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Islam and Media Working Group

Abstracts of papers presented at
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[1] We have endeavoured to ensure that these are the abstracts of the papers actually presented in Cartagena. Nevertheless, due to cancellations, additions and other factors, abstracts may be included here that were not presented and abstracts that were presented may not be included. Email addresses have been intentionally altered to prevent harvesting by spammers.

Id: 14545

Title: Engaging Representations: The interpretation of Islam and Muslims in the News by a non-Muslim audience

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Inspired by the apparent overtly negative coverage of Islam and Muslims by the mainstream press, my presentation will showcase my work on the research question: In what ways do depictions of Muslims and Islam in the News inform the thoughts and actions of non-Muslims in England?

As the media plays an important role in society, the analysis of the influences of the media on a person's ideas and conceptualisations of people of another religious persuasion is an important social issue. News reports about Islam and Muslims commonly relate stories that discuss terrorism, violence or other unwelcome or irrational behaviour, or the lack of integration and compatibility of Muslims and Islam with western values and society. Yet there is little research on how non-Muslims in England engage with and are affected by media reports about Islam and Muslims. To address this gap of knowledge, a content and discourse analysis of news stories was undertaken and then verbal narratives or thoughts and actions of participants were elicited through fieldwork using focus groups.

The data reveals personal stories that point towards the normativity of news stories and their negotiated reception patterns. Individual orientations towards the media as a primary information source proved to be a significant factor behind the importance of news reports, with individually negotiated personal encounters with Muslims or Islam further affecting the meaning-making process. Participants negotiated media reports to fit their existing outlook on Islam and Muslims. This existing outlook was constructed through, and simultaneously supported by, news reports about Muslims and Islam. The findings suggest a co-dependency and co-productivity between news reports about Islam and Muslims, and participant responses.

This research clearly shows: The utility of focus groups in religious studies, the usefulness of a hermeneutical framework in the field of media studies, and demonstrates that participant responses are (re) productions of local and personal contextuality. These conclusions point to a need for further research into the consequences of socially constructed depictions of Islam and Muslims and their influence on human thoughts and actions.

Id: 14681

Title: Reporting Arabs and Muslims in the Anglo American Media: Orientalism as News Practice in the 21st century

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The Anglo-American media coverage of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is dominated by news of conflict. There is no doubt that the region has seen many conflicts throughout the 20th century and into the 21st century, from anti-colonial uprisings, to the Arab-Israeli conflict, to the rise of militant religious groups like Al-Qaeda and the self-declared Islamic State (or ISIS), to the Arab "Revolts". However, the coverage of the MENA region in mainstream Anglo-American media has been impacted by currents of "Orientalism" that re-enforces negative stereotypes and connotations about Arabs and Muslims. The broader media coverage reinforces Islamophopic sentiments in mainstream news discourse and in various sectors of the Anglo-American society, and engenders hate and fear against Arabs in general and Muslims specifically. It argues that Orientalism as a 'constructed system of knowledge' has been loosely incorporated into a form of news practice that tends to produce media coverage that is redundant, inaccurate, full of prejudice and amount to being deeply Orientalist, especially when it comes to gender reporting. Journalistic texts are a product of a variety of cultural, social and political factors. Some Anglo-American journalists have a tendency to apply their own personal perceptions, re-emphasising stereotypes of the Orient. The rush to publish or broadcast makes them omit context. Lack of specialised knowledge makes it easier for many to retreat to preconceived perceptions and misunderstandings of the 'Other', in this case the people of the Middle East. This paper will examine the coverage of Arabs and Muslims in the Anglophone media, by drawing on examples from the news coverage in Britain and the United States.

