to kill any human being. The students' demonstrations are very common phenomenon. The students of various countries are demonstrating off and on for their demands or for their oppressed nation's freedom. So, due to these backgrounds, many new issues are appearing on global horizons. For example, repeatedly the issue of Cartoon Controversy in European countries, the withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan, etc. This is doubt that the world politics is travelling towards the clash of civilizations in near future or perhaps the Third World War. This is very alarming and dangerous situation. My thinking may be wrong. In this regard, new global developments are creating the environment of further resistance and conflict. The atmosphere of hegemony, peace and love is shrinking day by day. This is also a big challenge for the champions of 'Global Solidarity'. Information and communication technology (ICT) with very effective, non violent and soft messages and on the other hand, global cultural industries with cultural hegemony can play pivotal role in this connection. But rich nations will have to leave their one sided passion of domination and cultural imperialism. In my view, we have to solve such situation with the support of clear cut, soft and effective communication strategy. Any ambiguity will extend further resistance. So, in IAMCR2015, Mass Communication's world leading researchers and media professionals should focus, brainstorming and try to solve or to minimize these issues of hegemony or resistance.

Id: 10548

Title: Guns and God: Negotiating American folk imaginaries in emerging digital counterpublics

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Abstract: Hardly more than a year after debuting on the A&E network in 2012, Duck Dynasty set records for reality TV viewership, generated more than \$120 million in advertising revenue, and contributed to \$400 million in retail sales for associated merchandise (O'Connor, 2013; Steinberg, 2014). Reaching nearly 12 million viewers on its best night, and generating maelstrom of (sometimes controversial) press coverage, the show is a pop culture sensation. More important than semi-scripted bickering and narrative contrivances is the show's representation of a particular kind of American sensibility. A&E, and the Robertson family, have exploited the cultural cache of the imagined tropes that define Southern identity most clearly, hunting and Christianity. Comprising both domains are overlapping categories, including tradition, 'authenticity,' and a celebration of anti-modern parochialism. Our study explores how the American folk imaginary represented by Duck Dynasty and Amazing America with Sarah Palin is negotiated on digital forums like Facebook and Reddit, particularly those dedicated to issues of hunting and Christianity, and we analyze the ways in which the discursive negotiations reveal new forms of audience habitus emerging in digital counterpublic spaces. We are pursuing three theoretical entry points. Charles Taylor's notion of 'social imaginaries' (2004) which captures the values, expectations, and taken-for-granted commitments around which spatially and temporally dispersed communities cohere. Michael Warner's discursive counterpublics (2002) helps to characterize those networks of dispersed strangers whose conversation identifies them as part of a specific identity group. And Pierre Bourdieu's *Distinction* (1984) provides a basis for understanding how tastes and cultural capital inform a habitus as an embodied performance of social class distinction. By investigating how the American folk imaginary portrayed on shows like Duck Dynasty and is negotiated by viewers in online forums we hope to understand first, how people engage with representations of their perceived identity and second, how digital spaces allow them to negotiate these imaginaries with spatially dispersed others. References Bourdieu P (1984) *Distinction: A Social Critique on the Judgment of Taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. O'Connor C (2013) Duck Dynasty's Brand Bonanza. *Forbes*, November 6.

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Id: 10565

Title: Election 2015: Succession Struggle at Shas on the Yom Le-Yom Paper

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Abstract: Thirty years have passed since the first time the party Shas was elected to the Knesset (the Israeli Parliament). Shas, "Sfarad's* guards of the Torah (Bible)", was founded in 1983 Ahead of municipal elections (Dayan, 1999; Feldman, 2006). As an ultra-orthodox religious political party under the Council of Torah Sages, led by the former Israeli Sephardi chief rabbi Ovadia Yosef and revered leader Aryeh Deri, Shas has led to an extensive process of a return to religion (Cohen, 2006; Peled, 2001, 2003; Ravitski, 2006). The purpose of the party is to lead a religious revolution; strengthen the Sephardi orthodox view and to repair what it sees as the continued economic and social discrimination against the Sephardic population of Israel. Shas has stabilized on 11-12 seats at the Knesset out of 120 seats, since the beginning of the 2000s. Towards the 2015 election, Shas is undergoing some historical major upheavals. First and foremost, was the death of the undisputed leader of the party, Rabbi Yosef, on October, 2014. As an undemocratic orthodox party, he was the supreme arbiter of the political way of Shas, and an exceptionally religious leader for his followers. Second, Deri's return to the leadership of the movement, five months earlier, alongside Eli Yishai, that led the party for more than a decade. The decision to hold early elections intensified the succession struggle for the leadership of Shas, and eventually led Eli Yishai to quit Shas and to set up a rival party. Both parties claim to continue the legacy of the Rabbi, and struggle for much the same segment of voters. Although the processes of change that occur, as part of its ideological perception the orthodox society denies consumption of modern means of communication associated with modernity and the values of secular society (Tsarfaty, 2010). The movement published its own newspaper, titled Yom le-Yom. The paper was adopted as a legitimate medium because it preserves the special treatment in Judaism to the written word (Kouts, 2013). Yom le-Yom is used as a means of positioning status, strengthening internal solidarity and political and religious propaganda. The suggested paper deals with this struggle between the two rival parties in the 2015 Israeli general election. By conducting context analysis of Yom Le-Yom, the weekly published Shas's newspaper, we seek to expose the media frames of succession struggle. As an event of far-reaching political implications this study has two goals: to examine how the paper designs the internal discourse of the struggle for leadership and to look at the use of

political parties of the media in purpose to conduct an election campaign in a captive audience.-----*sefaradi / Mizrachi (Oriental)Expressions refer to the Jews who came to Israel from Islamic countries and the Balkans.

