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**Religions in the Digital World of Asia:
Some Considerations**

Franz-Josef Eilers, svd

Already in the early days of communication research Wilbur Schramm, who is considered as one of the fathers of communication studies, published in 1977 the book “Big and Little Media.” The ‘big’ media were the professional media institutions like radio, TV, press and film whereas the ‘little’ media were those which could not reach the ‘big’ level. They were also called “group media” because their ‘readership’ was usually in small groups where members could see and react immediately with each other. They developed especially in Latin America where the Church promoted them to help alleviate the life of simple people and also to develop a counter-balance to the influence of the “big” mass media which were owned and operated by big financial companies and were in the hands of the financially and politically “powerful.”

All this is different now with the development of new ways of communicating where everybody can reach everybody anywhere and anytime with the so-called social media or better social means of communication. Today anybody can also be his/her own editor, announcer or communicator using simple and affordable technical devices for a growing number of people and thus be somehow independent from the still existing ‘big’ media. Here the range of communication is extended almost without limits. Even the ‘old’ big media have to extend and adjust to these new technical possibilities if they want to survive.

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Now the means to communicate are no longer the privilege of a few but can be used by everybody in society and thus are rightly also called “social” media. They often are related to social networks though such ‘networks’ are not new but existed already since the beginning of humankind whenever people assembled and communicated with each other (Tom Standage, 2013). This phenomenon, however, has taken on an additional meaning in reference to new ‘means’ and possibilities which can be taken up by almost everybody in a growing way. The word ‘Social’ indicates also the shift to “*Social Communication*,” an expression which was actually introduced in 1963 by the Vatican II document *Inter Mirifica*. This Council decree proposed the expression to be used over and above the usual “mass media,” which would just refer to technology but not to a *social process*, a communicative happening between humans within a certain grouping (“social”) regardless of the means used.

Looking in this perspective to *Religions in Asia* seems to be quite challenging but is hardly done. Such an attempt might begin with looking first at the *means* used in different religious activities like teaching, preaching but also in religious ceremonies. The predominant concern here might often be the question how to ‘use’ them in a most effective way from voice/music to environment and other factors but communication as a *process* is easily neglected. In a theater performance the composition and timing for a proper use of different means and persons is important. So it is in religious communication which also has to be considered in its overall “performance” which leads to the experience of the “holy” in the understanding of Rudolf Otto (1923). In communication studies, this is reflected in the ritual communication concept of James Carey (1992) who comes to his insights from the study of culture. He distinguishes between a *transmission* model of communication and a *ritual* model. While communication as *transmission* is concerned about the flow of the message from sender to the receiver and its effect, a *ritual perspective* looks at the overall happening and experience between humans in ‘celebrating’ a ritual. In a ritual, the participants are not concerned about the means and their effects but rather about a common experience which is also the case in any religious practice and experience transcending the human into the “Divine.”

For our Asian situation this could mean *first* to study the ‘means’ available and where and how they can be used. But a mere listing and even

study of these possibilities and their effects is not enough. Following Carey’s ritual considerations they must also be embedded in a proper cultural and ‘religious’ environment with respective meanings and proper communicative dimensions. They further are determined by the history, teaching and expressions of different religions themselves in relation to the people of a given culture.

Thus—here in a *second* step—one might ask if and how far such ‘ritual’ experiences are met and ‘lived’ in Asian religions under the perspective and possibilities of a digital world. Special initiatives, however, for such research hardly seem to exist yet. These studies would include an analysis of different elements—from words, songs, books, preaching, images and actions like dancing—but also a vision of the whole process of religious activities: in what way are they related or interrelated with each other and with what purpose and effect? Here the digital element comes in with the general question: if and how far does new digital communication affect in religion and what way?