Id: 14916

Title: Trump's Muslim Ban: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Aljazeera, New York Times and Wall Street Journal

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: One of the major campaign promises of US President Donald Trump during the 2016 presidential campaign was to bar Muslims from entering the United States. Donald Trump kept his promise by issuing an executive order on assumption of office. The executive order bans Muslims from nine countries to enter the United States until a judge in Washington halted it.
The story received wide coverage in the media. This paper will study the news coverage of the executive order in three leading international media organisations, Aljazeera, New York Times and Wall Street Journal. These three media organisations were selected because they provide different perspectives to news and have global audiences that consume the news on daily basis.
Using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the paper seeks to compare how the three media organizations pitched the story. As discussed by Van Dijk (1993), CDA is interested in identifying the relationship between power, dominance and social inequality.
The paper would explore the issues related to power, dominance and social inequality in relation to the Trump's executive order as reported in the three news media organisations. What are the ethnic, racial, political and cultural issues that dominated the discourse of Trump's ban on Muslims in the three newspapers?

Id: 15035

Title: Transforming identities and relations: Taliban peace talks and Pakistani media

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: It is argued that in the process of crisis framing and crisis-related knowledge production, many actors play a role. These include traditional and social media, policy-makers, academic circles, independent experts, think tanks and the intelligence departments of governments and international organizations. Nevertheless, media is considered to play a most significant role in conflicts and war events. Media has the potential to frame conflict events in such a way that issues and parties are taken from the ordinary politics into issues which requires immediate action. It can increase violence, human causalities and also create hurdles in peace negotiations. It can reinforce the negative stereotypes of the 'enemy', and can serve as destructive agent by accentuating the dangers and risks associated with the compromise with the 'enemy'. At the same time, news media is also considered to have a significant role in promoting peace, by emphasizing the benefits of peace, bringing legitimacy for the leaders who are working for peace and transforming the images of the 'enemy'. However, media is considered to play a more effective role in peace building when it sees that the other institutions are serious on the peace process. If government and people, are seriously interested in peace making process, media also complements the efforts, but if there is no will to make the peace talks a success, media also frames the issue in war frames.
In this context the present study aims to examine the role of Pakistani mainstream print media in framing peace talks between Talibans and the Government of Pakistan in the period of January 2014 till July 2014. The selected period covers the time when peace negotiations between the government and Talibans were taking place and after their failure, the operation 'Zarbe Azab', a joint military offensive against the Taliban, began. In the content analysis, categories will be made under the peace and war journalism frames as suggested by Gultang in 1999. By using the frames it aims to examine how peace negotiations were framed and how in the process identities and relations were transformed by the print media of Pakistan? It aims to study whether the media attached urgency to the issues and framed the dilemmas of peace talks and worked for a peaceful resolution or created hurdles in the peace process.

Id: 15155

Title: Hate at first sight: Sexism, hate and Islamophobia in an online discursive event

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The so-called refugee crisis has created a perceptible online discourse on social media. People on various thresholds of political and religious spectrums are using social media such as Facebook to exchange and express opinions. The contemporary online discourse about so-called refugee's crisis contains insights into the differentiated political views in the context of existing social institutions such as religion, nationhood and culture. Love and relationships among refugees and so-called locals inspire multifacet feedback from online publics. Some perceive such relationships as a threat to the status quo and assumptions of a cultural homogeneity. Mass media organisations dominate the social media spaces concerning their reach in comparison to alternative voices on social media. Thus, a platform such as a Facebook page of BBC news is an exclusive merger of the scope of mass media and interactivity of social media. Considering the international reach of English language, the anticipation of a global feedback makes such a platform, even more, research-worthy. The critical theory of social media will serve as a theoretical framework for this research effort. Critical theoretical perspective enables an online researcher to uncover the reproduction of social domination on new media. This study will conduct a critical discourse analysis of a discursive event in the form of a BBC News of a relationship and marriage of a Refugee woman with a Border Guard in Macedonia. I will conduct a critical discourse analysis to dig out the ideological structures that embed in the user comments. A preliminary study was able to trace ideological positions such as Islamophobia, sexism and morality in these remarks. My work inspires from the concept of the Ideological square, and I will focus on the othering of refugees in general and a female refugee in particular in the comment section. A literature review shows that In the era of big data and social media optimism, there is a lack of critical research on social media. This study will contribute to the scholarship of critical study of online Islamophobia and further shed light on the sexism and othering of female refugees by ordinary people in an online public space. This study is an effort to uncover this discourse within the context of the socio-political scenario in Europe.