Id: 10655

Title: The Study of Social Networks and Trust in Religion Organizations ---A Case Study of College Students Fellowship in a Christianity Church

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Abstract: Various forms of communication are used to build up social networks, and the networks exhibit the power structure in the organization. In this religion organization, social networks are constructed based on the Christian church's communication activities and other brand promotion events, which aims to create trust and attract more believers. Specifically, social networks include advice network, friendship network and communication network in this study. Advice network and communication network are different from each other, as the former one refers to the transmission of the organization's formal information, such as gathering announcements, and communication network focuses on interpersonal grapevines or private communications. Friendship network mainly represents the emotional communication and persuasion. These three networks' structure will affect organization trust, which contains general trust and particularistic trust. General trust is the overall trust towards the organization that the members' hold, whereas particularistic trust talks about the interpersonal trust, and it has specific directions to one or several other members. This study is to examine how social network exerts influence on trust in religion organizations. This study combines qualitative method and quantitative method. First, it uses ethnography to establish relations with the Christian church and collect data. Second, it uses questionnaires and hierarchical regression to elaborate the relation between different networks and trusts. Finally, it conducts focus groups and interviews to find out the preliminary reasons for the measured relations. The process of the research is (i) illustrating the informal organizational structure by presenting the social network, (ii) measuring the general trust and particularistic trust, (iii) studying the relationship between social network and trust. Results show that (i) Social networks as informal power structures in this Christian church have much commonality with the formal power structure, and even strengthen the latter one. (ii) According to the degree and subgroup analysis, religion organization has noticeable core-periphery groups, among which the core members are administrative members who charge the operation of the fellowship, while the periphery members are rather scattered without outstanding subgroups. (iii) Friendship network's outdegree centrality and particularistic trust are positive related to particularistic trust in the

organization, that is to say group members who are willing to connect with others and spread information will achieve more particularistic trust from others. (iv) Friendship network's and communication network's normative indegree have negative correlation with the general trust in the religion group, the higher centrality, the lower general trust. (v) Both particularistic trust and general trust are interrelated, but general trust exerts more influence on particularistic trust.

Id: 10804

Title: A Comparative Study of Christian, Islam and Hindu Social Media Groups of Indian Context

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Abstract: Much like other cultural institutions, religion includes experiencing an internal structural change due to information revolution. The basic nuances of CMC have a direct link with technological modernity. On the Internet, people can read about religion, talk with others about religion, download religious texts and documents, buy religious books and artifacts, take virtual tours of galleries of religious art or the interiors of religious buildings, search scriptures using electronic indexes, locate churches and religious centers, participate in rituals or meditation sessions, vote on organizational propositions, see images of their religious leaders, watch video clips, and listen to religious music, sermons, prayers, testimonials, and discourses. Each religion or sect or sub-sect or cult has its own purpose while embracing web technology. In an overall atmosphere, the entire spectrum of religious purpose on the net is based on one principle: to go into the entire world and preach the gospel to every creature. Even though Christianity is the only religion that has dominated the electronic media, in e-space it cannot claim this superiority. Roman Catholicism and mainline Protestant denominations, along with Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and others, arrived a little later. A simple Internet search (January 2015) through Google resulted in 1,37,00,00,000 references to the word Christian, 42,70,00,000 for Islam, and 2,03,00,000 for Hindu. For millions of believers, the Internet has become a place where one can easily find God - or at least His followers. In wired environment, there is no restriction for individuals to express their opinion about a religion irrespective of their religious identity. The online forums have opened new vistas for these people to propagate their ideologies, or to initiate and organize a religious movement, or to propagate hatred feelings against the rival religious group. In the context of over-explosion of the online presence of religion, it is necessary to map religious cyberspace and examine the purpose and utilization of the online environment for religious communication. Along with content, it is important to understand the structure and composition of religious discourse. This study has been undertaken in order to map the context of religious discourse. Three prominent religions have been selected based on their representation in the Indian context 'Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. With the aim of measuring religious activities in the social media environment, this study sampled online religious groups operating in Facebook and Twitter platforms. In the Facebook groups, location specific groups (ie. India) will be identified for each of these three religions. An attempt will be made to analyse the groups activities for minimum of a year for each religion. For Twitter, there is no group system, however discussions are centered around hashtags. A suitable hashtags for these three

religions in Indian context would be identified. Like Facebook time period, an attempt will be made to analyse the activities of identified hashtags for minimum of a year for each religion.