*

The word “digital” refers to digits or numbers and reduces the communication to 0 and 1 as the carriers of any information. Thus: ‘digital’ refers to new means, ways and structures of communication which enlarges possibilities—over and against the traditional analog—almost limitless: Here the “Death of Distance” (Cairncross 1997/2001) comes in: we can communicate without any limits of time and space as well as content. One has to keep in mind, however, that all this refers only to the transmission but not necessarily the essence of our message or our life-experience. ‘Digital’ is transmission but only in a limited way also ‘ritual’ in the understanding of Carey and not to talk about the ‘essentials’ of life.

Further, digital is definitely more than just only technology—like some of the older communication means. By now it is very much a way of life though it probably does not penetrate the core and essence of a person and even religion in the ‘real’ experience of the “holy” beyond any ‘outside’ and possibly somehow ‘superficial’ “happening”... Here one might ask further questions like: How far and in what way does ‘digital communication affect our personal life and relationships, insights and ‘acting’ with others? Our visions of life and work? Our ways of expressing ourselves in community?

But also how far do they affect our own character developments and our communicative abilities and possible ‘ethics’ flowing out of all this? The way we communicate is not only determined by technical means but also by our ‘personality’ influenced by our upbringing and other life experiences.

*

Any deeper study of digital communication in *Asian religions*, however, must also consider the culturally already existing communication means and processes of respective cultures since religion is intimately related to culture. They are not only expressions of human life and history but also of beliefs or what Luzbetak calls the ‘*ideational*’ part of culture.

Physical culture which is expressed in visible signs like buildings with their proper architecture, positioning, decorations and tools is to be followed by *societal needs* which are reflected in the ways how people live and relate with each other. The *ideational* is expressed in beliefs which are reflected and communicated in ceremonies and practices from where religious traditions follow: may it in the Buddhist way of ‘listening’ to the Buddha and his teachings or the Qumran with its sayings and texts or in Christianity’s relation to a personal God who became human in Jesus Christ.

Social communication tries to enter into all of this and to study the origin, flow and effects of communication not just as ‘rational’ knowledge but as a celebration of human and divine life and community. Here the concern is less the individual communication experience via the so-called social media like Facebook or Twitter to satisfy my own ‘needs’ and longings but rather a living of the actual experience of community, being ‘social’ in a given religious practice and celebration. All this seems to be, however, broader and more than just a ‘digital’ way of transmission which might be temporarily considered more as a tool than the ‘essence’ of the experience of life.

The dictionary tells us that ‘digital’ is an adjective and “displaying a read-out in numerical digits rather than by a pointer like at a watch. It is “relating to/or using numerical calculations or data in the form of numerical digits” but also stands for “using computer and computerized technologies, including the Internet.” What does this mean for religions and especially religions in Asia?

Looking at this reality of *digital communication*, theologian and communication scholar Robert S. Fortner (2007) asks if the ‘digital’ which is a numerical unit (0-1) without a before and after also means for a digital world that there is no ‘before’ and ‘after’ any more but only just ‘presence’—that we live in a society without history and similar relations... where therefore “everything goes”?

*

What does all this mean in our world, which is determined not only by the ‘hardware’ of technology but also by shaping slowly but surely the minds of people, the behavior of society and the public atmosphere?

After the “millennials,” young people who were born after 1991 (the ‘birth’ of the world wide web) are called “*digital natives*.” They experience life different from the “digital immigrants” who were born earlier. What does this mean for personal and communal religious life? How can they be readily prepared to live, maintain, develop and ‘translate’ religious traditions of the past in the same or similar way as those who lived and developed the “holy” before them? How far does the “digital revolution” change the lives and convictions of people in general? Are there possible new expressions also of and for ‘eternal’ concerns? With the great variety of Asian cultures, populations, and also religious convictions and social developments will there be a difference in pace and space in different the parts of Asia? Does digitization already now give some directions for specific developments in the practices and even convictions of religious communities? There are already now “digital” Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Confucian, Daoist communities: how are the new developments reflected in and with them? How are they treating ‘digital life’ experiences? Are ‘beliefs’ adjusted to a digital shape? Do religious teachings and practices change in a digital way?

