



Religion and Communication Working Group

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Poetics & Power in Phagwa: Cultural Identity & Religious Play in Trinidad's Festival of Colors

Authors

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Abstract

In this paper we explore how the Hindu religious festival of Holi has evolved in the Indo-Caribbean diaspora. A thematic analysis of digital news articles written between 2016 - 2020 about public celebrations of Holi or 'Phagwa' in Trinidad and Tobago suggests that cultural performances across global borders evolve based on the local spaces where they occur. We draw on Stuart Hall's (1990) understanding of cultural identity, especially in the context of the Caribbean, as being about both similarity and unity as well as "rupture" and "discontinuity" (p. 225). We argue that the media impact on religious practices of Phagwa reflects the negotiation of Indian-Hindu heritage with diasporic Trinidadian identity. We also draw on cultural performance theory (Davis, 2009), which links observable communicative practices with cultural performance, such as religious rituals, dance, or drama, as intrinsic to daily life. We surmise that through Phagwa performances, local media reveal how color play is a communicative practice used, in part, to demand attention and affirm participants' Hindu-Trinidadian identity.

Two themes comprise our analysis: (i) *poetic-process of Phagwa performance* and (ii) *power-play in Phagwa performances*. Our first theme addresses a consistent focus in the news media on the religious myths and sacred elements of the festival. Cultural performance theory explains that festivals, and the rituals therein, are key tools for cultural meaning creation. Specifically, the notion of *culture as process* explains that cultural performance is a dynamic, evolving strategy for meaning-making, and *culture as poetics* addresses the rituals involved in festival performances and the ways those rituals may both reflect the spaces in which they occur and challenge them. Such ideas of festive, cultural meaning-making and rituals as strategic tools for both challenging and reflecting cultural norms appeared regularly in our sample.

Our second theme addresses the way that news media often framed Phagwa as a site of cultural struggle. Culture is embedded with power dynamics and our performance of culture raises questions about privilege, disadvantage, and how those relations appear in the social dynamics of cultural events. In Trinidadian news media representations of Phagwa, contestations appear in terms of claiming the right to celebrate the festival at all, in a nation where Hindus are a minority religious group and where government funding decisions appear discriminatory along religious and ethnic lines. Public performances of Phagwa in Trinidad are billed as dynamic cultural practices that stage and claim a Hindu-Trinidadian identity in a context where community members perceive their ethno-religious othering.

As with the rest of the world, starting in March 2020, COVID-19 led to cancellations of Trinidad's public Phagwa events, as indicated in media coverage that year. Some Hindu communities have since turned to digital media for rituals, cultural performance and other communicative practices. We conclude by exploring ideas for future research on how identity claiming and cultural performance practices can adapt to digital spaces.

Submission ID

327

The Freedom of Religion and Belief in the Spanish digital media

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Abstract

Despite the right to Freedom of Religion and Belief (FoRB) is a fundamental right recognized by a high degree of protection from infringement, it is still infringed by the intention to impose a radical secularism and the express violation of such right. The FoRB can also conflict with the fundamental Rights to Information and to Freedom of Expression, generating offenses to religious feelings. This research addresses these issues by making an analysis of the coverage that the Spanish digital media with more audience and the referent socio-religious web portals carry out when they refer to a violation of the FoRB. It does so by studying 171 cases collected from 37 websites between January 1, 2019 and July 30, 2020. The quantitative part is based on the 171 cases, and it reveals that the most referred autonomous communities are Andalusia, Madrid and Catalonia, and that the most mentioned confession is Catholicism. It also shows that intolerance is the infringement that acquires more presence, being impediments, vandalism, desecration and destruction of places of worship the most referred topics. The qualitative part is based on 9 selected cases and 41 publications and reveals a mainly negative tone of the media regarding the infringement, but it also evidences some bad practices, such as the use of inappropriate images, the use of problematic terms and the promotion of stereotypes. The research concludes with recommendations for the media coverage of informative content related either to the FoRB and to religion in general.