Id: 10862

Title: Communicative Figurations and Religion. The Mediatized Construction of Religious Authorities in Recent German Catholicism

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Abstract: Communication and media studies were dominated since the late 1970s by the concept of a "media logic" (cf. Altheide, Snow 1979), which is based on the assumption that modern media influences social life in an increasing manner. Various fields of culture and society such as religion would be determined by an inherent logic of the media, which arises by economic interests. So for example Hjarvard used this concept for the field of religion and makes the case that the increasing mediatization of society contributes to secularization (Hjarvard 2011). An extensive critique of Hjarvard's considerations was formulated by Lövheim (Lövheim 2011), who problematized his concept of religion, which recognizes only a theological school of thought represented as full religion and his assumption that the main function of religion looks at the definition and legitimation of social reality. In addition, in research communication and media studies (Krotz 2007 and Hepp 2011) the concept of media logic has been questioned in general. So far media studies presuppose a specific media logic which has a specific effect on reality. In contrast to that Krotz stressed the fact that media can only be understood as inseparable with the construction of reality (Hartmann & Hepp 2010). Methodologically therefore not a specific medium such as television or the internet is provided as research object, but the individual actors in their mediatized worlds (Krotz 2007). Furthermore media alone is no longer seen as the reason of changing processes, but in a combination of various socio-cultural processes, in which mediatization is one process among others. The paper is based on a research project of communicative figurations of religious authorities in recent Catholicism. Religious authority serves as a fundamental concept in religion. However, in mediatized cultures and societies such apparently non-negotiable patterns become increasingly debated within and beyond religions. So we can observe the struggle for symbolic capital between the traditional religious experts, new parties as well as the so-called laity, which leads to different authority structures. The initial hypothesis of the project is that traditional religious authority has not completely changed by mediatization or even dissolved, but that different transformation patterns in different communicative figurations within the field can be observed. This involves the question of the extent to which authority structure has changed with the increasing variety of communication media, and to what extent one can find different patterns of transformation of these authoritarian-creating communicative figurations. Following Heidi Campbell's distinction (Campbell 2007) between mediatized authority constructions on a social level (hierarchy and structure) and on the level of religious symbol systems (text and ideology) the project asks how in the religious field

the different communicative figurations of the construction of religious authority are changing and probably becomes more global and plural. The reason for such transformation processes - so the hypothesis ' is the plurality of different actors, who are part of changing or new evolving communicative figurations.

Id: 10865

Title: Mediatized Religion in Southeast Asia: Transformations in the Self-Crucifixion in the Philippines and the Role of Media

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Abstract: It is an everyday experience that present life, in Asia as well as in 'the West', is extensively media saturated. This increasing 'mediation of everything' is interrelated with our understanding of religion: Religion today is rapidly transforming. Even processes particularly aiming at conserving religious heritage are deeply mediatized, by different digital media as much as by traditional mass media. For instance, religious institutions, groups and individual actors increasingly use media to discuss and negotiate religious authority and identity, dogmatic doctrine, and belief itself. According to the communication scholar Friedrich Krotz 'mediatization' describes a meta-process which shapes modern societies, en par with various socio-cultural processes as globalization or individualization. Mediatization thus questions the obsolete concept of a 'media logic', which is based on the assumption that various fields of culture and society, such as religion, are determined by an inherent logic of separate media genres. Rather, mediatization research focuses on the individual actors in their mediatized worlds and consequently, research on mediatized religion is no longer a media-centered but an actor-centered research. The theoretical and methodical approach of mediatization by today is established in Europe and has primarily been researched in 'Western' (European and American) contexts. The paper goes one step further and discusses different aspects of mediatized religion in Asia, namely in the Philippines. For this, it will present a specific case study discuss the data in the light of the current mediatization theory: Religious groups and individual actors increasingly use new forms of media and are part of religious discussions on religious authority, dogmatic doctrine, and belief itself. These discussions also debate and negotiate diverse construction processes of religious identity as well as religious action and behavior. An example for such processes is the discussion of a popular ritual at Good Friday on the Philippines, namely the self-crucifixion. This ritual was invented in 1962 and originates in the concept of self-flagellation in the 16th and 17th centuries when Spanish missionaries brought Passion plays to the Philippines and introduced the Iberian 'Calvary Catholicism'. Public self-crucifixion became very popular and is performed in parts of the Northern Philippines. Nowadays, this ritual is highly mediatized: the Word Wide Web is full of pictures and videos of self-crucifixions which evolve heated discussions. It is also shown and presented in the television as a prominent event and cultural heritage. So it is not surprising that certain villages became a famous tourist spot - a fact which is highly criticized by the catholic clergy. The paper will present the mediatization processes in various media genres and ask for transformation processes. For this it analyzes the different construction as well as

negotiation processes of religious and cultural identity. In contrast to former research which based on the idea of mediatization as dominated by a certain media logic, the paper will take also other socio-cultural processes such as globalization or economic developments into consideration.

Id: 10923

Title: The Makerspace in the Basement

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Abstract: The Mt. Elliot Makerspace is one of hundreds of makerspaces that have popped up in the United States over the last ten years. Branching off of the 'Maker Movement'-- a contemporary extension of Do-It-Yourself culture that emphasizes use of novel technological equipment, this is a communal space for people to come together and work on DIY projects ranging from wood tables to personal Arduino robots. In the press, Mt. Elliot has been lauded not only for its educational work with underserved youth, but also its emphasis on outreach and neighborhood building. However, one thing that has not been mentioned is the fact that it is located in the basement of a church ' the Church of the Messiah in southeastern Detroit. In fact church basements-- typically in Protestant churches-- have functioned as the sites for myriad maker spaces all over the United States. Churches have long functioned as places of communal gathering, acting as what Oldenburg (1999) calls 'third places.' These are public sites that reside outside the first two spheres of living (work and home), such as taverns and coffee shops, that provide people opportunities to gather and engage with one another. Within church estates themselves, these church basements additionally function as a third places within the third place of the church, since they work to bond the community outside the prescribed activities of spiritual communion. In American Protestant churches, the church basement has traditionally hosted 'hobbyist' groups, such as quilting and knitting ministries. However, despite the fact that these activities might be included within the current sphere of 'makerdom', numerous people have critiqued the Maker Movement for its emphasis on high-tech tools above more 'feminine' crafting practices, thus marking it as a more exclusive, 'masculine' arena (Bean and Rosner, 2014; Buechley, 2013). Additionally, whereas church basement activities have traditionally emphasized building a sense of togetherness within the existing community of the church, the Maker Movement comes out of a libertarian ideology (Morozov, 2014) that emphasizes the creation of self-sufficient networks that reside outside traditional authority structures such as the church. Our study examines the role of the church basement as a feminized, marginal, religious space in light of the rise of church-situated hacker and maker spaces. We perform a close reading of the materials provided by those makerspaces that have made their homes in churches, and we interview and perform participant observation at HacDC, a church-