Id: 15177

Title: Journalists' Perception of their Roles and Ethics in Muslim and Western Countries: Evidence from the Worlds of Journalism Study

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: A review of journalism journals yields few studies that compare journalists' roles and ethics in Muslim and Western societies. Although media systems and journalistic cultures differ considerably, the global transformation of journalism and the challenges facing journalists around the world are largely similar. This study seeks to test how the different political, economic and social context for journalism affect journalists' views of roles and ethics. The results are based on the most extensive survey of its kind conducted by the Worlds of Journalism Study Team in 67 countries. The study focuses on how differences in political systems, press freedom, political and civil rights, economic development and GDP per capita affect perception of journalistic roles and ethics. More importantly, this study will examine the extent to which Islamic culture creates a distinct unified journalism culture different from the Western liberal- based culture and why certain roles and ethical orientations are perceived as more important than others among Muslim and Western journalists.

Id: 15220

Title: Daesh and the Power of Digital Media

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Why is Daesh so successful? What kind of theories and methodologies do we need to answer such a question? Do the media matter for Daesh's achievement? These are the main questions that this paper attempts to address.

Theories about ideology/hegemony and power/dominance have to be applied to explain some of the aspects of Daesh's phenomenon. In this regard, I want to study different dimensions of Daesh's power, including cultural power. Moreover, the relationship between rulers and ruled in the case of Daesh will be studied. The main object of this paper, is studying the relationship between Daesh's media, ideology and power. I see power, as a multi-dimensional, dynamic and relational reality and try to demystify different dimensions of Daesh's power, and emphasise that the non-coercive aspects of Daesh's power are as important as its coercive aspects.

 I will borrow some concepts from Gramsci and Bourdieu as theoretical framework. For Bourdieu power stands at the heart of social life and the field of power is the most important field for him. I will use Bourdieu's capital theory, because he expanded idea of power beyond the economic sphere and into domain of culture in detail. Furthermore, to discover how Daesh's rulers/intellectuals through ideology work on ruled/citizen's mind and hearth and create "consent" to domination and coercion, which is shaped and manufactured in civil society, Gramsci's division between civil society and political society (hegemony and coercion) provides a fruitful theoretical framework for this study. This framework assists to analyse how Daesh's hegemonic institutions in civil society (such as schools, mosques, and media) tie up citizens to the ruling power by consent, and not by coercion. However, I will focus on Daesh's (digital) media in this study.

In order to study how Daesh uses digital media to spread its ideology, it is essential that I first discuss ideology and its roles, then explain role of digital media in political changes, and how digital/social media have been used by other similar groups in the past, and finally examine Daesh's nature and the main dimensions of its power. These studies help to find the gaps in the literature better.

Literatures demonstrate that it is a question about the role of digital media in political change among scholars. Some discuss about twitter and Facebook revolution, digital threat and social media war, but others doubt that technology causes political change, and say it only mediates it. However, in the age of the Internet, the benefits of the Internet and digital media democratisation are preparing the atmosphere for many users, including groups such as Daesh.

This paper will follow the qualitative research tradition. For data collecting, it will be conducted using the Desk research method and interview. I also use critical discourse analysis for data analysing and discuss Fairclough and Wodak approaches. By CDA, this research tries to reveal

structure of Daesh's power and deconstruct its covert "ideology" that is "hidden" in different written and spoken texts.

Id: 15516

Title: ISLAMIC TERRORISM IN THE USA AND RUSSIAN NEWSPAPERS: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The proposed report is based on the survey of coverage of three terrorist attacks widely discussed in both American and Russian mass media. The first case is a terroristic attack at the Boston Marathon at April 15, 2013, where 3 persons died and more than 280 were injured. The second case is mass murder (49 dead, 53 injured) in the Orlando night gay club Pulse (June 12, 2016). The third case includes several terrorist attacks in Paris at November 13, 2015. All three terroristic attacks have Islamicroutes, two of them were organized by ISIS.

