Religion and Communication Working Group

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Id: 19496

Title: US Mega-Church and its visual culture

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The 21st century US mega-church – mall like complex in the suburbs which features information desk, coffee shop with comfy stylish chairs and sofas, an auditorium equipped with movie-theater seats and massive video screens, all surrounded by acres of parking lot to accommodate hundreds of automobiles- is a byproduct of the Church Growth movement, Evangelical movement and the 1st and 2nd revivalism that swiped the entire US and some part of the UK. The US mega-church is a "seeker-sensitive" model that reflects the era's trends in easy and feel good theology that provides convenient salvation. The mega-church provides amenities that seekers need such as online prayers, instant online community chat room, gluten free communion wafer, allergen-friendly communion, and child care service in the name of youth ministry. Mega-church indeed became the face of capitalism that became huge enterprises that leads many branches of Campus plan, utilizes electronic media, new construction materials, Online cyber church that employs the latest technology that's available. Through this paper, I analyze visuals of US mega-churches and offer the relativity to its non-nomination creed.

Id: 19503

Title: [Panel] Democracy, Religion and Political Communication in South Asia, Panel description

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: The primary focus of the of the panel discussion will be to dissect and discuss as to how an average citizen as voter decides to choose a political party or a candidate that would cater to his/her personal and ideological expectations for the smooth functioning of democracy in South Asia today. What are personal, political and religious considerations in the decision making as which party or person to vote in largely poor, illiterate and information deprived voters. Each panel participant will be expected to critically examine and discuss how the cultural and religious factors and belief systems are expressed, internalize and propagated in the election campaigns? Also how country specific/culture specific religious signs, symbols, and media are used and expressed political messages in the local languages, idioms and delivered to convinced the voters to vote for a particular party or individual candidate? Further, how religious values and ethos have been intertwined within political communication to achieve democratic goals in elections campaigns?

The panel discussion is considered critical and important keeping in view that most of the British colonial South Asia achieved its independence after Second World War II and these countries adopted parliamentary democracy of adult franchise regardless of country's political history or past methods of governance and state religion. The periodic elections have been held in almost all South Asian countries regardless their population size that include few million population Bhutan and billion plus population India. By and large democracy has matured and flourished in these countries requiring serious theoretical discussion on the issues of emerging political communication and new forms of democracy.

The panel participants will bring out their research based analyses, experiences and observations during their presentations and discussions.

Id: 19532

Title: Shaming in Judaism: Past, Present, Future

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: It is sometimes thought that public shaming is a new phenomenon, only emerging with the
advent of the Internet and, in particular, with the rapid growth of social media. Yet, from a
historical and religious viewpoint public shaming can be seen as a modern version of legal
penal practices that were common in the Middle Ages and occasionally resorted to in
subsequent years. In this article, we survey the various modes of public shaming within the
Jewish community in the Middle Ages and in modern times. We review whether and how the
new practice of communications shaming on social media has been adopted by religious
institutions as an extension of communal, traditional shaming, and discuss how rabbis relate
to this today.

Id: 19533

Title: Territorializing the sacred into contempt: The contextualization of celebrity shamans in Korea

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: This study is an ethnographic research focusing on celebrity shamans in Korea, the celebrities who have "come out" as shamans. The term "celebrities" refers here to actors and actresses, fashion models, singers, and performance artists. This study explores the life of the celebrities, who have decided to live as a shaman, even though doing so means they will never again appear in the limelight. Exploring the life of celebrity shamans through the cultural studies lenses can provide a perspective on how the sacred can be constructed (or deconstructed) with the mediatization of Korean culture. Mediatization is the "long-term interrelation processes between media change, on the one hand, and social and cultural change on the other" (Hepp, Hjarvard and Lundby 223).

Shamanism is the indigenous belief system in Korea, but shamans in Korea have been ostracized by the ruling power for more than five hundred years. With the mediatization of contemporary Korean culture, shamanism has seen a resurgence. Ironically though, celebrity shamans in Korea are not the beneficiary from the mediatization process. Rather, when the celebrities came out as shamans, the sacred aura that they have held became de-and re-territorialized as a sacred commodity, execrated by Korean society at large.

Cultural studies is an interdisciplinary intellectual tool, which maps out strategies of articulating power relations in the rhizomatic collection of the contexts that constantly reiterate the process of de-and reterritorialization. Also, cultural studies provides scholars skeptical, analytical disposition, by which to study the relation among discourse, power, everyday life in modern society. From a cultural studies perspective, mapping out the process of territorialization from the sacred aura of celebrity into a sacred commodity of celebrity shamans can demonstrate how the construction of the sacred can be contextualized in various domains of Korean culture.

Id: 19591

Title: Facebook as an arena of struggle for the right to political participation of Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) women in Israel

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: In the Israeli political reality, the Haredi parties, despite their participation in the parliament, ideologically reject the democratic outlook and exclude women. This exclusion represents their religious outlook.
This political reality contradicts the law and the values of democratic rule. It has been made possible due to the unique cultural status of Haredi society and political interests.

One of the most important and unique phenomena in the 2013 elections was the political organization of a small group of Haredi women on the Facebook, demanding representation in the Haredi parties. The group operated under the name "LONI-LOBO" (Hebrew)."

For the first time in Israel, Harediwomen from various groups joined in protest against the radicalization against   Hared iwomen. In order to combat extremism, they posed a revolutionary feminist demand - representing women in the Harediparties. Their demand for democratization, equality and partnership in the political system undermines their absolute exclusion from the public arena.

Two major changes in Haredi society have enabled women's protest: changes in the media's exposure and consumption patterns, and changes in the level of education and traditional patterns of employment among Haredi women.

Haredi society's traditional ideological stance regarding the modern media rejects the use of the new media - as part of the supervision of exposure to modern / secular content that is perceived as prohibited. There is still an argument regarding the use of computers and the Internet. The adoption of the Smartphone made it possible to breach the control walls anonymously. Against this background, the use of Facebook for the purpose of protest by women is perceived as subversive.

In the 2015 elections, the Group's activity was renewed, and it also affected other initiatives. ""LONI-LOBO" " expanded its media activity in order to raise the issue to the public-media agenda. Soon a protest movement began to crystallize on Facebook. In a reality where Haredi women were forced to deal with "symbolic annihilation" (Tuchman, 1978) in the Haredi media, the media arena in Facebook became the centerpiece of their activity .