located makerspace in Washington DC. We ask: how might an examination of the contemporary 'masculine' makerspace shed new light on the traditional 'feminine' space of the church basement, and vice versa' References: Bean, J., & Rosner, D. (2014). Making: movement or brand'. *interactions*, 21(1), 26-27. Buechley, L. (2013, October 28). Keynote Talk. Presented at the FabLearn 2013, Stanford, CA. Retrieved from <http://edstream.stanford.edu/Video/Play/883b61dd951d4d3f90abeec65eead2911d> Oldenburg, R. (1999). *The Great Good Place: Cafes, Coffee Shops, Bookstores, Bars, Hair Salons, and Other Hangouts at the Heart of a Community* (3rd edition.). New York: Berkeley, Calif.: Marlowe & Company.

Id: 11014

Title: Is Cremation Religious or Cultural: Do we bury the ashes'

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Abstract: Globalization has made the world fast become a global village; with a great inter-connectedness between the North and the South. The Northern and Southern spheres are being found with no choice but to fuse their cultural values and beliefs with those from far and wide. Some of these bi-values tend to be easily accepted and others quickly rejected as is the case of cremation in the Sub-Southern Sahara, in the country of Malawi. A case of cremating the dead has caused a stir in probing a media reaction and scholarly discussions. Scholars have recently become increasingly interested in the role religion plays in the responses to the funerals and burials/cremation ' cultural procedures in Malawi. Here, we present the Malawi burial procedures, cultural values, religious beliefs in view of death and burials: data will be provided to examine the relationship between religion and burial services through surveys and in-depth interviews with denominational leaders, congregational leaders, and congregation members in three districts of Malawi. In this paper, we outline existing perspectives on the religion and cultural perspective links on burials, the cremation concept, cultural taboos in conducting funerals and a provision of initial evidence for a series of general research hypotheses. The paper will further describe how the data collected can be used both to extend explorations of the relationship between religion and cultures in burying the dead and, also as a model for gathering similar data in other contexts. This research also aims to establish and clarify hegemony or resistance: on the ambiguous power of communication as interviews to allow empirical research on religion, death, related behaviors, attitudes, and norms.

Id: 11164

Title: Religious Exclusion and Caste Discrimination: Tracing the trajectory through the Periodic Telugu Cinema

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Abstract: This paper looks at film as a historical account on understanding religious exclusion engineered through dominant images to reinforce caste and gender discrimination in the minds of the audience. Textual analysis of selected films from the pre-independence to post-liberalization era is studied. Films such as Maalapilla (1938) (Untouchable girl), Osey Ramulamma (1997), Ammoru (1995) etc. that depicted narratives on the tussle for temple entry and atrocities on the caste background are common both in reality and cinematic expressions. This paper examines projection of various communities, their characterization and thematic unfolding. The objective of the study underpin that the pre-independent Telugu cinema to the post liberalization cinema showcased the religious exclusion more overtly than subtly. One of the major findings of the study was that Dalits and Dalit women are craving to become part of Hindu religious fold than any other religion. Whereas, the history provides evidence of Dalits taking Christianity, Buddhism and Islam in Telugu society. There is a dearth of literature on this aspect particularly in the Indian pedagogy. The context of the paper finds its relevance in the Benjamin's analogy on the Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction in the backdrop of representing marginality. Unlike Bollywood 'the Bombay Cinema -Hindi language film industry, Tollywood-the Telugu language film industry is considerably large and broadly akin to the ground realities in India. Both the caste and religions are inevitable part of the story lines of the Indian cinema in general and of the Telugu cinema to be specific. Caste and religion are underlying themes in any Indian film. Their engagement is contradictory in their own right, so also attributory. Their historical genealogies are inseparable in their functionality and fluid in the reality of their coexistence. Dalits- a socially oppressed section and many other forms deprivations rooted in the hierarchical and the hegemonic ideology of the Hindu religion. The heat of the constant tension between these socially lower and upper castes has become part of the Indian cinema storyline since its inception. Since 1938 till now films are continuously stereotyping this imaginary Dalit aspiration to become part of the Hindu religious hegemony is an underlying project of the so-called upper caste.