Another important question for Asia is also if and how far a digital landscape can help towards a fruitful *interreligious dialogue* and possibly develop more easily common exchanges to be facilitated and even consolidated between religions in a digital way?

*

The distinction between “Religion Online” and “Online Religion” exists already since quite some time: How does religion present itself online or is religion itself practiced online? The Dawson/Cowan book *Religion Online, Finding Faith in the Internet* (2004) is one of the early publications in this perspective. It contains one article each on Islam and also Buddhism: *‘Rip, Burn, Pray’: Islamic Expression Online* by Gary R. Bunt and *The Cybersangha: Buddhism on the Internet* by Charles S. Prebish. Both authors, however, describe their findings and considerations from an American/Canadian academic perspective but not from an Asian point of view, though in the Prebish article on Buddhism lists some relations in Japan, Taiwan but not more. These articles do therefore not really reflect the Asian situation as such. The presentation on Islam asks for example in general how the Qu’ran and Muslim prayer life is reflected in the Net and portals. In addition, the Buddhist presentations pose similar questions from a more general and Western academic point of view.

For all of us, the Internet has changed and developed considerably also within the Asian countries themselves. It means that many more detailed local studies on the activities, experiences and consequences of digitization of religions in Asia are needed asking for example:

1. Is there no history in ‘digital’? If yes, what are the consequences?
2. Can digital communities ‘substitute’ physical communities? Are they the same or how are they different, with which consequences?
3. Are there any special Asian ways or responses to a digital challenge? Is “Puja” or the lighting of a candle through digital devices acceptable/or even the same like in real presence?
4. How far can spiritual experiences be reflected in a digital world? Is there also a “holy” (Rudolf Otto) in the digital world? When? Where? How?

*

To give a concrete example of research approach from the West: Heidi Campbell has in her seminal book *When Religion meets New Media* (2010) studied for America and Europe Western Jewish, Muslim and Christian communities but not any of the Asian communities. However her findings and reflections could also help in general to develop similar approaches also for Asia and religions in Asian.

She describes religious communities as “groups who share a common ideology and theology and can be identified by distinctive patterns of practice and circulating discourse which support and justify their experience of the sacred and every day” (p. 8).

After a first chapter on religious communities and the Internet and considering a “religious-social shaping of technology” she presents in her book the following chapters which might up to a certain point also be considered in Asia:

1. History and media tradition: discovering baselines for religious approaches to new Media.
2. Community value and priorities: contextualizing responses to new media.
3. Negotiating with new media: to accept, reject, reconfigure and/or innovate?
4. Considering communal discourse: framing new media appropriation.
5. Studying the religious shaping of new media: the case of the ‘kosher’ cell phone (in Jewish culture)
6. Insights from the religious-social shaping of new media.

In the course of her presentation she sees some positive and negative patterns for a new media choice by religions (p.185 ff).

As *positive points* she lists:

1. Media which can be utilized for proselytizing and public proclamation of core beliefs.
2. Technologies which facilitate global networking and promotions within religious communities to solidify membership, identity and beliefs.
3. New media for agenda setting and publicizing beliefs, especially if it is supported by a discourse.. new technology as tool for highlighting core communal values.
4. New media technologies for innovative ways to digitize or technologize religious rituals or reminders...to more easily integrate religious expectations into daily life, like e.g. times for daily prayer of Muslims..

For *negative points* she enumerates:

1. Avoid technology features which allow access to secular content.
2. New Media might undermine established authority structures and gatekeepers, therefore forms of monitoring like filtering software.
3. How New Media influence the identity management of the community.
4. New Media messages are fluid and transitional rather than fixed like traditional media on a text: E-vangelism comes with responsibility.

She calls for an analytic frame in the shaping of religious-social technology which should ask for “the spiritual capital of the community... as families of users who frame their choices on their underlying religious ideology.”