Like other protest movements in non-democratic societies (eg, Breuer, 2012; Baylor, 1996; Mccurdy, 2012), the social network was also an effective, cheap and anonymous means of organizing and mobilizing messages. Facebook has made it possible to bypass the gatekeeper men - in the Haredi media. A virtual community of women formed an alternative political discourse, sparked a lively discussion of women and men and the formation of a new feminist-Haredi identity . Theoretically, this is an interdisciplinary study that focuses on Haredi society as a minority group in the encounter between media, protest and feminism - in terms of the status of women and political and media representation.

 The study examines, through textual analysis of the posts published on the Facebook page of the protest movement, the process of forming a feminist leadership with a feminist consciousness among Haredi women. The activities of women show that they adopt the Internet and social networks as a platform for change alongside the old media .

Id: 19650

Title: Religion on News Websites: a case study in Israel

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The paper examines the image of religion constructed in Israeli on-line news websites in order to generate a picture of how religion is covered in the age of new media. A content analysis in four websites comprised- a secular a secular elite website (Haaretz on-line), a secular popular website (Y-Net), and two religious websites - one reflecting the modern orthodox (Arutz 7), and one B' Hadrei Haredim -- reflecting the Haredim -- was carried out for an eight week period.
The most covered category was Religion 13.3% which was followed by religious festivals (8.9%), synagogue (5.2%), God (4.2%); secular Jews (4.2%), Modern Orthodox Judaism (4.1%), prayer (3.9%), and Haredim (3.7%). All other categories amounted to less than 3% each.
Ironically, "Religion" and "God". the two categories creceived least coverage on the two religious-orthodox websites - 10.8% (Arutz 7) And, 11.2% (BeHadrei Haredim) in contrast to 30.2% in Haaretz on-line and 19.1% in Y-Net. The high score for Haaretz on-line reflects the intellectual reflective approach it takes to questions about theological belief in contrast to the two orthodox websites which are not inclined to question fundamentals about God and religion.
The two combined categories of religious festival and fasts reached 11.3%, and reflect the central part which religious festival and fasts have in Israeli Jewish culture.
All the websites are clearly orientated to the Jewish faith. While it is only natural for the focus in a country's media to be on the dominant faith, the extent to which this was the case was surprising, particularly given that Muslims make up a sizeable part of the opposition.

The Western Wall and the Temple Mount in Jerusalem varied considerably -- with the two religious websites much higher than the non-religious ones.
  Overall, some similarities between the two religious and the two secular websites may be identified . The religious websites (BHadrei Haredim and Arutz 7) gave most space for religious leaders and non official leaders (like yeshiva heads) and official state and religious posts (like Chief Rabbis). Other key themes for the religious websites included the centrality of the synagogue and prayer; religious festival; and fasts; and broader existential theological matters about religion, existence of God, and religious streams. For the non-religious, broader or existential and theological, questions, God were even more singularly prominent. Also prominent was synagogue prayer, as was religious streams - reflecting to some extent the tribal characteristic in religious life. Both religious and non-religious were single-mindedly orientated to Judaism, away from other faith groups.

Id: 20282

Title: Wo/Men's God-given Power: Male Headship vs Female Agency in Pentecostal Sermons

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: This research project seeks to reveal the relationship between Pentecostal Christianity and patriarchal ideology in South Africa. Recorded sermons from two Pentecostal (charismatic) churches in Alexandra Township (north of Johannesburg, South Africa) are compared using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Through CDA my research ascertains how the church constructs gender hierarchies and perpetuates or challenges gender inequalities. I focus on the Christian religion in general and Pentecostal (charismatic) churches in particular, and also on Black Feminist Theology (BFT). My research is concerned with societal issues and "truths" constructed by the church in the context of Pentecostal churches in Alexandra.

Degenaar (1997: 46) and Voster (2014) refer to "Religious Discourse", arguing that beliefs are constructed through language and that those beliefs (or ideologies) are then naturalised by repeated practice. Tuckey and Kretzhmar (2002) discuss the internalisation of ideology experienced by children who attend Sunday school. Their identities are constructed in a way which encourages "macho" leadership for boys where "servitude" and inferiority are the structures reinforced in girls. Sermons may be also be used as an instrument to conceal these ideologies through the use of a softer patriarchy—giving women responsibilities and roles which are traditional in nature, and do not pose a threat to male power and dominance. Motherhood, for example, is constructed as not only a female identity, but the only identity that should count for women as is discussed in Frahm-Arp's (2016) research on Pentecostal churches in Johannesburg, and is similar to what Nadar (2010) terms "Formenism" and "Masculinism". Formenism is a patriarchal ideology which is initiated and supported by women.

Employing Fairclough's model of CDA, I describe the content of the two sermons studied as text objects−with specific reference to the use of discursive strategies (grammatical, semiotic, narrative and argument) to convey the respective messages. I also interpret the sermons in their religious context as a means of influence, giving reference to some Biblical texts. Lastly, I explain the gender issues pertaining to hierchies between men and women as communicated by the two pastors and in relation to the rights and struggles of South African women. The two ministers stand on opposite ends in constructing the identities of women within the respective congregations. The one constructs a traditional woman, who waits for a man to initiate and for God to stand up to the injustices against her. The second pastor, however, encourages a rejection of such a construct, insisting that women take their stand as leaders in the home, church and society. This shows just how the ideology of male dominance can be both naturalised and presented as a norm or how the normality of it can be presented as foolish or a danger to the family. Any of the two representations construct an identity in the listeners who are given the polarized views: Christian or unChristian. As to the degree to which women in the respective congregations subscribe to these constructs, I find through an ethnographical study of women within the respective audiences.

Id: 20548

Title: Communicating power: The use of religion content to influence public opinion in elections

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Religion and politics are often intertwined especially in presidential elections, where many contesting powers have shown their interests for their own benefits (Tomsa, 2018). Indonesia is not an exception, especially in the use of religion to influence public opinion. The 2018 regional election in different parts of Indonesia, for example, showed the influence of religion in influencing political participation and public opinion for certain candidates.