Submission ID

555

The Church Doors Are Closed – A Birth of An Online Church: Observing Romans 13 in Light of Covid-19

Authors

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Abstract

Covid-19, a great equalizer as many people are calling it, is nonselective. It knows no race, tribe, clan, gender or ethnicity. It affects all, the rich and the poor, those in the West and East, the North and South. It has ravaged the global North and the global South alike. Its effects ranging from physical sicknesses, mental and psychological health challenge, trade, economic and financial devastation. Boarders are closed, planes grounded, local travels restricted and people shutdown in their homes (some in mandatory “Stay Homes”, others voluntarily, and some “in self-quarantine” as others are quarantined in health facilities. Religious institutions have not been spared. The Government of Zimbabwe has implemented very strict lockdown measures that do not allow churches to be open and no physical church gatherings in a bid to curb the spread of the virus. This has given birth to a rise of the online churches. The bans on the church gatherings have however been received with mixed reactions as a lot of people have come out of social media and other media platforms criticizing the government. This paper therefore seeks to review the Zimbabwe social and mainstream media comments in line with religious freedoms versus religious zeal. It will also examine the pros and cons of the online church versus the physical gathering in a pandemic.

Submission ID

646

Platformization of Tarot Soothsayers: Feeling labor and Chinese digital spirituality production

Authors

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Abstract

This article studies the platformization of spiritual production in China through the specific lens of *Bilibili*, an interactive technology- and algorithm-driven video-sharing platform targeting China’s millennials who often describe themselves as “spiritual but not religious”.

Since 2019, an increasing number of Chinese young people are getting involved in the global Tarot craze on *Bilibili* by actively participating in the interactive videos where bloggers produce videos with several options and audiences can make selections to trigger different plots and endings. By January 2021, videos of Tarot on *Bilibili* have been viewed more than 330 million times and discussed over 432,000 times. Such videos become a safe place for Chinese young people to express and reduce anxiety and depression without suffering from the stigma of mental illness. Through the negotiation and interaction between divination bloggers, audiences, and the platform, a digitally-mediated spirituality for the youth comes into being. It should be noted that this process has to happen under the government's culture regulation.

However, such spiritual activity has been criticized as “superstition” by China’s state-media since it facilitates the youth to deal with the uncertain beyond the realm of science. Even so, young’ people’s enthusiasm for Tarot has not been stifled. In contrast, official criticisms put forward the public debates and practices of online divination. Being rooted in this social context, in order to get as much traffic as possible, divination uploaders have tried out a set of negotiating strategies for the platform and the state’s cultural regulations.

The study shall investigate the work of divination uploaders, through the lens of feeling labor, to understand the negotiating production of youth spirituality on *Bilibili*. The concept “feeling labor” was coined by Zeynep Kurtulus Korkman (2015) to conceptualize Turkish coffee fortunetellers as those who work on managing own feelings and expressions while aiming at affecting spiritual experiences in clients. By adopting it, how uploaders strategically utilize the technology provided by *Bilibili* to design audiovisual contents so as to attract and keep viewers, to deal with online censorship, and to respond to users’ feedbacks, will be elaborated.

By doing so, the article may contribute to the comprehension of the production logic of the digital spirituality embraced by Chinese youth, and to the contextualization of digital labor in the Global South.

Submission ID

744

COVID-19 Pandemic and the Framing of Health Risks in Israeli Ultra-Orthodox Religious Media

Authors

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Abstract

Abstract

Despite the growing recognition of the important role culture and religion play in risk communication and framing theory, studies of frames in religious media are limited. In the context of health risks, they remain virtually unexplored. In an attempt to address this void, this study looks at risk reporting in religious media. By means of a content analysis of 331 news reports and articles published in the Haredi (Ultra-Orthodox Jewish) religious media during the first two months of the COVID-19 pandemic in Israel between January and March 2020, this research serves the dual purpose of both the empirical evaluation of the "quality of risk information" as well as the framing of pandemics in religious media. Building on the constructivist approach to framing theory and existing content analysis of health risks, its findings shed light on the positive and negative effects that the mediation of frames through cultural-religious prisms can have on the quality of risk information. In addition, they provide a conceptual basis for comparative risk analysis across various cultural and religious groups.

Submission ID

1007

Protecting Their Community: The Utilization of Twitter by Ultra-Orthodox Journalists During Covid-19

Authors

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Abstract

Journalists can play a pivotal role in society by promoting the security of a population amid a health crisis such as the Covid-19 pandemic (Author, 2021). This role becomes of enhanced importance for marginalized populations as they face a compounded threat due to preexisting social inequalities. Indeed, the Covid-19 pandemic has disproportionately affected the wellbeing of individuals from marginalized populations, affecting their health, employment, finance and more (Kochhar, 09.06.20). Prominent among marginalized populations are the ultra-Orthodox Jewish community in Israel. Therefore, this study examines if and how ultra-Orthodox journalists advocate their community's security during the Covid-19 pandemic.