She further sees *four layers* for a proper investigation of the history and tradition of the community in relation to media:

1. Identify core values and essential priorities.
2. Base immediate interaction on these foregoing points.
3. There is a need for a communal discourse to frame the technology and its prescribed use: prescriptive, officializing and evaluation discourses.

Authority and identity management of the respective communities are to be considered for a network of interactions in a “networked religion” (p. 193).

Her research might contribute to a similar study on the role and impact of digital communication for religions in Asia: are there similar common elements in Asian Religions? How far are they determined by different cultures? Are there common elements of ‘Asian-ness’ which have a special relation to religion like e.g. silence, meditation, ascetism, view of the cosmos, human relations like age groups (parents, older generations, filial piety)?

*

Digitization seems to change our ways of communicating completely. This is reflected in some developments like the following:

1. Former printed matters are now digitized and in the Net and ‘cloud’ paper seems not to be needed anymore..
2. Radio and television with text and picture (sound and image) are now at the free will and decision of the consumer who decides what and where s/he wants to ‘go.’
3. Fixed broadcasting programs will in a growing way not anymore be needed because everybody becomes his/her own program director in selecting what s/he wants to see and hear.
4. For transmissions long, medium, or short waves are not needed anymore. All is available through streaming. Here again, who decides which kind of program s/he wants to see?
5. *As a consequence:* It is the *consumer* who decides what, when and where s/he receives programs—also religious ones. Thus it depends on his/her personal interest and needs...which indicates also his/her interests and personal disposition... (What are the criteria for such decisions by the consumer? Any consequences for ‘education’ and religious formation?)
6. There are no boundaries anymore for interpersonal communication in digital ways, but there still is and will always be a difference between (physically) direct “person-to-person” communication and the ones mediated by a transmission instrument.
7. Personal communication means (cellphones, tablets etc.) are multiplying and in a growing way available and accessible to more and more people: like in the Philippines where there are more cellphones than the total number of inhabitants. Thus the ‘digital divide’ will become smaller and smaller.
8. Where is in all this a/the religious need and communication of persons and communities? How will digital *communitas* and religion tomorrow look like? Do they still have a *role* to play? How? When? Where?

If religion is essential for any human being and society it must be also be reflected in the digital world of Asia. Our question, however, is: where, when, how, with which consequences for individuals and communities—including the academic community... is this (to be) realized?

The digital way of living actually refers to new means, ways and possibilities of communicating which affect *all* areas of life but do not

reach to the essentials of our human being. With the “Death of Distance” (geographically, mentally, time-wise) these outside experiences do not, however, fully reach and change the essentials of our life: We are not conceived, born or die digitally but really which also holds for deep personal relations! Thus, beyond or even before any digital experience there is already the “real” or “analog” of our lives which cannot just be ‘thrown away’. In fact, while our ways of change with new technical possibilities (digital) our personal needs and realities as human beings are not discarded which also includes religion as an essential dimension. In the same way as our needs for concrete bodily touch and love are still existing also in the digital world, also our relation to the “holy” is lived beyond the digital in the reality of religion. Basic human needs are not something which can be changed or thrown away like a cloth—to change to digital—also religion has to be seen as essential to any human existence. Digital communication changes our ways and possibilities for communicating completely—no limits in reaching and communicating with people from all corners of the world—which widens our horizon and develops new relationships and experiences. But at the core of our lives we are still the same human beings with our own needs and experiences which also the digital world finally cannot fulfill. David Sax (2016) comes in here with his well researched book *The Revenge of Analog* where he also reports on (analog) meditation centers in the Google headquarters and similar enterprises in Silicon Valley where, according to him, spiritual masters and gurus are in high demand (p. 205 ff.). Consequently, despite all the digital hype there is still the analog reality from where we live and might reach out digitally. Here religion comes in: live analog but act digital which this way ‘flows’ out of our analog reality which not only includes religion which might be even considered as the core of everything we responsibly do and from where new communication possibilities become a ‘new’ dimension!