The use of religion in politics around the world have been common. Aspinall & Mas'udi (2017) argued that even though this is an unfortunate situation, it is a sign of democratization and political participation. Scheiner (2016) argued that religion has indeed influenced and embedded in all course of life including in election, nevertheless, other factors have to be considered as well in influencing public opinion such as cultural practices and economic situation.

Indonesia adopted the combination of presidentialism and a multi-party system since reform government came to power in 1998. With the presidential election coming this year in 2019 and based on the regional election last year, it is expected that religion will continue to be used as a way to influence public opinion in the election. Messages on religion have been transmitted through media, social media or religious events. The popularity and ease of use of social media with different apps and platforms made messages could be easily altered and transmitted through mobile phones.

This study looks at the influences of religion in politics in Indonesia. Data is based on a combination of two sources; The 2015 data of journalism across the globe (WJS) and content analysis data from three online news media that were gathered from February to April, 2019. The selected duration is based on major events leading to election from presidential debates, campaign activities up to the voting process.

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Id: 20685

Title: Adventist Visual Culture from 1830s to 1900s: The Use of Religious Images by a Text-Centered Movement and the Implications to Its Relationship with Mass Media

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Conservative evangelicals and fundamentalist Christian groups show in their history a pioneering and conflicted relationship with mass media, especially the electronic or audio-visual media. While they understand that mass media can be enthusiastically used as an efficient and powerful evangelistic tool, they also criticize it as an "instrument of the Devil", which threatens the values and beliefs of Christian faith. With Seventh-day Adventists the situation is not much different, once the relationship between Adventism and mass media has alternated between a missionary engagement attitude and hard criticism.

One of the main assumptions that lead Adventism to promote an intriguing and conflictual relationship and use of mass media, especially the visual/video ones, is text-centered and print-driven orientation of the movement. This vocation led the movement toward a specific pool of restrictions and rules about how to consume media content and produce religious media products focusing on text over image and reality over fiction. Hence, this study aims to present a brief history of Seventh-day Adventist Church visual culture from 1830s to 1900s in order to identify how the Adventist mindset behind the production of print charts and religious images continued to influence the way Adventist community interacts and creates TV programs and movies.

The article begins with a succinct overview of the Seventh-day Adventist Church history, belief and culture, with an emphasis on the description of one of its identity marks – the text-centered and print-driven orientation – followed by a concise presentation of the history of charts and religious images by Adventists. This leads to an analysis of the Adventist visual imagery focusing on the emphasis on text over image and on reality over fiction. These characteristics are essential to understanding not only the origin of the movement, but also the metanarratives and paradigms by which the Adventism understands itself and the way the movement uses mass media and creates its own media products nowadays.

Id: 20734

Title: The effect of Hope as a placebo effect in the Prophetic age: A case of religious practices on Media in Southern Africa.

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: There is hope that makes sick and hope that does not disappoint. Hope deferred as Solomon puts it "makes the heart sick". Yet, on another hand from Apostle Paul's perspective hope does not disappoint. It is therefore critical to examine these two forms of hope and their effects in the Prophetic age with a special interest on televised prophetic services in Southern Africa.

The rise of the mediated (televised) prophetic age has rekindled the need to probe in-depth the theology of hope. Hope is not usually treated as an isolated entity but in many cases it is fused with other things. In so doing hope is tinted and lost within a tirade of concepts. Yet, if hope is to be examined as an independent concept it speaks volumes and finds its way to addressing human plight.

The concepts of love, faith and hope are important in a human's life and they are also crucial foundations to ones virtues. Majority of theological researchers talk about love and faith (Althouse & Waddell, 2010; Poloma & Green, 2010; Poloma & Hood, Jr., 2008; Hardesty, 2003), however, little is known about hope. Thus, further research on hope is important, because hope is very central to our everyday life and most people do strange things, which this research will bring to light; all because of hope. This is because when a human being is in pursuit of hope, he or she carries a deep tension from within – a battle-scarred heart longing for healing. A quest for something greater than their ability to drive out despair, pain and hurt. Hope isn't just an emotion; it's a perspective, a discipline, a way of life. Hope is a journey of choice (Coty, 2010).

A trace on hope and the role it plays in the lives of people would lead to very crucial aspects of human life. These aspects include the ability or failure to deal with disappointment, pain, abuse and all forms of prejudice in their immediate situations. Hope provides people with the belief that tomorrow will be better than today and it helps us all face the challenges of each day with the anticipation for a breakthrough regardless of the costs.

This research will examine the factors that contribute to such occurrences as it reviews of what hope truly is. It should not be symbolic hope but rather real hope. Many times desperation has been misunderstood for hope, yet there is a very thin line between the two very different worlds. A sobering examination on how many respond to the prophetic claims on television, and the demands thereof would quickly tell us how desperate people are.

Methodology:
This research will use interpretivism and realism as my philosophical stance.

 Resources to be Used:

This research will use primary sources in form of testimonies, interviews, and surveys of church service documentations, preaching recordings and other original materials in line with the hope theology (Observation and experimentation).

This research will also include material that interprets and analyses the primary sources.

Id: 21142

Title: Technology and Religion: The Dialectical Tension of Safety in Religious Spaces

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: In the last several years, the public has witnessed mass shootings at numerous religious centers around the world. From the mass shooting at a synagogue in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania to the shooting at a historically African-American church in Charleston, South Carolina, and to the violence and death at a cathedral in Campinas, Brazil, the narratives of coverage have similarities but also differ greatly in context and meaning.

Historically, churches and religious centers have been places in which people can find physical, as well as spiritual and psychological safety. Safety is being threatened today in the church not only by mass violence, but by the potentially divisive narratives produced in the narratives of coverage, and how these narratives have the potential to bleed into the safety that is found within the religious community themselves. How are these larger narratives of coverage processed by the members of the church communities themselves? Are these narratives implicitly impacting the relationships and safety of those within the church? These questions lead to a larger pragmatic question of if the growth of digital churches is coming about based on a desire for safety and/or safety from confrontation (Hoover and Clark, 2002)? Within this, is the opportunity to practice religion through digital media supporting and/or subverting the ability to exercise the rights and the achievement of universal dignity?

The current research strives to uncover, through a participatory-based, case study approach, how the issue of safety is constructed and deconstructed in light of these pivotal and horrifying moments. Focusing on a church in a midwestern community that is exploring these issues through congregational photo voice, surveys and interviews will not only help with this study, but provide a foundation for future research.