The content analysis survey was conducted by the group of professors and students from the Department of Communications, Media and Design at the National Research University "Higher School of Economics" in collaboration with scholars from the George Mason University. Four American (The Boston Globe, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post) and four Russian (Kommersant, Moscowskij Komsomolets, Novaya Gazeta, Rossijskaya Gazeta) newspapers were selected for the analysis.The total sample size is 278 articles.

The report will be focused on the differences of narrative and discourse in the American and Russian media sources. The analysis of the lexical units used to describe terrorists and Islam will be presented.

Id: 15904

Title: Media and Islam: An Empirical study of Religious Rituals portrayed in Main stream Pakistani Dramas.

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Religion is an absolute reality of human life. As one of the major and worldwide religions, Islam also guided and taught its followers properly about all strides of life through Quran. The sacred book of Allah comprises on all the "dos" and "don'ts" clearly for Muslims. One of the discourses behind the creation of the state of Pakistan was Islam and the majority of Pakistani population also consists on Muslims. The situation suggests a strong portrayal of Islamic values in the contents of Pakistani dramas.The study will evaluate that how Pakistani Dramas are portraying Islamic ideology (teaching of Islam with reference to domestic life) in their story themes. Drawing upon the theoretical perspective of Agenda Setting, the study will investigate how Islam is projected in HUM TV dramas. For the purpose a sample for content analysis includes three dramas of HUM TV titled "Zara Yad Kar", "Man Mayal" and "Pakeeza" will be analyzed through quantitative content analysis.
Keywords: Religion, HUM TV, Islamic ideologies, Agenda Setting theory.

Id: 15907

Title: The Mediatization of SARA conflict in Indonesian Online Media: The News on the "212 Peaceful Protest' against Ahok

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The term "SARA" in Indonesia is an acronym for Suku, Agama, Ras, and Antar golongan, or Ethnicity, Religion, Race and Intergroup relations. Two particularly sensitive issues related to the conflict of "SARA" in Indonesia today, are the issues regarding religion and also Chinese ethnicity. This study analyzes the news on "Aksi Damai" or "Peaceful Protest" occurred on December 2, 2016, in Jakarta related to incumbent Jakarta Governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama or Ahok over a blasphemy case. The "212 Peaceful Protest" is a protest conducted by several hardliner Muslim groups against Ahok, a Chinese Christian. Ahok was accused of a blasphemy related to his statements about politicians who exploit a verses from the holy Qur'an, to win the elections. This study uses quantitative and qualitative methods to collect data through content analysis, observation, and interviews. The research subject is two online media in Indonesia, Republika.co.id and Metronews.com. The news from Republika.co.id and Metronews.com are being collected from November 28 to December 4, 2016. In Indonesia, Republika.co.id is considered as a media that is oriented toward Muslim agenda, and Metronews.com toward nationalism agenda . The results show that both Republika.co.id and Metronews.com build a media logic or mediatizations (Livingstone & Lunt, 2015) related to Ahok's blasphemy cases. Republika.co.id builds a narrative that Ahok is guilty of blasphemy case and should be jailed, while Metronews.com builds a narrative on the importance of national unity and supports the legal and political logic regarding Ahok's case. Republika.co.id builds logic of piety while Metronews.com builds logic of national unity.

Keyword: mediatization, online media, Islam, conflict, politic

Id: 15928

Title: News Construction of Islamic Group in Indonesian Mainstream Media: A case study of "The Super Peaceful Protest' 2 December 2016

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: According to Associated Press, the Indonesian Muslim Super Protest held on December 2, 2016 with at least 200,000 Muslims (Google Map calculated far higher participants, with approximately 7.5 million people) rallied in the Indonesian capital on Friday in the second major protest in a month against its Jakarta's current governor who is being prosecuted for alleged blasphemy. This great number of mass has made the event as one of the greatest peaceful actions in human history.