Id: 11225

Title: Construction of Hinduism online: new media, new narratives '

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Abstract: Knowledge construction was traditionally a process confined to restricted groups of people and institutions. This process has undergone considerable democratisation with the advent of new media, the World Wide Web and the Internet. The term 'Hinduism', emerging from Indological and Orientalist discourses, is an overarching construct referring to any, some or all of a variety of schools of thought, philosophies, ways of life, beliefs and practices prevailing in the Indian sub-continent. This paper seeks to analyse the framing of the term 'Hinduism' on a crowd-sourced knowledge construction website like Wikipedia as well as other institutional sources of knowledge construction that have come into being exclusively in the online space, in comparison with the traditional institutional sources of knowledge construction like Encyclopedia Britannica (online versions), etc. This paper would engage with the argument that new media provides a platform for democratisation of channels of communication and larger participation of erstwhile receivers in the making of content of communication, thus challenging the hegemony of conventional sources of knowledge by giving alternative narratives on a given subject. The paper will also attempt to study and understand the major actors participating in this process of knowledge construction on Hinduism and the nature of citations/references/sources used.

Id: 11228

Title: Media Events and the Death of Rabbis.

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Abstract: The death of a religious leader has a profound impact among his followers. This includes a sense of communal loss of a father-figure, generating in some cases acute despair among his followers. In the hassidic context, for example, the admor or spiritual head fulfils a role well-beyond being a posek of halakha , or one who decides Jewish religious law, and gives advice on a range of family matters, and even business matters. In the age of mass media, the death of the rabbi and his funeral generates wide coverage in the printed press, radio, television and Internet, notably on the day of death but also in the period afterwards, and in the case of sickness the period prior to death during which prayers for the rabbi's are recited. The paper examines the media and the death of the spiritual head of Sephardi, or oriental, Jewry, Ovadiah Yosef in 2013, examining how his funeral became a media event, and a platform for expression of loss among his followers.

Id: 11344

Title: Religious Identity in Russian Media: Hegemony, Resistance or Ignorance'

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Abstract: Media coverage of religious identity in Russia is still difficult for journalists for many reasons. The first is the ethnical domination. According to the "Levada-Center" longitude research, religious identity for Russians is still much less significant in comparison to ethnic identity. Responses to the question "Who do you perceive yourself with pride that in the first place add your self-respect" show that during the period from 1989 to 2008 the share of respondents that chose "I am Russian" rose from 43% to 50%, while those who chose option "I am believer" - from 4% to 15%. The second reason for is the religious and quasi-religious "mixture" in mass consciousness and, consequently, in Russian public sphere. Describing in his research the increase the ideological uncertainty and beliefs in reincarnation and astrology, witches, shamans and so on, sociologist D. Furman suggested, than religion is not winning vs atheism in Russia, rather atheism wins vs religion (Furman, Kaariainen 2006). According to surveys, conducted in Moscow State University, Keston Institute, SOVA Center, Forum 18 and other research centers, conflicts between religious identity prescribed from above and self-identity of Russians cause complications in the interactions of religions in the public sphere. Explosion of the religious life from the inner circle of communication (family, relatives, friends) into the public dimension - mostly channeled and mediatized by mass media - could lead to more active influence of religion in the public space up to its political manifestations - the creation of the Christian or Islamic parties. However, this has not happen. Media coverage of religious identity in Russia generally could be described in terms of hegemony, resistance and ignorance: hegemony of the leading religious community - Russian Orthodox Church (in some - but very few - regions - Muslims), resistance of religious minorities (Catholics, Protestants, Jews etc) and ignorance of their moral vices and social demands by mass media and government at federal and regional levels. Muslims normally fail in demanding to separate the concepts of "Muslim" and "terrorist" or "extremists", Jews are not successful in fighting again anti-Semitism, Catholics and Protestants are constantly suspected as "foreign agents". Ignorance by Russian mass media, excluding religious requests from agenda and framing the everyday life mostly in political perspective are main factors of the marginalization of religion. More data will be provided in final paper, but the most evident argument today is the military conflict in the Eastern Ukraine - religious protests against it are not articulated properly in mass media and are not able to stop the war despite of claims on power of religion in the public sphere. Religion evidently fails in the battle with politics. Keywords: media, religious identity, mediatization, public sphere, mass communication, Russia.

Id: 11368

Title: Is it Soft Power'

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Abstract: In 1990, Joseph Nye offered a concept that has now become almost a buzz phrase 'soft power. Soft power is the ability 'to attract and co-opt' as opposed to using coercion, bribing or using force. Recent years have offered challenges to the church(es) (and here I include groups other than Christianity), many of which have come from media reporting on topics that have caused a backlash among believers: abuse cases, corruption, terrorism. While any of these subjects would be unacceptable in any stratum of society, that they have been found to be (seemingly) rife among religious leaders, has caused many people to decide that they no longer want to stay within their religious group. This paper will consider the 'Francis Effect'. Following the media coverage of the reign of Benedict XVI, a man who was not really at ease with the media, we now have a Pope who seems to be a different sort of man altogether. While the outfit he wears is the same, the outlook seems not to be. How true is this' The paper will consider coverage of stories about the two popes and their outreach to the world. How different are they in actuality' Is there really a chasm between the two men's outlooks' There will be a combination of content analysis and interview material used to address this conundrum. What has caused this 'Francis Effect', which apparently is causing people to return to the Church' Is Francis using his own form of soft power'Bibliographyye, Joseph.Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power(New York: Basic Books, 1990).