Our approach to the current research is grounded in theorists such as Durkheim who have spoken about how religion organizes people into cohesive social groups, and helps maintain order to preserve social functioning (Durkheim, 1915). Mattis (2001) who reinforces ideas regarding the church as being a space created and fully owned by African Americans as having the responsibility of using its resources to alter the material conditions of the poor and disenfranchised, as well as provide a safe location for community growth.

Locating the multiple dialectical tensions that exist within this issue of "safety" at religious centers can explicate how different elements may attribute and (re)produce individual and collective identities in the broader dimensions of social life (Sandlin, O'Malley & Burdick, 2011). In addition,

a literal foundation can be provided for individuals to begin grappling with the dialectical tensions, or contradictions, encountered daily and how we might better form dialogue, or language and meaning created between people in the interplay of contradictions/opposing forces, around these tensions to discover a new way of understanding and "seeing" the larger dimensions of social life surrounding us (See Bakhtin, 1981; Baxter & Montgomery, 1996; Galanes, 2009; Prentice & Kramer, 2006). Not only does this help to build community within the group where the dialogue is taking place, but it also helps model important dialogic skills.

Id: 21347

Title: Politics or Religion' An Analysis of Hate Comments in Philippine Radio Station's Facebook Page

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: With the victory of Duterte in the 2016 Philippine presidential election, the country had experienced a relative increase of hate speeches on politics, gender and religion. The emergence of these offending and discriminating statements were oftenly attributed to some political factors and the contravening opinions of various government officials, the Catholic Church, and Duterte's critics towards his presidency and administration. Commentaries and opinions on Duterte's drug war campaign and other programs and projects had been trending in the public discourse. Hate speeches not only had been headlining the traditional media of print, radio and TV but also caught too much attention in the social media (Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Instagram). Stalking, trolling and bashing were the names of the game as hate, threat, intimidation, and violence frequent as themes of online comments both towards Duterte and his opponents.

      Drawing inspiration from previous studies and literature, this study aims to examine netizen's anti-faith speeches particularly the hate comments directed towards the Catholic Church. The study delimits to the official Facebook page of Radyo Veritas – a leading Catholic radio news network. Employing a self-made coding sheet, the researcher selected, coded and analyzed netizens' comments for a period of six (6) months (July 2018 to December 2018). Specifically, the comments were examined on its language, purpose or motivation, theme, content, attributes, producer's identity or anonymity, target and interpretation. The results indicated that offensive and obscene language, attack or retaliation, stir hostility through criticism, anonymous identity, directly targeting the Catholic Church and political believers were the dominant categories that emerged during the coding process; reflecting and resonating similar findings of research inquiries on online hate speeches.

Keywords: hate speech; Facebook; Catholic Church; Duterte; user comments; Philippines

Id: 21430

Title: "Let them eat grass': pastors vs the people in South Africa's Daily Sun.

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The Daily Sun, South Africa's most popular tabloid newspaper, focuses on the lived conditions of its township readership. Many such peri-urban settlements are characterised by a lack of basic services and by high unemployment, factors that remain impediments to the realisation of a "better life for all" post-apartheid. Such dire inequality within an economy shaped by the exigencies of global neo-liberalism is conducive to desire for otherworldly intervention. Due to South Africa's missionary history, many township residents hold Christian beliefs (often alongside customary worldviews), and pastors find townships fertile ground in which to establish churches and attract followers. Some pastors who draw on a global Pentecostal discourse of deliverance have become notorious, not only for their flashy style of living. They are also blamed for leading their congregations in bizarre practices of healing and anointing, such as drinking petrol or eating grass. The Daily Sun features these pastors and their congregations frequently in its pages. Using a thematic content analysis, I examine the tabloid's coverage of the "bad pastor" from 2011 -2018. I argue that, rather than being simply sensational, the paper plays an important role by mediating for its working-class readership what it means to be a "modern" Christian, and a "good" pastor in a highly unequal society.

Id: 21634

Title: Religion and digital media in Peru: the feast of the images of the Lord of Torrechayoc in the Sacred Valley of Cusco

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Catholic religious traditions are very important among the people that inhabit the Andean valleys in Peru. Especially the festivities in honor of the images of Christ, the Virgin Mary and the saints. For more than five hundred years and coinciding with the Spanish colonization there was a mixture between the pre-Hispanic cults and the devotions brought from Europe. The sacred images have always been fundamental mediators for the experience of the faith of the Andean believers. They are worshiped in temples and chapels, walked in procession, adorned and made offerings because they are attributed miracles. The registration, circulation, consumption and applications of religious images has intensified due to the development and penetration of modern technologies, digital connectivity, the use of drones and the possibility of live broadcast of the parties on television.

In the Sacred Valley of the Cusco region, in Peru, in the city of Urubamba, an image is worshiped: the Christ of Torrechayoc. The term Torrechayoc means "place of the two towers", in the Quechua language, language in which the ancient Peruvians communicated and which subsists until today. The paper will offer the research advances of our doctoral thesis in anthropology by the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru. Since 2015 we have been studying the festival in honor of the Christ of Torrechayoc, patron of the province of Urubamba that is celebrated during the month of May, coinciding with the first potato harvests in the Valley of the Vilcanota River.

The festival gathers thousands of pilgrims in the city of Urubamba and is followed by an Internet channel, especially by migrants of Andean origin residing in different regions of Peru and abroad. We seek to understand what remains and what is transformed into the religious experience of Andean origin with the expansion of digital means of communication.

Our research questions are: ¿In which ways do andean believers use digital technologies to express their faith? What remains and what has changed in the identity and way of living the religious celebration due to the expansion of technologies for the registration and circulation of images? The paper shows findings after having followed the party through traditional and face-to-face ethnography and digital ethnography, as well as virtually. We have analyzed the images and various representations of the Christ of Torrechayoc during the festival since 2015. We follow authors such as Hans Belting, Arjun Appadurai, Deborah Poole, Henry Jenkins, Bryan Turner, Jesus Martin Barber, among other authors.