AP reported further that President Joko Widodo (nicknamed Jokowi) who is viewed as a strong political supporter of the Jakarta governor, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (nicknamed Ahok) and Indonesian Muslim coming from all over the archipelago by being out of the city during the first protest, unexpectedly went to the national monument to join Friday prayers with the sprawling crowd. He called for protesters to disperse peacefully. They cheered and then broke into chants calling for Ahok's arrest, but later people were streaming peacefully out of the area into a main thoroughfare of the city.

This paper investigates the Islamic discourses of "moderate Muslim" and "radical Muslim" polarities in news reporting in one of the largest media groups in Indonesia, TEMPO. In particular, it aimed at examining the media coverage of one group categorized by TEMPO in binary terms as 'extremist' - Front Pembela Islam (Islamic Defenders Front – FPI). It uses a multi-method approach to consider how TEMPO perform news depiction of FPI as the main organizer of the Super Peaceful Protest 2 December 2016 and to identify how media portray FPI's goal of social purification on Islamic principles. It employs a triangulated methodology. Qualitative data analysis will show how news of FPI is structured and framed according the both on TEMPO's editorial policy and its news outlets. News languages and styles will also be discussed. Qualitative analysis will be conducted based on Critical Discourse Analysis approach using Van Dijk's Ideological Square concept and framing analysis. In addition to CDA, a quantitative version of content analysis will be employed.

Id: 16022

Title: Media Bias on Minority reporting in India-An Analysis of News Coverage of Muslims in Vernacular Media

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Media representation of minorities, particularly Muslim communities, is a well researched topic in the academic community. Media has played a significant role in constructing the identity and image of Muslims, the largest minority group in India. While the mainstream English newspapers take a balanced stand in presenting Muslim issues, the vernacular press are mostly biased and played a significant role in igniting the communal issues in the country.

  The situation has even worsened after the B.J.P led government under Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi came into power in 2014. Communal polarization is now gaining momentum and Muslims face identity crisis severely.

   In this context, this study would like to analyze how the language press deal issues related to Muslim communities in the country. The study will analyze the news coverage of Muslim issues during the B.J.P rule in two very prominent language newspapers in Malayalam language, the official language of Kerala, one of the Indian states in South India.   Malayalam newspapers are selected for this study because, Kerala has lots of distinctive features, incomparable with rest of the Indian states especially with regards high level of PQLI(Physical Quality of Life Index). As per the National Family Health Survey, Kerala tops the list of 29 Indian states with regards to media exposure. This high standard of quality can be seen in the news presentation as well. Malayalam news papers always praised for its objectivity, brevity, balance and insightful analysis in news coverage.

   However, this care and vigilance is lacking while reporting the issues on Muslims. Muslim community in the state always accusing the local media for sensationalizing while reporting topics like extremism and terrorism involving Muslim names. Media too following copybook journalism while covering such issues by just giving the 'official version' given by the police. The Muslim community leaders accuse that they feel bias and discrimination in media coverage. In this context, the study will analyze some selected news items appeared during the period of Modi's rule and tries to find answer for the following questions: Is there any truth in the accusation of the community leaders? Does the Malayalam newspapers biased on muslim related stories? Whether the coverage was objective? Whether the incident deserve such coverage or was it blown out of proportion deliberately? Does the media have the same approach while covering the issues on other communities?

  The study will try to find out the correlation the perception of the community and the media coverage. For this, the proposed methodology is a combination of content analysis and a questionnaire survey. Survey will be used to get the perception from the Muslim community on these topic and content analysis will be used to study the media coverage of Muslim related topics .

Id: 16121

Title: The Image That ISIS Built: A Deep Dive into Dabiq Magazine

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: ABSTRACT
The use of computational propaganda by armed faith-based organizations is on the rise. They use media and digital technology not only for political and propaganda purposes, but to extend their influence and shape their image.