This study focuses solely on Twitter due to its increased popularity in contemporary journalistic activity (Molyneux & Mourao, 2019). The study includes all of the tweets of the 20 most popular ultra-Orthodox Jewish-Israeli journalists on Twitter during the first five months of the Covid-19 pandemic (March 1st to August 16th, 2020). In all, 23,110 tweets were analyzed in this study through an inductive grounded theory qualitative content analysis (Ritchie et al., 2013).

Findings reveal that ultra-Orthodox journalists often utilize Twitter in an "ambassadorial" role to advocate the security of their community through six strategies: (1) explaining the unique challenges endangering ultra-Orthodox Jews during Covid-19, (2) dispelling Covid-19 accusations directed against ultra-Orthodox Jews, (3) encouraging social distancing and health guidelines, (4) highlighting

the social contributions of ultra-Orthodox Jews to the general public during the pandemic, (5) criticizing wrongdoers, (6) criticizing acts of hatred and bigotry directed at ultra-Orthodox Jews.

This study contributes to scientific knowledge in three ways: First, it sheds light on ultra-Orthodox journalists' professional ethos: suggesting that in addition to preserving rabbinical hegemony and community values (Cohen, 2017; Golan & Mishol-Shauli, 2018), they also protect their community from outside threats to life, rights, and a dignified existence. Second, it contributes to understanding the role Twitter can play in journalistic work due to its inter-social interactivity - pointing to a new type of connectedness and collaboration - and its potential in enabling the capability 'to be secure'. Third, it expands the understanding of the media resource, contributing to policymakers tasked with formulating its fair distribution in society in accordance with the justice-based capabilities approach (Sen, 2009).

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Submission ID

1104

MEDIA FRAMING ON MUSLIM IN CHRISTCHURCH MOSQUE ATTACK: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE PRESS AND NEW YORK TIMES ONLINE NEWS

Authors

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Abstract

Public perceptions on events are greatly affected by the media coverage, depending on how it is framed. Media constructs and shapes the world on how we see it, predominantly on the area where the general public has limited knowledge on it. For decades, and particularly since September 11 attacks, media framing of Muslim as terrorist were persistent. Considerable studies showed that western media framed Islam and Muslim as the major terrorism posing threat to the western society. Islam is depicted as a monolithic and homogenized religion whereas Muslim is uncivilized and inhuman religious maniac. In fact, media reinforced the perception of Islam as anti-democracy and anti-civilization to the western world. The globalized negative portrayal of Muslim in western media has raised the concern of racism, stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination against Muslim, led to dreadful consequences. News coverage on terrorism, which involved Muslim as perpetrator, heightened the fear culture for Muslims and Islam, eventuate the rise of "Islamophobia". The media portrayed perpetrator Muslim as terrorists who clashed the western civilization and threatened the public security as a whole. When such media frames are accepted and becomes an exigency, this negative depiction of Muslim perpetrator was not only leaving implication to the society and individual whose lives are affected by such coverage, but also impacted the political decision making and global relations in the effort of maintaining social order. However, the recent Christchurch mosque attack happened on 15 March 2019 in New Zealand, killed more than 50 Muslim by a local extremist, turned Muslim into terrorism victims. Despite the wealth of literature criticizing Islamophobic representations of Muslim in western media, there is scant research examining the coverage of terrorism act where perpetrators are non-Muslim and victims are Muslim. Therefore, it is very interesting to scrutinize how Islam and Muslim were framed in two influential local and American-based online news sites where Muslim appeared to be the victims in the attack. In this study, a news content analysis was carried out on the online news of *The Press*, a daily newspaper published in Christchurch, and *New York Times*, a New York based American newspaper with wide readership and global influence. The content analysis covered the first two weeks of the incident where there was extensive follow-up news. By using framing analysis that explicated by Robert Entman as the theoretical framework, this study examined the theme covered by both news sites for the event of Christchurch mosque shooting. It also made comparison in between of these two online news sites, local and western, in the news coverage where Muslim was the victims. The finding will determine how media framing of Muslim victims and Islam in the Christchurch mosque attack transform the media event into national mourning in a climate of counter-Islamophobia.

Submission ID

1179

Digital Youth empowerment in the midst of a pandemic. The Spanish Catholic case study

Authors

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Abstract

The different religious institutions have adapted to the Covid-19 pandemic, making use of the digital resources while enhancing online religion. “Now the focus is much more on regular online engagement” (Hyatt, 2020). As a consequence, even though religious parishes and temples were closed due to the global health crisis and the lockdown, youth has been able to feel more connected to the religious community thanks to the social platform.