Id: 21810

Title: [Panel] Religion Online: How Digital Technology is Changing the Way We Worship and Pray, Panel description

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: This panel examines the relationship between religion and Internet through exploring of how new media technologies change the way faith is communicated within religious groups and how Internet and social media affect the way people worship and pray. Drawing from case studies, it provides insights to how various religious communities adopt and adapt to new media, and at the same time how they are disrupted and reshaped by digital technology.

Moderator: Chiung Hwang Chen
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Tentative Panelists:
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Presentation title: Digital Media and Global Buddhism

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Presentation title: Seventh-day Adventists in the Digital Age

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Presentation title: When Foucault met Deleuze in a Cybercafé: Won Buddhist Cybercafés and Mind-Assessing Diaries

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Presentation title: Negotiating Religious Authority in the Digital Age: The Case of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Id: 21812

Title: Religion On-Line: Orthodox Jewry

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: The attitudes of Orthodox Jewry to Internet reflects the respective ideologies of the two main strands of orthodox Jewry: modern orthodox and ultra-orthodox Haredi. Modern Orthodoxy, by definition, seek to reach a synthesis or reconciliation between Judaism and the modern age. Thus, Internet - like other media - is perceived as a potentially valuable feature of modern life - indeed, a product of God's creation. By contrast, Haredi Jewry erect cultural boundaries, and perceive in Internet a threat `from outside'. In earlier media forms, including secular newspapers and television, Haredi rabbis succeeded to impose upon their communities' prohibitions from using such media. But in contrast to these traditional media forms, Haredi rabbis have been much less successful in imposing a ban in Internet - mostly because of the central place which computers and Internet play in the twenty-first century. Yet, the concern of Haredi rabbis about Internet is that it offers access to sex and pornographic matter - the likes of which have not entered mainstream newspapers and public television. Indeed, so threatening is Internet that the Haredi campaign against it does not even use the word `Internet' but speaks in terms of a "campaign against Technology".

For all orthodox Jews -- including Haredim - the Internet is a huge online store of Jewish religious sources including Bible commentaries and law codes, revolutionising Jewish education –offering those studying Judaism, not just rabbis, handy technology to access Jewish sources.

Faced with these acute dilemmas, some Haredi rabbis have compromised to allow Internet - albeit with a filter - at Haredi businesses only, not at home because of the danger of children, for example, accessing it.

Accessibility also impacts upon religious identity, with some orthodox Jews looking on-line further afield outside Orthodox Judaism for their religious identity, and by corollary, while other non-affiliated Jews and non-Jews are today being exposed on-line to Orthodox Judaism and its lifestyle to a greater extent than in the pre- on-line era.

Indeed, the Internet case raises fundamental questions about the very relevance today of the cultural ghetto as a Jewish lifestyle.

But data suggests that the modern orthodox are the sector in Israel's population with most use of computer technology, reflecting their middle level socio-economic status. Similarly, many Haredi Jews have computers, and are linked to Internet, including those at home. In a certain sense, the advances of information technology over the last twenty years have reached a certain peak. The author has undertaking a detailed questionnaire survey (100 questions) on Israeli rabbis and social media.

Id: 21818

Title: Seventh-day Adventists in the Digital Age

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: The study begins with an overview of the Seventh-day Adventist Church history, belief and culture, with an emphasis on the description of its two identity marks: the apocalyptic vocation and a text-centered and print-driven orientation. This leads to an analysis of the most important assumptions in the relationship between Adventism and mass media focused on the internet, which are: the emphasis on text over image and on reality over fiction. These characteristics are essential to understanding not only the origin of the movement, but also the metanarratives and paradigms by which the Adventism understands itself, and the knowledge and traditions by which the movement operates in the surrounding culture – especially in the digital age. Finally, the chapter will present some opportunities and challenges faced by the Adventist community in the digital age based on the Seventh-day Adventist reality in Brazil, the country with the largest number of Adventists in the world and with the biggest Adventist communication system in the globe.

Id: 21821

Title: When Foucault met Deleuze in a Cybercafé: Won Buddhist Cybercafés and Mind-Assessing Diaries

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: This study explores the practice of keeping a cyber mind-assessing diary among Buddhist priests and the followers in Korea and its meaning. With the emergence of the new media era and its accompaniment of de-religionization, in this research, I intended to suggest a theoretical framework for studying various Buddhist self-cultivation practices inside and outside cyberspace, which is a combined theoretical framework built upon Foucault's confessional discourse and the Deleuzian concept of Body without Organs.

Id: 21824

Title: Negotiating Religious Authority in the Digital Age: The Case of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: This study surveys the intersection between Mormonism and the Internet. It looks at the use of new media technologies by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church or Mormon Church) to control messages and promote its public image, and the grassroots online community building involved in either supporting or challenging the official position. Specifically, it discusses the issue of authority and the tension/meaning negotiation between the LDS Church and its critics/membership in the digital age. The bulk of the paper examines how social media pose a threat to the institutional faith and analyzes the strategies the LDS Church uses to counter the threat, extend its influence, and secure its authority online.

Id: 21895

Title: Physically-Challenged, Orphans and Street Psychopaths as Situational Cases for Human Dignity, Disputed Rights and Contested Truths in Gospel Video Films

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Usually considered as less-privileged in the society, abandoned, rejected and dejected, the physically challenged, orphans, and street psychopaths are looked down upon, deprived of basic rights and, often without means to attain the ladder of accomplishments seemingly available to the average persons in the society. Cultural inhibitions, absence of technological aids and facilities, non-existence of special care funds/policies, non-availability of healthcare facilities and welfare as well as religion and intolerance are just some of the societal inhibitions denying these categories of individuals referred to as the minority groups (including albinos, the helpless sick, all beggars and widows amongst others) access to basic things of life such as food, clothing and shelter and, forcing them to the streets as urchins, beggars, hangs-on, dependants looked down upon as never-do-wells, threats to life, security risk and dregs of the society. These minority groups are individuals in society but socially speaking, their humanity has been denigrated or reduced to second-class citizenry; their basic human rights denied without redress while the truths about them have been largely swept under the carpet with large majority in the society looking in the other direction. This study using the gospel video film platform, examines the reflections of these categories of individuals in Nollywood, the celebrated Nigerian cultural art and successful film industry with a view to ascertain their placement or displacement in the religious offering of popular cultural entertainment. Content analysis of 30 gospel video films from Mount Zion Films Productions (2010 - 2018) is used for the study while availability sampling is adopted to select the tapes because of their short life span. Date of film, duration, context, location, appearance, family relationships, language, work, issue at stake, home, marriage, dressing, lives (normal or abnormal), situation, violence, resolution, among others, constitute the content categories of the study while appearance of any of the three groups constitutes the unit of analysis. Catharsis and Cumulative theories are the framework underpinning the study showing purgation of violence through emotional release with ubiquity, resonance and mainstreaming as factors promoting the second-class citizenry approach to

the minority groups. The results of this study has promise for both policy and social action in all societies of the world concerning dealings and focus on the minority groups highlighted in the study, with critical implications for marital and socioeconomic conditions of families.