Ever since the "Islamic State" declared the establishment of what it calls the "State of the Caliphate" on June 2014, it has deployed a strong media and propaganda machine, and has deftly used the Internet and social media to spread its message.

ISIS launched its own media platforms under names that carry historical significance and/or were culled from religious texts, which reflect the military confrontation with the "Crusader Army" in Dabiq (north of Aleppo).

This study explores the media discourse of ISIS insofar as it belongs to an ideological organization, or as the group describes it, "jihadi media."

Many studies have attempted to address this topic, but they have not gone deep enough in their understanding of the historical and religious perspectives inherent in this type of media discourse.

To further explore the ISIS worldview, a content analysis of the organization's media discourse was conducted. Amongst the major findings in this breakdown were the following recurring themes and components:

•   Religious content: 16.3%
•   Propaganda content (how they see themselves and would like to be seen): 12%
•   International and current affairs: 9%
•   The need for Muslims to acknowledge their enemies: 18.4%
•   The need to be in a state of hostility with non-believers (kuffar): 16.4%
•   The need for neutrals and supporters to emigrate to the State of the Caliphate: 15.9%
•   The target audience is ISIS supporters, followed by neutrals.
•   Historical language and terminology is used heavily (42.2%).

Keywords: ISIS, ISIL, Dabiq, Propaganda, Jihadi, Media
Language: English

Id: 16285

Title: Features of ISIS coverage in the media

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The proposed report is based on the research titled "Image of ISIS as portrayed by media and mass culture", conducted by the Faculty of Communications, Media and Design of the National Research University "Higher School of Economics" (Moscow, Russia) for the Valday Club. The project included content analysis and frame analysis of publications about ISIS in 13 media from the USA, UK, Russia, India, Turkey, OAE and Hong Kong. The research sample included 1176 articles in English or Russian.

The research revealed the inconsistency and complexity of the ISIS image as a transnational construct. Its dynamics in 2014-2015 was studied. Also it showed that "media story" of ISIS is common for various countries.

In general, the leading media showed consensus in their attitude to ISIS, which is treated as an enemy that should be destroyed. There were no publications in which ISIS was treated in positive context (for example, as defenders of the right values). The topic is treated as of high social value. The frames "ISIS" and "totalitarianism" are converging in parallel with the divergence of frames "ISIS" and "Islam".

ISIS discourse is dualistic. It is referred to as state and terroristic organization at the same time. Armed struggle of anti-terrorist coalition is marked as a anti-terrorist operation and a military conflict at the same time. It should be mentioned, that ISIS failed to create a strong image of their leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in the world media (as for example Usama bin Laden had). The image of IS have no strong connection with this person.

Publications about ISIS are characterized with a high level of reflection. Many texts are overloaded with different historical and cultural references (from 9/11 and the activities of al-Qaeda to works of George Orwell). The subject of reflection, however, is only a phenomenon of ISIS. Media are not interested in the structure of ISIS, it origins and reasons of formation, etc.

In general, we are dealing with attempts to describe a fundamentally new political and cultural phenomenon by the means of obsolete media language. It is obvious that at the moment there is an intensive process of symbolic means validation in the description of this phenomenon. Traditional frames of radical Islam are changing.

The report will be focused on some features of ISIS media image and media discourse in different countries.

Id: 16320

Title: Media at Work: Priming and Framing Charlie Hebdo and Chapel Hill Killings

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The media coverage of Charlie Hebdo and Chapel Hill killings generated a heated and controversial debate among scholars, specialists and media practitioners about the double standards and the different approaches and concepts of news around the globe. The framing of the two events by the news media showed the real politics of processing and packaging news within a set of values and conventions. This paper looks at how the media covered the two events through framing, priming and agenda setting theories. The author uses discourse analysis to look at how the international news media both in France and in the USA framed and processed Charlie Hebdo and Chapel Hill killings.