In a way we might say that religions are in their core ‘analog’ while the digital dimension helps to more deeply understand this reality of life! Thus for example in Christianity sacraments like Baptism are not just digital but ‘real’ (analog) with the concrete water flowing the ceremony. While digital communication can help to better understand and appreciate the reality which, however is analog. Here the reality of God is not just digital but analog. He is not only present *online* but acts rather *offline* as one of our 2016 research conferences at the University of Santo Tomas (UST) in Manila said in one of their presentations.: Religion is not just digital but also “real” in its core.

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Religion in the Virtual Public Sphere: Nature and Dynamics A Study Based on Selected Social Network Sites

G. Patrick

Relating religion to ‘virtual public sphere’ has been a concern not only for communication research but also for religious studies and political science for quite sometime now. As we live in an era wherein we witness to increasingly growing involvement of religion in the processes of public sphere or in various aspects of public life, it is fitting that we continue to explore this interface. Virtual space, unique to our times, offers an unmistakable domain to this interface.

Public Sphere

The public sphere, as we know, is a category that relates itself to the practice of democracy. Theorising on it is generally referred to the research done by Jurgen Habermas¹ who understood it as ‘a discursive realm between the civil society and the state, involved in creation of public opinion, which weighs upon political decisions or participates in the process of decision making on matters concerning public life.’ He thought of three types of public spheres: 1) public spheres in the political domain (a domain which is proximate and yet different from the state, preparing individuals for statecraft); 2) public spheres in the ‘world of letters’ (discussion and debates in the domain of literatures, academia, press, clubs, etc., which, with its relative independence, debates upon the state as well as the courts); and 3) public spheres in the ‘town’ in coffee houses, salons, ‘table societies’, etc. which cultivate the general

¹ The attribution begins with Jurgen Habermas’ research-based publication, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*

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population for creating public opinion. 'Discussion' (lexis), according to him, embodying the public use of reason, is the central dynamics which constitutes these varying domains of public spheres; and this discursive practice has, again, three important dynamics as he found them existing in the seventeenth and eighteenth century European society: 1) neutralisation of status, 2) problematisation of common concerns, and 3) inclusiveness (Habermas, 1989). 'Neutralisation of status' meant that the practice of discussion was premised upon a radical disregard for varying status-positions of discussants, bringing them on par with each other; 'problematisation of common concerns' meant bringing up a rational-critical public debate upon issues which affect the society; and, 'inclusiveness' stood for seamless universality converging upon the fundamental character of being human. Habermas' study delineated how these dynamics which informed the bourgeois public sphere during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries began to change under the impact of the growing capitalism, which, among others, transformed the discussant from being a creator and debater to a consumer of ideas and culture.

Habermas' ideas of public sphere have come under critical evaluations, resulting in rejections as well as appropriations. An important criticism made here is that Habermas' ideas are too ideal-typical to correspond to actual practice of democracy, and that they relate themselves to elitist vision of public sphere, which is blind to gender, social and economic discriminations. The bourgeois public sphere which he studied had accepted only the white propertied male to be a discussant in the public sphere; moreover, the kind of Kantian view of universal human being which undergirds his discussion is blind to such discriminating identities as gender, racial, social, and economic differences. Pointing out to these blind-spots, Nancy Frazer argued for the need not of one-universal public sphere but of many 'counterpublics' to enrich the practice of democracy. It has been pointed out that it is not 'consensus building' alone which is the hallmark of democracy (as emphasised by Habermas), but contestations, resistance, and agonistic negotiations too build up a healthy democracy.