Key words: Physically-challenged; Orphans; Psychopath; Displacement; Gospel video film.

Word count: 387

Id: 22310

Title: The making of a Believer: a constant negotiation between the Self and God

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The proposed paper will make a case for religion to be primarily a communication tool; creating and circulating ideas, concerning matters from an individual's everyday life and activities, to more social subjects, from ethics, morality, and politics, to the metaphysical. It will explore the nature of relationship between religion and communication by partly locating it in Niklas Luhmann's (1986) system theory approach.

The paper will argue that if communication is taken as the process of exchange of meanings between individuals through common symbols (Gordon, 2016), then religion and religiosity certainly qualify. Religion, attended in this way, is primarily a process of communication between individuals and social groups, who share common signs, symbols and its meanings; and consequently identify themselves with a religious identity. Creating (revelation in religious parlance), interpreting and exchanging meanings concerning a mosaic of subjects including the unfathomable- idea of the unseen providence called God, birth, life after death, injustice, suffering, aging, illness, vagaries of nature, etc.; through sacred books, lives and traditions of prophets and their first disciples, reservoir of anecdotal stories; remains at the heart of practicing religions especially monotheistic religions. As Luhmann (1986) puts it, religion communicates ideas and abstractions about, the " observable" and the "unobservable"- universe. An individual and the group; through this shared awareness, guided by religion, about the material and immaterial; are in constant communication with each other and the larger world.

Through argumentative analysis this paper intends to explore what meaning(s) do people draw in religious concepts and practices? How does religion gets manifested in the everyday? How does it interact with an individual's agency? How does it network with other social institutions of the society?

Consequently, it aims to argue that though religion constructs and communicates, essentialized roles for its believers, an individual's agency of meaning-making, constantly interact with an array of belief assemblage besides the ones offered by religion's belief set, resulting in a hybridised outcome, often incongruent with the envisaged perfect picture of a believer, or the one portrayed by stereotypes. In that sense, this work problematizes the conception of a believer, and thus his actions in response to the events conflicting with his religious beliefs.

In essence, this paper proposes religion and religiosity as a continuous communication project, entailing constant meaning-making industry, both at an individual as well as at a social group level.

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Id: 22421

Title: Using the religion card on Twitter for campaigning : A study of the Karnataka State Elections 2018

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: In India religion plays a dominant role, affecting even election campaigning, voting behaviour and policy making. Political parties and leaders use the religion card during election campaigning as it has a strong grip over people's mind-set. It is seen to help build their vote bank. Voting behaviour is dominated by emotions rather than rationality and religion being a strong emotive factor plays an important role in determining voting behaviour.

Political communication has witnessed the use of public rallies, radio, and television to reach the masses. Lately, social media has been the key medium. Valenzuela, Correa & Zuniga (2017) discuss the ways in which social media platforms influence participation in the field of politics in unique ways. As Twitter platform is inexpensive and propagates a two way communication, it is considered as useful tool. Twitter allows unsymmetrical and unilateral connections, where acceptance from the other user is not required to contact and follow (Latinobarometer, 2013). All the political parties in India now resort to using the various social media platforms, mainly to lure the young voters.

In Karnataka politics, religion plays a significant role. For instance, the kannada speaking 'Veerashaiva Lingayats' with 24% of population is considered to be supportive to BJP, with their chief ministerial candidate belonging to the Lingayat community.

A survey by Singapore's Institute of Policy Studies suggests that the internet affecting elections is hyped. The proposed research will study the use of Twitter by the main political parties during the Karnataka State Elections in 2018 and explore how much of the 'religion card' was used on this medium.

As the medium is largely used by the young people, the research questions the young voters if religion was an important factor that influenced them to vote for or against a candidate. Focus Group Discussions will be conducted to understand this.

Id: 22430

Title: Media & Political Communication in Kashmir: An analysis of media content & its implications

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: In vibrant democracies like India , the socio-political and economic context creates a situation where latent as well as active forces are at work to scuttle and thwart the democratic practice and the development of "democratic institutions. This paper will bring forth this scenario in Kashmir, which is situated at the northernmost end of India . Kashmir is geo-strategically located, bordering India , China and Pakistan. Kashmir has been the scene of a socio-political conflict since 1947 when India gained independence. Post the 1947 partition of British India , Kashmir was divided and as of now three-fourth lies in the control of India and the rest lies in the control of Pakistan.
Since 1948 , a gameplay of democracy has been enacted in Kashmir with successive regimes at helm elected by continuously rigged and manipulated elections with utter disregard for public will and public opinion. State and non-State actors have played multifaceted roles to create a crisis ridden situation.
Gramsci's notion of hegemony is actively in play in Kashmir as the " hegemonic powers of State control" with the help of legislations,repressive laws and security apparatus negate the very process and sustenance of democracy which allows for and thrives on dynamic political communication.
In this scenario of a thriving and active mediascape, the media ie, mainstream, new as well as social media act as a bridge between the state and the subjects.(citizens).An analysis of the pattern of political communication, therein , poses a fertile field of study .The media scenario in Kashmir presents an intriguing pattern as contending media play divergent and conflicting roles .There are multi layered pattern of local,regional,national and international media at work.The versions of reality, the nature of reportage, the multiple interpretations are all affected by the powers that control and influence the media.The ideological,political,economic and market driven media play their own agenda setting function .The presentation of content is highly variegated and influence driven.
This paper attempts to study media content and focus upon the interaction between politics,media content and the public.It will also focus on how people communicate about politics.
James Chesebro has identified five critical approaches to contemporary political communication . This paper attempts to study all of these - Machiavellian , iconic , ritualistic , confirmatory and dramatistic. Drawing from these five aspects , this paper attempts to contextualise all of them in the contemporary political scenario of Kashmir today.
At present, there is a very fluid and volatile political climate in Kashmir.An elected political government has been dismissed and Kashmir is under the administrative purview of the

Central Government in New Delhi.There are attempts to hold an election in the near future and Kashmir remains politically volatile and disturbed with civilian killings, excessive human rights violations and custodial killingsgoing on.. All political shareholders are at interplay with their agendas and machinations.