Because of time and resource constraints on what can be reported, framing occurs in the media most of the time. Journalists must select which events to cover and which to ignore. They must also decide which facts, values, perspectives and aspects of the story will be mentioned or given prominence. This means journalists use their own interpretive frames when packaging news. Reporters are also influenced by social norms, pressure from interest groups, journalistic routines and their own cultural, ideological and political orientations. Consequently, some aspects of the story privileged over others. This sets the agenda for the audience in terms of what to read? And how read to think about issues?

Agenda setting refers to the idea that there is a strong correlation between the emphasis that mass media place on certain issues and the importance attributed to these issues by mass audiences. The media effects have impact on particular aspects while ignoring the others. The prominence shown in the media for any issue becomes a major factor in creating an impact in a person's judgment . This can lead to less concern on the more important issue. Priming occurs when news content suggests to news audiences that they ought to use specific issues as benchmarks for evaluating the performance of leaders and governments. It is often understood as an extension of agenda setting. Framing differs significantly from these accessibility-based models. It is based on the assumption that how an issue is characterized in news reports can have an influence on how it is understood by audiences.

Id: 16368

Title: Articulation of Religion in the Cyberspace: The Case of Islamic Fatwa Websites

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: In the contemporary world, societies are becoming more virtual and more religious therefore, the importance of studies about media and religion is increasing day by day. Hoover (2012) observes that owing to media and particularly new media and cyberspace, religion is changing in the 21st century and this new age religion is seeking out new resources. The interaction of online media and religion has resulted in networked religion. Studies concerning on-line religion not only increase social connections in networked society but also provides opportunities to be aware of new trends in the practice of religion (Campbell, 2011).

Processes and outcomes of cyber religion are quite different as compared to traditional religious expression. Many recent studies on media and religion propose that religious expression in cyberspace is increasing Hoejsgaard, 2005; Roman, 2007; Zoonen, 2011. While explaining the relationship between religion and the internet, Hoejsgaard (2005) is of the view that cyberspace provides a "creative or formative environment fostering new religious contents and activities online." Roman (2007) in his analysis of cyber religious websites, underpins three parameters of cyber religious fields which include; mediation; content; and organization. In order to distinguish the concept and expression of cyber religion from traditional religion, he explains mediation in terms of virtual communication and body centered communication. While organization is conceptualized as non-institutionalization and complete institutionalization and content is explained in terms of reflection of cyber culture and reflection of religious traditions. This study analyzes official and non-official Islamic websites for content type, sectarian affiliation, claimed motives, promotion of common values etc. Sample of the study is obtained from Dr. Bilal Philips' research project on Islamic websites based on short reviews and ratings of websites on a scale of 1-10.

Id: 16392

Title: The Challenges of the Egyptian Media Diversity in Current Stage

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: At this time, Egypt is witnessing very difficult and complex media circumstances such as: Prominent of businessmen control on the private mass media and government control on the official ones and its restrictions of media freedom, the imposition of direct censorship on Egyptian media, imprisonment of journalists, media professionals, and intellectuals, in addition to monitor their activities through laws and extraordinary procedures.
In light of aforementioned circumstances in Egypt and voices rising that are calling for an end to this media monopoly and the need to adopt new policies founded on media diversity, the current study attempts to monitor, analyze and interpret the challenges of media diversity in Egypt during the current phase.
This study seeks to answer the following questions:
• What are the political challenges that the Egyptian diversity media face?
• What are the demographic challenges that resulted from the concentration of the Egyptian media in the capital?
• What are the economic challenges that media diversity in Egypt face?
• What are the professional challenges that media diversity in Egypt face?
• What are the technological challenges that media diversity in Egypt face?
• What are the information and cultural challenges that media diversity in Egypt face?