In this context, it is in place to note that the contemporary post-secular era, characterised by such experiences as 'resurgence of religion,' and 'public religion,' re-envision the place of religion in the workings and dynamics of the public sphere. Habermas, as a Marxist critical theorist, had his 'secularist' orientation to religion, and therefore, did not consider religion fit to partake

of the 'rational-critical public debate' of the public sphere. That religion, considered to harbour schemes of hierarchies, could not be a partaker of a status-neutral public sphere was one of his salient criticisms, and he totally precluded religion from the public sphere. However, one sees a change in his position towards his later period. He came to appreciate the role of religion for the moral regeneration of humanity, and accepted that religious visions could inform the debates of the public sphere, provided they were 'translated' into intelligible rational language (discussion with Cardinal Ratzinger, later a pope). Taking cognisance of the 'incommensurability' of radically different ethical or religious doctrines, as pointed out to by John Rawls, Habermas emphasised the need of 'translation' of religious visions into intelligible rational language. But, we find several contemporary scholars of religion or social theory, going beyond Habermas' understanding of the role of religion, and proposing the possibility of 'conversations' between religions in the public sphere so as to invest the practice of democracy with ethical standards, values of social justice, and aspects of transcendence.

Religion in the Virtual Public Sphere

While this point 'whether religion could participate in the public sphere' is continued to be debated, we are overwhelmed by the digital presence of religion in the 'virtual space', including those sites identified as 'virtual public sphere'. We need to clarify here what do we mean by 'virtual public sphere', and the place of religion in it. In this task of clarification, we are aided by not a few good studies already existing on themes like 'virtual coffee houses', 'twitter and democracy', 'virtual communities', 'virtual forums of debates', and so on. Some salient characteristics these studies attribute to virtual public sphere are:

1. The very character of internet which provides the facility and ambience for a horizontally two-way interactive communication, that can complement as well as contradict the given message, unlike the one-way process found in mass-communication or some traditional channels of communication which tend to be top-down and ascriptive.
2. Existence in the internet of discussion forums, varying from closely-knit collectives to loosely-weaved forums, undertaking critical-rational public debates in an open manner
3. Prevalence in these forums of discussion and debates upon matters of

common concern and common good

4. A relative autonomy these forums experience from external dominance or control – be they related to state, market, or even communities of religious-cultural traditions
5. An identifiable continuity between these virtual forums and physical spheres in terms of discussion, debates, and actions.

While these are some of the salient characteristics which vouchsafe for the existence of virtual public spheres, critiques have their own doubts cast upon them. While granting the discussant-savvy character of the interactive internet, and agreeing to the existence of discussion forums of common concern in the virtual space, they doubt the quality of debates taking place in them; they find much of uncritical or low-quality discussions or debates, mostly circumscribed by particular traditions (in the manner of ‘text-based orality’, as pointed out perceptively by Prof. Chandra); they doubt very much their autonomy and freedom from external sources of authorities – be they state-governed, market-led or communally inscribed. More and more of researches continue to shed more and more light upon the congenial and critical aspects of virtual public spheres today. What they all affirm is the unmistakable existence and functioning of virtual public spheres in our mediatised world today.

Similarly, researchers find also the role of religion in the virtual public spheres. They identify dynamics and characteristics unique to religion in the virtual public sphere. Some of them are:

1. Religion in the internet, by the latter’s very nature, is democratic and participatory; it lends itself for complementary as well as contradictory responses, and constructs itself through this dialectics; and, therefore, is congenial to the dynamics of the public sphere
2. Religious websites do provide opportunities for discussion, debate and interpretation of their religious beliefs, doctrines, and practices; they offer opportunities also for inter-religious understanding and cooperation
3. Religious websites, both information-oriented and practice-oriented, dwell upon their visions of common good, and involve themselves in matters of common concern and public life
4. A relative freedom, however questionable though, from external dominance, is experienced by virtual religion
5. A continuity between virtual religious discussion and debates and the

physical sphere of action.