In this uncertain scenario, a study of media and media content- mainstream and local ie. electronic , print and social media presents a kaleidoscopic pattern. The audience's interpretation of the media content also has an active and significant role in this powerplay of conflicting cacophonies.

KEYWORDS :

Hegemony , Multiple versions , mediascape, agenda setting, conflict in interpretations , media interplay , audience , public opinion

Id: 22460

Title: Audience responses to religious documentaries: the impact of the portrayed religion and the cultural context of reception.

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: This study observes audience responses to documentaries about religious actors. It aims at knowing to what extent audience's cultural background and the depicted religion impact receivers' attitudes, opinions and appreciation of a religious documentary. For doing that, the study applied a two steps method. During the first, it was conducted a semio-pragmatic analysis of 15 min. clips of two documentaries produced by two different religions, Mormonism and Islam, for extracting the meanings and values conveyed by them. The documentaries were similar in length and characteristics, were created as a promotional tool of the depicted religions and presented a positive image of its followers. Then some scales were produced that included the results of the analysis. During the second phase, it was conducted a reception study to test the responses to both documentaries. A total of 408 students from Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Spain) and the Universität Zürich (Switzerland) were randomly assigned either to the clip on Mormonism or Islam. After the viewing, students completed a questionnaire measuring their perception of the values conveyed by the documentary and their opinions about the documentary and the portrayed religion, particularly appreciation. The main results show that the cultural and religious background impacts the reception of documentaries about religion. In fact, the opinion, attitudes and appreciation of the documentary depend on the portrayed religion and the cultural context in which it is received. These results are relevant for the understanding of religious persuasion through audiovisual narratives.

Id: 22462

Title: Interplay of Religion and Politics in Indian Democracy

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: Babri Masjid was a disputed site as the birth place of Lord Rama(Hindu God) ,in the city of Ayodhya. It is under litigation since India's independence.Babri Masjid was a mosque built in the 16th century. Later on this site was disputed to be the birth site of Lord Rama. In the 1980s a movement was started for building the Ram Temple at the site of the Babri Masjid by political parties having an inclination towards Hindu ideologies. One of the prominent opposition leader of that time Mr.L.K.Advani (BJP)went around the country gathering support to build the Ram Temple.The structure was demolished on 6th December,1992. There were communal violence and international reactions to the incident.
The BJP (the ruling party Currently) in its election manifesto of 2014 also talked about the construction of the Ram Temple. As the election is approaching again we see a rise in the news about the construction of the Ram Temple.
This paper seeks to analyse how the issue of Ram Temple is being portrayed in the print media for three months starting from January 2019.The major English dailies will be taken for the study.The news items will help understand the interplay of religion and politics in Indian democracy.

Id: 23137

Title: Spiritual Competence to Preserve Human Dignity in the Era of Technology: Proposal for an Analysis and Intervention Grid

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The development of technology in the field of communication certainly presents many positive and negative aspects for different areas of individual and social development of the human being. In this framework, we should not forget the key piece: the human being, his spirituality and his dignity.

Is it still possible to think of a technology that can collaborate in the promotion of true communication in the service of the human being? This question leads us to reflect on the growing development of information and communication technologies and the urgency to improve media production and, at the same time, to strengthen the diverse competences of the receiver, of the human being. This implies that the latter needs to develop competencies that lead him to strengthen a responsible attitude toward and from the messages established by these new means of communication.

From this perspective, our initial question can be formulated in the following way: Among the competences that the human being should have before the media messages, what role does the spiritual competence have, how should it be understood in the perspective of preserving human dignity?

To address these questions, we start with the main results of our previous research on the communicative dimension of media education (dialogue and cognitive decentration) in order to delve into the anthropological-philosophical dimension and deal with the aspects of spirituality and human dignity

On this occasion we wish to offer researchers and those in the field of education and the production of media messages a proposal of "Analysis and Intervention Grid" on spiritual competence (based on communicative and educational competences). Our proposal is based on the theoretical contributions of Arnaud Join-Lambert, Walter Lesch, Henri Derroitte, André Fossion, Marie-France Daniel, Jean-Pierre Meunier, Paul Ricoeur, Paulo Freire Mario Kaplún, among others. In the experimental part our indicators emerge from research results with children and adolescents - that is, people with identity, spirituality and dignity - after having been exposed to various types of media messages in different geographical, social and cultural contexts.

As a general conclusion, it has been observed that the understanding and the subsequent application of spiritual competence in the human being - within formal, non-formal and informal educational processes and at any stage of life - can contribute considerably to strengthen the noblest values and to preserve their dignity amid all kinds of contrary currents.

Id: 23152

Title: The Imprensa Evangelica journal and the origins of Brazilian Protestantism in the 19th century

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: In the second half of the 19th century, the arrival of the Rev. Ashbel Green Simonton (1859) in Brazil sent missionary by the Protestant mission of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America (PCUSA) caused significant transformations in the religious context and culture of Brazil. In 1864, Simonton and other missionaries, created the newspaper denominated Imprensa Evangelica, Evangelical Press, in Portuguese. In analyzing the creation, dissemination and diffusion of the Imprensa Evangelica newspaper, the first Protestant Portuguese-language newspaper in Brazil, published biweekly from 1864 to 1892 in Rio de Janeiro, we saw that the Protestant missionaries of PCUSA gave the printed word an extraordinary value, which would then become an efficient ally of the ideal of spreading and disseminating the Protestant faith in national territory. They also made use of the printed word for the circulation of information on the missionary activities of PCUSA and the doctrinal instruction of the faithful through reading the Bible and a vast Protestant literature. The missionaries of PCUSA long ago wanted to find a Protestant periodical to support instruction to the newly converted and their children. Its editors initially intended to publish it weekly, but they gave up after the issue number 1. They then published it every two weeks on the first and third Saturdays of each month. For 28 years, in those days when Protestantism was being implanted in Brazil, the Imprensa Evangelica was the official organ of the Presbyterian Church in Brazil. Considered the most complete document of the social changes proposed by the new denomination from the middle of the XIX Century, the Imprensa Evangelica became the great integrator of the Protestant Churches in Brazil. It served as a contact between Presbyterians and Brazilian elites. It fought for religious freedom, denounced the mistreatment and persecution of the Roman Church. It brought several texts and literary genres. It published the translation of various classics of worldly Protestant literature and disseminated throughout the country the doctrines of the Reformed faith. It was fruitful in publishing Bible studies. It was read, respected and recognized by the Brazilian society elites. However, the vast majority of the Brazilian population was illiterate and their minds were not open to the written word. The Imprensa Evangelica introduced in Brazil, from the missionaries, the habit of reading.