Id: 16542

Title: The Hinduization of Bombay Cinema in 1949 - The case of Barsaat (Raj Kapoor, 1949)

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: This paper was originally a part of my thesis on Bombay cinema between 1946 and 1949. The paper discusses how a 1949 Indian film set in Kashmir, Barsaat (directed by Raj Kapoor), had to remove the signs of Muslim identity of one of its Kashmiri characters due to censorship. Censors requested that one of the characters be shown explicitly as Hindu. The film presented before the censors originally appeared to have a Hindu-Muslim love affair. After censorship, no Kashmiri characters were Muslim. In the film, Kashmir is presented as a mostly empty natural paradise, whose few inhabitants, all Hindus, welcome Indians. This can be seen as a consequence of the post-independence war between India and Pakistan over Kashmir. The film legitimizes the Indian claim to Kashmir. The paper also discusses how Nimmi, a Muslim actresses who plays an important role in Barsaat, was presented to the readers of a Bombay magazine, Filmindia, as a Hindu shortly before the film was launched. Nimmi, whose real name was Nawab Banoo, adopted a Hindu screen name at the request of director Raj Kapoor, and her Muslim identity was thus initially hidden from the public. After 1945, it became common for Muslim actors to take on Hindu screen names as the Hindu right grew, religious tolerance in India diminished, Muslims were seen as a threat and there was pressure on the Bombay film industry to not hire Muslim actors and crew (though this was ineffectual in 1949, this situation seemed to repeat itself in 2016 when the Hindu fundamentalist party Maharashtra Navnirman Sena forced the Film and Television Producers Guild of India to agree to not hire Pakistani artists any more). The paper is based on the writing of Ananya Jahanara Kabir about the representation of Kashmir in Indian films, Kaushik Bhaumik's thesis on Bombay Cinema and Ella Shohat's book on Israeli Cinema.

Id: 16706

Title: "Oh honey, I am a human just like you': discourses of resistance against media representations of Muslim immigrants and refugees.

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Semati (2010, p. 269-270) explains that the "constant drumbeat, by selfish and opportunistic politicians, lazy journalists, and uninformed pundits, about 'Islamic terror' or Muslim Other is a dangerous component of identity politics" (Semati, 2010, p. 269-270). These rhetorical strategies harmonize United States President Donald Trump's recent Executive Order temporarily banning immigration to the US from seven predominantly Muslim nations. Indeed, it is in this political moment that a better understanding of how Muslims in the United States, those likely to be increasingly targets of material violence, particularly hate crimes (PEW, 2016), react to public communication around their identities as both Muslim and refugees or immigrants. The intersectional perspective offered here through qualitative in-depth interviewing with Muslim immigrants and refugees in Fort Wayne, Indiana fills an important gap in disciplinary research.

Research concerning portrayals of Muslims in the United States media is a topic of much interest in journalism, media studies, and rhetoric (Asultany, 2013; Anderson, 2015; Bullock, 2015: Hiriji, 2011; Nacos & Torres-Reyna, 2007; Naji & Iwar, 2013; Shaheen, 2003). However, few studies in the field of communication have employed an intersectional perspective to analyze how Muslim refugees and immigrants encounter, understand, and resist or embrace representations of religious and ethnic identifications in various media in the US. Our research, then, works to answer the question: How do Muslim refugees and immigrants in Fort Wayne, Indiana perceive, communicate about, and resist representations, particularly negative ones, of Muslims in media.
As the current administration uses nativistic and Islamophobic rhetoric in the crafting of immigration policies to specifically target Muslim communities this research is particularly timely and Indiana is a specifically appropriate place to conduct this research because of its sizable population of Muslim immigrants and refugees. To this end, we interviewed fifteen Muslim refugees and immigrants from nine different countries to better understand their interaction with media representations of Islam.

The preliminary findings from the interviews show evidence that some Muslim immigrants and refugees find discourses and acts of resistance to mediated representations of Islam and Muslim identity important for the strengthening of ingroup ties across intersectional identities. Many participants also report that these discourses and acts of resistance are constructed in response to the physical and verbal violence that their members are facing in the public sphere. In this way, we suggest that the type and function of their resistive discourses not only subverts the rhetorical practices of and representations in media landscapes, but are also linked to the protection of their shared physical spaces where they experience intersectional collisions of Islamophobia, racism, and sexism in their lives and communities.