The aim of this research is to analyze the different practises involving the world of youth in Catholic institutions in Spain in order to understand the needs of young people as well as finding answers within this religious landscape. The pandemic has allowed religious institutions to develop and improve their resources in faith formation, not only online but also offline. “The offline and the online make one reality, one environment. This reality is highly mediated”. (Lundby, 2012).

How is youth in the particular case of Catholic Church landscape in Spain approaching religion after the Covid-19 impact? In order to answer this question, the research methodology followed a four-step process. Firstly, the project proceeded with a literature review on the crucial concepts regarding youth engagement and their needs. Secondly, the quantitative research was conducted with a survey to the different involved organizations as well as to the youth who were engaged with the initiatives. Thirdly, the qualitative realm was developed through a focus group and in-depth interviews. Finally, we did a netnographic analysis with the compilation of all the initiatives.

For young active believers, religion is the element that connects their community and holds it together (Díez, Micó, Sabaté, 2017) and, therefore, the digital scenario has let the religious communities to create innovative and creative practises to adapt to the new online reality. As this research shows, technology and social media are relevant tools to enhance faith transmission among youth as well as to create an integrated community.

Submission ID

1540

Mapping of Leadership as a new communicative aspect for Catholic communities in Spain and Portugal

Authors

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Abstract

Leadership is a concept that is mostly associated with the corporate and political spheres. As to describe it, Bernard Bass explains that it takes place when a member of the group modifies the motivation or competences of others, or when their attention is directed towards goals or to the path required to accomplish them (Bass, 2008). Following this line of thought, leadership can therefore be applied to a broader scope than that of business and politics. If it is the ability to motivate, influence and awaken possibilities for individuals in the fulfillment of their organizational objectives (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, Gupta, 2004), leadership becomes an effective communicative effort that can engage members of a group and positively impact a wide variety of organizations, including religions. Moreover, and amid the present time global pandemic, leadership might not be a possibility but a necessity: in the midst of uncertainty and ambiguity, a leader is able to provide guidance and serve their community members.

What is the approach of leadership practices by the Catholic institutions of Spain and Portugal? This research aims at mapping leadership formation initiatives in the framework of the Spanish and Portuguese Catholic Church with the main objective to provide data on this scenario and be able to conclude which are the current necessities and the succeeding steps for these institutions to take into account and perform. The role of media and communication is a core area in this matter. The challenges that the digital culture (Campbell, 2021; Hoover, 2016) brings to this field, in terms of new leaderships and a redefinition of the concept of authority are very present in this investigation.

Accordingly, the investigation followed a three-step process that defined the methodological structure. Firstly, it included an online mapping of initiatives throughout the Iberian Peninsula. Secondly, it sought quantitative results through a survey that targeted each ecclesiastical district of both countries, as well as other related organisations. Third and last, it moved into the qualitative stage with focus groups and in-depth interviews aiming to acquire a clearer understanding of the research scenario.

The final findings of the study conclude a critical implication for the Catholic communities of both countries: how they should proceed in the field of communication and leadership in face of the present reality and the positive opportunities this field has to offer.

Submission ID

1548

Religious Communication and Practice on Chinese Online Shopping Platforms: Commerciality, Secularization, and Accessibility

Authors

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Abstract

Because the government has a policy of media management and control, there are few religious television stations and newspapers for the general public in China, except for academic journals. Religious rituals must be performed within a defined spatial area, and religious communication is more spatially restricted. New media offer another possibility of propaganda for religious communication. The popularity of social and video platforms provides an opportunity for religious communication in China to gather a virtual community. Religious groups or individuals are posting articles and videos and forming social groups for new media propaganda. This approach has initially broken down geographical limitations, but has attracted more people from within the religious community. With the popularity of new mobile media represented by smartphones, cell phone users will account for the majority of China's 900 million Internet users by 2020, and in addition to online social networking, browsing and using online shopping platforms has become a daily behavior and trend. As the government's management and control of shopping platforms is still in a state of exploration. A large number of religion-related goods and virtual goods have appeared on online shopping platforms represented by Taobao and Pinduoduo. There are three main categories: devotion and donation (building religious buildings, copying and printing religious books, feeding religious people, holding religious ceremonies, etc.), religious supplies and decorations (religious propaganda and popularization, secondary propaganda), and folk religion and divination. Through shopping platforms, congregants can donate to a geographically distant temple by purchasing different forms of virtual products online. Donating money to perform religious rituals or release animals, the purchaser can also receive proof and remembrance in the form of video or live streaming. A large number of religious products are becoming increasingly practical and innovative, especially for groups with relatively low levels of education. Sales of audiobooks, religious-specific radios, religious picture books and decorative religious promotional items are high. Shopping platforms have the greatest impact on the promotion of folk religion. Traditional folk religion rely mainly on interpersonal communication, which is very restricted geographically, private and has narrower communication channels. On the current shopping platforms, on the other hand, they can be accessed by keyword search and contacted remotely through the Internet. Many online stores of local faiths have more than 100,000 purchases. The non-religious population has a high level of interest in them.