Id: 11665

Title: Panel: The religion and the concept of public at the brazilian public broadcast

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Abstract: A research conducted by the Brazilian Cinema Agency (ANCINE) in 2014 shows that 17.9% broadcasters of all Brazilian televisions have been occupied by religious programs. The gender is in the top of Brazilian television, ahead of journalism (13.1%) and the series (10.0%). The genre's strong presence does not reflect, however, the Brazilian's religious diversity. A survey from IBGE shows there are 140 religions at Brazil, but the media space is occupied exclusively by Christian denominations: or by the Catholic Church or evangelical groups. This reality takes form in a highly concentrated broadcasting system. Report from the British NGO Article 19 shows that, in 2007, six private corporations hold the Brazilian TV market negotiates more than USD 3 billion in publicity. To monopolize the use of electromagnetic frequencies, media companies exercise according to their optical and interests the process of "selection and disposal of many world outlines the horizon of possible features" (Galimberti, 2006). The TV Brasil, television station subject to the Empresa Brasileira de Comunicação (EBC), was created with the objective of structuring for the first time, a network of public broadcasters in the country that could minimally offset this system. Although intended a much smaller space to religious programs (2.5%), the public broadcaster also maintains the gender from the hegemonic groups. In 2011, a resolution taken by the Curator Council of the EBC, the body responsible by the editorial line of EBC and, therefore, the TV Brasil, ordered the suspension of religious programs. The decision embeds the concept of "public" as a disputed territory. To make the decision, the Curator Council made use of the concept of secular state. Public, so while State. The decision was not unanimous. Members of the Council against the decision, reminded of the role of religion in the cultural formation of the Brazilian people that approaches the concept of public to the popular culture. Catholics and Evangelicals people have come together to defend the maintenance of the programs. On the other hand, representatives of minority religious denominations joined the

secularism advocates against the christian programs. The solution to the impasse was a mediated way out: the creation of a range of religious diversity, with a secular approach of other religions. The few proposals for inclusion of other religious rituals in programming such as the aim of reducing the historical inequality between the hegemonic faith and minority groups, such the afro-brazilian religions, were not considered. Is the question that arises from this decision that focuses this work: to what extent the solution (that with the maintenance the area of hegemonic groups and prohibits the practice of other rites of faith) would not be a way against to a more inclusive process to ensure equal treatment to groups historically treated unequally' How the occupation of media by afro-brazilian or indigenous rites could contribute to reducing the prejudice' To answer this question, the work uses concept like "hybrid cultures" from Nestor Canclini and mediation from Jesus Barbero.

Id: 11669

Title: It's All the Government's Fault: Online Media Framing of Religious Conflict of Ahmadiyah in Indonesia

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Abstract: Built on the assumption that news media construct their own frames in reporting religious conflict, this study investigates how Indonesian online media framed the Ahmadiyah conflict in Cikeusik, Banten Province, Indonesia during February 2011. This topic is considered as significant due to little research on Ahmadiyah, especially in the Southeast Asian context. Additionally, exploration of media's role in portraying religious conflict should be seen as important, both for theoretical and practical reasons. Based on framing analysis of 359 news articles taken from two major online media in Indonesia, Kompas.com and Republika Online, this research used a qualitative textual analysis approach in identifying the frames. Research findings suggest that Kompas.com indirectly named the incident as an attack and violations of human rights but avoided to mention the event as religious conflict. In contrast, Republika Online, which was influenced by Islamic values tended to name the event as a clash based on religious issues. Republika Online even suggested to ban the Ahmadiyah since it was considered as unwanted by the majority of Muslims in Indonesia, especially in Banten province where the conflict happened. Both media named the actors as anonymous but blamed the government's failure in protecting religious rights. Furthermore, as a Muslim majority country, Islamic teaching indirectly influenced how the Indonesian news media portrays religious conflict associated with Muslim and Islamic sect like the Ahmadiyah. This study helps to understand how the media framed the same issue but with different frames based on their own religious affiliations. Moreover, qualitative textual analysis approach also found to be sufficient to identify hidden frames within the word choice, language structures, and the usage of informant's statements in the news texts. A more detailed analysis of each frames were further discussed within the paper.

Id: 11672

Title: No Country for Movie Buffs: The Historical Role of Political Religion in the Ban on Commercial Movie Theaters in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract: This paper provides unique insight into the variants of political religion in Saudi Arabia and its relation to media. It explores the seeds of ideology that lead to the restriction on media and movie theaters in particular in modern Saudi Arabia. It follows the growth of those seeds through two events that happened over two periods. In 1912, a young Danish explorer, named Barclay Raunkiaer, traveled and documented his journey to central Arabia in his book *Through Wahhabiland on Camelback*, and gave communication historians a glimpse on the existed milieu in which the attitude towards communication mediums formed in the early years of the formation of modern Saudi Arabia, the third kingdom. In 1965, Saudi security authority killed a religious member of the royal family, prince Khaled bin Musa'ad, after his attempt to attack one of the first Television station in the country. The Saudi government was secretive regarding this event, however, the coverage of some United States' newspapers' reveals some settings in which the attitude towards the advent of television formed. History is written by the victors, as Winston Churchill believed, this is why, when writing about history, we enter an arena of truth struggle concerning the forgotten and marginal elements within the society, as Foucault puts it (Smith and Riley, 2009). Under theocratic system, it is hard to offer supplemental perspective that differs from the prevailing ruling power's perspective, particularly when the existing structural aspects are1 Used first by K.C.W.F., the Economist, Oct 18th 2013.2sustained by religious, cultural, economic and political alliances. Social responses to new technologies differ based on the environment. The inception of almost each new technologies (public sphere) in Saudi Arabia (telegraph, radio, film, television') has provoked radical views, and the dominant authority works to contain and spatialize power relations in society (Foucault, 1977). Historical approach is used here over two periods of Saudi history to understand the political religion and cultural transformation in relation to cinema. The argument here is that linking Raunkiaer's observations in 1912 to the prince death in 1965 helps to understand and conceptualize the political religion effects on contemporary Saudi cinema. This shows that the distrust and extremism towards film and movie theaters in Saudi Arabia is not isolated from a deep-rooted culture and political religion that has been complicit in it.