Id: 23366

Title: Internet and Social Networks in the Religious Life of Mexico

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The religious life of consecrated persons is an option in which women and men dedicate their time and energy to the profound service of God and of others. According to the Statistical Ecclesial Yearbook of the Vatican, in Mexico, in 2015 there were 95 dioceses, 7,165 parishes, 908 deacons and 1,670 religious of consecrated life, including 27,331 religious, 515 consecrated laymen, 45 thousand 90 missionaries. and 305,569 catechists. In addition, it was recorded that there were 197 hospitals run by religious, 471 thousand clinics, five leprosariums, 311 homes for the elderly, disabled or minors and 383 orphanages. These figures reveal that despite the fact that the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI, 2010) points out that currently there are not as many Catholics as 100 years ago, Mexico is still a country with a population full of religious consecrated.
The consecrated ones also dedicate themselves to the contemplative life, they also dedicate themselves to the pastoral work of their parish or their community. That is why they are involved in the technology that changes day by day. One of the objectives of being able to count on the internet and social networks is that besides being the strategic tools that spread the faith (Chu, 2011), or even create digital communities, also through these networks the closest ties are strengthened with people, communication grows and spiritual formation is promoted (Izquierdo, 2017).
One of these advantages of the Internet and social networks is that they foster dialogue, show personal values and generate new ideas (Palazón, Sicilia, and Delgado, 2014). However, in some religious communities the importance of constructing dialogical and training spaces through cyberspace has not been understood, and the internet and social networks have been judged as the factors that undermine the activities of the consecrated people (Sbardelotto, 2014).
The present work addresses the possibilities and limitations of the use of the internet and social networks in the lives of the consecrated people of Mexico City and the city of Puebla. It tries to clarify the prejudices about transmitting the faith in the network and evaluates the effect caused by the personal use of social networks in the religious of these two cities.

Id: 23718

Title: Role of Religo-Political Communication and Social Media In Political Campaigns: A Case of India

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: From time in memoriam communication has been part of political process across the world. In modern day politics the model developed by American political scientist and communication theorist Harold Lasswell (1948) is quiet relevant even today. Where he talks about an act of communication (political) to be like 'who' 'says what' 'in which channel' 'to whom' and 'with what effect'

In the most recent decade India has seen a noteworthy religo- political change. The parliamentary and local election races are today fought with more religious and caste sentiments. Political gatherings with various beliefs both ideological and religious system has made utilization of the modern communication technology to the fullest.

Political parties like Congress, BJP and Aam Aadmi Party to mention a few are utilizing platforms like Google Hangout to address the voters who are the so called kingmakers of the Indian democracy. Indian Politics has changed in second half of this decade. India is a nation of assorted variety and youth which makes up an enormous 34% of the aggregate populace is more drawn now to religious-political sentiment.

The mass media are essential to the conduct of elections in a democratic country. A democratic election with no media freedom would be a contradiction in itself. But the paradox is that, in order to ensure that freedom, a degree of regulation is required which need to be formed by the government. Although technology has always played a role in politics, it wields more influence today than ever before. There is a greater volume of political information, more instant communication between leaders and followers, and more opportunities for voters to exert control over the message (Johnson, 2011).

The launch of Jio and 4G technology has paved the way for better communication and access to information for every citizen. Affordable data packages and smart phones has enabled this transformation. Parliamentary election in 2014 showed how political parties used social media to communicate their religious political ideas with the voters.

The present study shows that 65 percent of the respondents believe that digital campaigns during election has a huge impact on the voters. While 59 percent respondents believe that digital media has managed to reach out to the voters and 55.5 percent believe that digital media has managed to promote party ideologies to the voters meanwhile 36 percent of the respondents are of the view that social media doesn't influence them while voting.

The author will also try and de-code how religious signs, symbols, are used and expressed in political messages, idioms delivered to convinced the voters to vote for a particular party or individual candidate. Further, the paper will also try to gauge how religious values and ethos have

been intertwined within political communication to achieve democratic goals in elections campaigns.

Id: 23804

Title: The Militarization of Religions in the Digital Age

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: One of the major challenges in the world today is the militarization of religions to gain political, economic, and socio-cultural powers. Indeed, the Encyclopedia of Wars (2004) reveals that historical accounts of conflicts show that only 7 per cent are primarily caused by religion, while Islam only accounts for 4 percent. But the pogrom and displacement of millions of refugees being experienced in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Syrian civil war, Afghanistan, Iraq, Chechnya, Kashmir, Libya, northern-eastern Nigeria, Middle East, Central African Republic, Congo Kinshasa, and others are worrisome. Thus, this study examines the militarization of religions in the manifestation of the philosophy of 'conflict of cultures', in the manifestation of the world to a 'Global Village' (Marshall McLuhan). It examines the impact of the new media on religious conflicts, apart from analyzing the basic foundation of terrorism. It looks at the synergy between the International Networking (Internet) and the militarization of religions, and it analyses the terrorist activities of ISIS and the White Supremacists in the USA. Using the theory of 'clash of civilizations' of Samuel Huntington (2003) as theoretical framework, the study critically analyses the data, make recommendations, and concludes that most of the terrorist acts are politically, ethnically, economically, socio-culturally prompted and revengeful.

Key Words: Militarization; Religions; Clash of Civilizations; Terrorist Groups