The current behavior of religious communication on Chinese shopping platforms is complex, mainly reflecting the following but some characteristics: the mix of officially recognized religious organizations and regional folk religion , the questioning of commerciality and credibility, and the expansion and increased participation of religious communities.

Submission ID

1923

Disinformation and religion in Brazil: a study on the Bereia Collective – Information and News Check

Authors

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Abstract

The 2018 presidential elections in Brazil were groundbreaking in the massive spreading of disinformation. The strategies used for disinformation campaigns were like those in the UK, during the Brexit campaign and the presidential election in the USA, events that took place in 2016. The resulting effects were striking: a survey conducted by Ibope Data found out that 90% of Brazilian voters interviewed stated they received fake news during the 2018 elections, mostly on private social media. A privileged target of these Fake News campaigns were religious groups in Brazil.

This paper discusses the overlap between disinformation and religion, focusing on *the Bereia Collective*, a collaborative project of Religious News Fact-Checking that targets disinformation spread among religious groups in Brazil. It presents the results of empirical research conducted on *Bereia* website. It covers 92 fact-checking news texts published by *Bereia* from 12th December 2019, to 30th September 2020, using content analysis methodology. This analysis reveals the main broadcast sources of disinformation among religious groups; and the most frequent issues and categories raised in disinformation content that were fact-check by the Collective. The paper also presents primary results of the (ongoing) qualitative analysis of these texts.

The theoretical conceptualization of disinformation follows both the European Parliament “Action Plan against Disinformation” (2018), and the work of Don Fallis (2010), who both consider paramount the intentionality of spreading the false information in promoting private economic or political gain that can cause public harm. The paper brings these conceptions to terms with research produced by Brazilian scholar Alexandre Brasil Fonseca (2020), who focus on the intersection between disinformation and religion in Brazil.

This paper concludes that most of the content that was fact-checked by *the Bereia Collective* had some distortion, in different levels, of some proved fact. Most issues were related to health and politics, revealing that the Evangelical disinformation agenda followed the broader trends of the Brazilian

society – such as the effects of the lockdown and the global pandemic over local businesses and jobs. The sources of disinformation checked by *Bereia* were mostly social media (46%) and religious news websites (50%). This result is coherent with two main characteristics of disinformation: the intense use of social media for its spreading; and the targeting of specific public for such content. The analysis of the fact-checking news produced by *Bereia* also suggests a relation between the spreading of disinformation and the rise of religious fundamentalism in Latin America.

Submission ID

2083

Views on the pandemic: Rereading the experience of the religious formation of children and young people

Authors

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Prof. Patrícia Dias - Catholic University of Portugal

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Abstract

The current pandemic is transforming social interactions and interpersonal communication. The hypothesis that "in the sphere of mediatization, institutions and individuals are inserted in interactions different from those in which the media emerged through mediating condition" (Weschenfelder 2019: 30), leads us to question the place of these media, and the protagonism of individuals themselves, also in the religious sphere. In fact, the means are not just a resource to be used, but they change the way of understanding and living the relationships between individuals and groups, and can constitute places of religious experience. This hypothesis is the basis of a survey aimed at families, children and adolescents, and pastoral agents from several Catholic religious communities located in the territory of Lisbon - Portugal.

This empirical study aims to assess the impact of the pandemic on the spiritual life of the groups studied, particularly in the way in which the educational relationship was established, interactions with digital technologies were processed in the context of religious education, and changes in the way of understanding the organization of educational strategies and the exercise of the role of the educator of the faith were found.