Id: 11712

Title: Wechat and Catholic Youth in China Today

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Abstract: Social Networking has greatly influenced the communication behaviors of many, especial the young people. This paper is present a scientific study of Wechat, one of the most influential social networks in China, and its influences and impact on the Catholic youth in China. The author had conducted a survey to 300 Catholic youth, from both urban and rural areas. Some interesting findings will be presented in the paper. Many Catholic young people in China believe social networking, such as Wechat, could be used for evangelization and can be served as a platform where they can share their experiences and stories of their faith.

Id: 11743

Title: Digital Dystopia : Citizen Outrage, Global Fear, Media Censorship, and Biblical Beheadings

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Abstract: IAMCR Conference 2015 Working Group: Religion, Communication & Culture
Despite global outrage over the January 7, 2015 massacre of the Charlie Hebdo satirical magazine staff and associated murders in Paris, apprehension and safety issues abound globally as publication editors weigh the merits to potential media critique of sensitive religious matters related to Islam, with fear of reprisals. In 2008, an article of mine -- approved by the editors of an anthology -- was removed by the publisher Peter Lang due to 'serious concerns about the potentially controversial claims and generalizations,' which translated, basically, to issues of fear and safety tied to publication. These are very legitimate concerns, yet refusal of major Western publishing houses to allow voices that question important issues surrounding radical Islamism is a growing, disturbing trend. Publisher censorship further moves free speech to a contestable realm, and the entire world closer to global Islamist control and influence -- a primary contention in my essay, which was for an anthology on media and the end of the world, meaning that all contributions had to be primarily hypothetical. Does a rising acceptance of sharia laws as protective devices for Muslims carry an overarching obsession on the motivational forces driving this action -- namely fear and safety -- during our digital age? Leveraging the values of debate and discourse for free speech with the religious sensitivities that now relegate freedom of speech to an acquiescence of silence and fear is a technological nightmare. The Internet and new media exacerbate the call for terrorism reform and policies that suggest fear of reprisal is a primary incentive for eventual global legal compliance that silences important voices in the marketplace of ideas as a form of religious blackmail. While no one wants to suggest the war on terror with its mass-mediated murders as beheadings and burnings that conjure imagery from the Book of Revelation may hold more than symbolic relevance for the future of mankind, that the three Abrahamic religions are each awaiting their messiahs with extremists poised for global confrontation is prophetic.

Id: 11745

Title: Online Games as Conflict Zones for Hindu Diaspora Identity and Authority Negotiations

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Abstract: Though new media are increasingly significant for religious actors in South Asia as well as in the South Asian diaspora, mediatization processes as related to Hindu traditions are still highly under-researched. This is true for new media, in general, and more so for research on video gaming and religion. But as much as new media in India influence cultural and social transformations, in general, they also contribute to (re)shape and (de)construct religious identity and authority. Online Games ' from the 'West' and India ' took up Hindu deities and concepts ever since digital media emerged. In South Asia, Hindu deities were mainly incorporated in educational online games and in the 'West', Hindu deities occasionally appeared in mythological online games. Such representations previously raised no public concerns, but recent developments point at an opposite trend. The paper discusses the recent developments in the light of theories on religion and new media, by presenting two case studies. Especially Hindu diaspora groups increasingly sharply criticize the incorporation of Hindu deities in gaming environments, such as Kali's representation in the online action game 'Smite'. Another example for this trend is that the slot game 'Lakshmi Gold' by the major company Playtech was withdrawn only 3 days after its release, due to heavy protests by Hindu groups. The paper analyzes the initial protest, formally presented in press releases, by a Hindu group based in the USA, and the heated Internet debates following the protest. As such, the paper discloses the implicit negotiations of Hindu diaspora identity and authority via new media, and the debates' role as identity marker and authority consolidator for religious groups in diaspora environments.

Id: 11748

Title: Video Gaming and Religion in South Asia

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Abstract: Research on video games and religion so far has primarily concentrated on European and U.S. settings. But video gaming rapidly evolves also in South Asia and plays an increasing role for Indian audiences and religious actors as well as for global, diaspora audiences with Indian backgrounds. India produced video games by today take up a number of religious issues and reconstruct and negotiate religious concepts and beliefs, such as postmortality. This is interesting as such, but it is even more rewarding to proceed from analyzing the game immanent narrative only to now also include the recipients' perspective, i.e. to analyze if the religious topoi constructed in the game are discussed by people playing or watching the game, and if so, in which way. This presentation discusses, first, the religious constructions in one of India's largest video games so far, the 2011 released Ra.One (available cross-platform, i.e. for PS2/ PS3, PC, smartphones and in online versions), which shows an intrinsic interconnection with the Bollywood Science-Fiction Blockbuster. Both film and games intensively experiment with Western as well as Asian religious, especially postmortal constructs ' for instance, the game's character 'Lucifer' is based on Christian afterlife concepts while 'Ra.One' directly refers to Hindu mythology. But primarily, the narrative toys with immortality. The game developer designs the game's protagonist 'G.One' (translating from Hindi to 'Life') as his (immortal, game-immanent) alter ego and indeed gets 'reborn' in the real world as a living machine-human-hybrid after his biological death. Both major gaming characters, G.One and the antagonist Ra.One, cannot be killed without their H.A.R.T (Hertz Advanced Resonance Transmitter, an acronym clearly toying with 'heart') plugged into their systems, thus declaring them 'alive' (and able to die, i.e. able to enter postmortal worlds) only with a 'heart'. Ra.One thus toys with (after)life constructs based on a human-machine-nexus, with notions on gaming/technical/mechanical enhanced immortality and, as such, with definitions of life, death and life after death in both games and real life. The presentation, second, proceeds from analyzing the game immanent narrative only and for this highlights the recipients' perspective. In order to decipher if the religious topoi constructed in the game are ' explicitly or less evidently ' relevant for people playing or watching the game, it takes discussions on the game into account. Such discussion occur in a number of new media formats, such as in blogs, press articles, as comments on gaming videos, etc.

Id: 11763

Title: Anal Sphincter Exercise as Meditative Prayer: Seeking a New Direction for Prayer in the Digital Age

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Abstract: This research seeks to contribute to the study of prayer in the contemporary context of media, religion, and culture by proposing a new direction for prayer in the digital age. The main premise of this research is that in the current media-saturated world, enhanced by digital technologies, people's basic desires, which arise from attachment to the objects of eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body, are easily manipulated and distracted. Desires, therefore, turn to lust with obsession. This research also assumes that such an overly mediated environment makes it more difficult for people to reflect on their thoughts and feelings and find their true selves. Matt Swaim's view on prayer in the mediated world supports the premise of this research. In *Prayer in the Digital Age*, Swain observes two forms of hindrance to prayer in the media-saturated world: 'obstacles class'ed according to distraction, and obstacles class'ed according to fear' (Swaim, 2011, p.4). Swain indicates that we need to acknowledge the imperfection of the conventional method of prayer in the digital media age, which occupies our senses with distraction and fear. That is, prayer in the contemporary media environment should be practiced to prevent our senses from being tricked and manipulated. In this context, anal sphincter exercise, a traditional meditation practice in the East, is proposed as a supplement to meditative prayer. At first glance, it seems there is no connection between anal sphincter exercise and meditative prayer, because the former is mainly considered a physical exercise for health, and the latter is identified as a contemplative prayer or centering prayer based on Christian mysticism. However, from the perspective of meditation, they both share a common denominator: avoiding distraction and finding one's true self. As a form of Christian meditation, meditative prayer creates 'the emotional and spiritual space that allows God to construct an inner sanctuary in the heart' (Foster, 2011, p.26).

Anticipated Significance This research seeks to contribute to the study of prayer in the contemporary context of media, religion, and culture by proposing a new direction for prayer in the digital age. This research provides me with an excellent opportunity to attempt to form a theory about digital breathing and suggest a new direction for prayer in the digital age. **References** Foster, R. (2011). *Sanctuary of the Soul: Journey into Meditative Prayer*. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Books. Merton, T. (1996). *Contemplative prayer*. New York: Doubleday. Mijares, S. (Ed.). (2009). *The revelation of the breath: A tribute to its wisdom, power, and beauty*. Albany, N.Y.: Excelsior Editions. Oida, Y., & Lorna M. (1997). *The invisible actor*. New York: Routledge. Song, J., Kang, H., & Kim, J. (2009). 'Anal Breathing Training and the Oriental Medical Study of Anal Breathing.' *Journal of Medical Gi-Gong* 11. Swaim, M. (2011). *Prayer in the Digital Age*. Liguori,

Mo.: Liguori.

Id: 11766

Title: 'Celebrity Preachers: An Exploration of the Theory of Mediatization of Religion Through an Analysis of the Celebritized Messenger of the Gospel'

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Abstract: Keywords: media, television, preacher, celebrity, gospel, entertainment Since media analyst Marshal McLuhan posited, "The medium is the message," in his groundbreaking book *Understanding Media* (1964), mass media, television in particular, has so altered the presentation of the gospel message, and the image of the gospel preacher as to bear out the reality of McLuhan's theory. Stig Hjarvard (2006) suggests that a true sociological understanding of the relationship between media and religion comes not in analyzing the religious message projected through media, but rather through analyzing how media imposes itself on the form of religion. Since the time of America's 'Great Awakening,' media has celebritized the preacher. From the dramatic yet well-studied gospel messenger George Whitfield of the typographic era (Postman, 1985), the preacher has become the drama-steeped entertainer of the reality television era of the 21st century. Through formats such as Trinity Broadcasting Network's talk-show, 'Praise the Lord,' which highlight the messenger rather than the message, television has transitioned from a technological conduit employed by the preacher to become the architect of the preacher as celebrity. Charismatic personality, entrepreneurial sophistication, and glamorizing the gospel message in conformity to the nature of the medium are factors contributing to celebritization. Specifically, Hjarvard's the production 'language' of television is illustrated in the ministries of mega-church pastors T. D. Jakes, Joel Osteen, Rick Warren, and the stars of Oxygen network's 'Preachers of L. A.' This paper explores the mediatization of religion through the emerging phenomenon of the celebrity preacher as popular entertainer rather than gospel messenger, and the implications of this phenomenon to both religion and culture in the 21st century.