The surveys gravitate around five axes: 1) Spirituality: relationship with God; 2) Domestic church: educational function of the family; 3) Children's education and digital culture; 4) The role of the educator; 5) Community: liturgy and fraternity. Being transversal to the research, in each type of respondents some are privileged more specifically. Thus, in surveys aimed at families with children up to 12 years old, there is a set of questions about the experience of faith in the family and the use of digital technologies during the pandemic, compared to the previous period. Children between 6 and 8

years old are invited to draw a picture about God and the pandemic. Children between 9 and 12 years of age will answer with the help of their parents to questions about the experience of faith and the use of digital technologies. In the case of adolescents, between 12 and 16 years old, we seek to know how they relate to God at this time and live the experience of interacting with digital media in the context of religious education. Finally, it is intended to investigate how trainers are living and reinterpreting their role, as well as assessing interactions with digital technologies; religious leaders are asked for a more global approach to how they see the future of training in the context of the changes that the current situation calls for.

The results will be the object of critical reflection in order to help to configure new dynamics in the context of religious education and religious experience. Twenty-six Catholic religious communities are participating in this survey, with an estimated average number of 500 families with children up to 12 years old, the same number for adolescents, with the number of pastoral agents being approximately 200.

Submission ID

2158

SPIRITUAL COMPETITION, MEDIA EDUCATION AND THE CHALLENGES OF HYBRID GLOCALISATION

Authors

Dr. PATRICIA CORTES - CEPIES - UMSA

Abstract

More than ever it is necessary to investigate topics that allow us a better understanding of the interconnected world in which we live due to the technological development of communications. One of these issues is related to Hybrid Glocalisation and its repercussions on the individual and on society. This opens new lines of inquiry regarding spirituality and the deepest values of the human being.

The lack of awareness of citizens around the world about the influence of information and communication technologies on the representations that we may have of the realities that we face is evident. In general, aspects such as critical thinking, culture, citizenship, spirituality, among others, are involved. Therefore, it is necessary to make a substantial improvement in the relationship of communication, education and human spirituality.

In this framework, our initial question is the following: Among the competencies that the human being should have in the face of media messages, what role does spiritual competence play? How should it be understood and defined within the dimensions of the media education and in the perspective of obtaining an adequate representation of reality (global / local)? To address these questions, we start from the main results of our previous research on the communicative dimension of media education (dialogue and cognitive decentration) in order to now delve into the anthropological-philosophical dimension.

On this occasion we wish to offer researchers and those in the field of education and communication, a theoretical and conceptual proposal on the dimensions of media education, with a special section referring to spiritual competence. Our study is based on theoretical contributions from different currents of thought and geographical origins.

As a general conclusion, it has been observed that understanding the dimensions of media education and spiritual competence could lead us to a later phase of operationalization and application within formal, non-formal and informal educational processes. This would allow us to contribute to strengthening the critical thinking and spirituality of the human being. We believe that this is a priority task that will define the future of humanity in the face of the challenges of Hybrid Glocalisation.

Submission ID

2184

Rebranding the American Catholic Church from a Classical Rhetorical Perspective

Authors

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Abstract

This work represents an attempt to reimagine the American Catholic brand fractured by the clergy sexual abuse scandals and their official cover-up to save the Church from public embarrassment and humiliation, using Isocrates' theory of self-defense and self-representation as found in his *Antidosis*. It conceptualizes the Catholic Church as a brand because it is a religious organization with an army of followers, is well-known, and is an indisputable leader in the provision of education, healthcare, and social welfare, thereby playing an important role in the socio-cultural consciousness of many Americans. Built over centuries of service to its members and the country, the Catholic Church and its brand from the 1960s to the dawn of the twenty-first century had enjoyed a high moral authority as a religious organization that promoted the dignity of the human person and acted as an ethically responsible corporate citizen in American society. However, such a moral authority crumbled following the 2002 *Boston Globe* revelations that for decades the Church's hierarchy in the Archdiocese of Boston had sexually preyed on innocent children and vulnerable members. The result has been a crisis of faith and trust, lasting for almost two decades in spite of the Church's efforts to create a safe environment for its children and vulnerable members and to hold predator priests accountable. This project holds the view that, for the Church in America to rebuild its brand and thereby restore its fractured image and reputation, it must embrace its core identity as a model institutional citizen that promotes the dignity of the human person, differentiate and dissociate itself from predator priests and their episcopal supporters, establish goodwill toward stakeholders by setting up monuments to memorialize abuse victims, organizing annual events for victims to tell their stories, holding abusive clergy and irresponsible bishops accountable, allowing the lay faithful to play an active role in priestly formation, being more transparent in its handling of sexual abuse cases, as well as requiring seminarians and

priests to undergo frequent sexual assault and sexual harassment training, and must honestly confess its complicity in the tragedy of the abuse.

Submission ID

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