Critiques have their appraisals on these dynamics and characteristics too. Though the internet, by its nature, may be democratic and therefore lends itself for the dynamics of public sphere, critiques point out that the experience of transcendence, which is perhaps, the core of religion, seems to be ‘determined’ by computer technology, and therefore, places a hurdle on the workings of religion; they opine that though virtual religious sites may, in principle, grant place for discussion and debates, in actuality, these are ‘dictated’ by religious authorities or communities of faith, and therefore, there is not an open debate there; though virtual religion exhibits much interest in common good and in opportunities for inter-religious cooperation, they suffer from embedded claims of one’s own supremacy over the others; the question of relative autonomy to virtual religion is rare to find, because most often these websites are targeted towards specific audience (...); and the element of continuity could also result in organisational projects, for fundamentalist, nationalist and sectarian purposes.

While claims and counter-claims on the place of religion in virtual public spheres keep emerging, it is in place to accept the fact of the existence of elements which can be ascribed to ‘religious public spheres’. They are functioning across religions and regions, and their dynamics and characteristics depend upon the particular context in which they are operating. Some case studies:

Case-Studies

For the present paper, I chose to study two selected social network sites relating Islam and Hinduism. My reason for selecting Islam is that it has been the religion which brings highest hits in the google search engine. It has more than 450 million hits; all the other religions get lesser hits than this. Needless to say then that Islamic websites provide the singular data for study of virtual religious public sphere. The next choice is a site on Hinduism, because it is contextually significant for my discussion here in India.

Islamic Virtual Public Sphere

The case study presented here is a summary of an already existing study carried out by Mohammad el-Nawawy and Sahir Kamis, published under the title “Collective Identity in the Virtual Islamic Public Sphere: Contemporary

Discourses in two Islamic Websites” (*International Communication Gazette*, 2010). The two websites chosen by the researchers, based on ‘virtual traffic ranking’ provided by alexa.com, are the popular Islamic websites *islamonline.net* and *islamway.com*. The study is an exploration of these two websites to identify the nature of virtual *umma* (online Islamic community) and the dynamics involved in the creation of collective identities. The authors undertake a textual analysis (analysis of discourses, genres, and styles to arrive at the meaning) of certain selected threads (selected on the basis of their political and religious significance) found in these websites to examine whether the discussions taking place in them exemplify, first of all, the Islamic principles of *shura* (consultation), *ijtihad* (interpretation) and *ijma* (consensus), and secondly, the Habermasian principles of rational-critical debate, common good and inclusiveness.

The researchers find that the Islamic principles of *shura*, *ijtihad* and *ijma* are generally well respected in any Islamic public sphere. As they opine: “[M]embers in the sphere of ‘public Islam’ participate in open discussions and critical negotiations of various issues in a way that eventually leads to achieving *almaslaha al-’amma* (common good)” (233). They opine that “In order to make sure that justice and freedom of opinion prevail in the deliberation process, the Qur’an (Muslims’ holy book) calls for adopting *shura* (consultation). ‘The meaning of “shura” is the solidarity in society based on the principle of free consultation and genuine dialogue, reflecting equality in thinking and expression of opinion’ (Abu-Nimer, 2006: 159).” Participants in the process of *shura* are required to reach *ijma* (consensus) through a rational critical debate. According to Salvatore, quoted by the researchers, “Muslim participants who interact in public deliberations to reach *ijma* go through the process of ‘reflexive rationalization’ (Salvatore, 2006: 98) – a process through which they use various modes of engagement to frame and analyze issues in a reasonable manner.” (234). This rationalization, according to the researchers, “depends on *ijtihad* (interpretation), which ‘includes all the instruments used to form judgments through human reasoning and personal effort.’” (234). All those who practice *shura*, *ijtihad*, and *ijma* through online practise of Islam, even if they live across continents, experience a solidarity which makes them a virtual *umma* (community). The internet technology has made the Muslims to be part of an imagined world community of Muslims. “The implications of such processes”, according to the researchers, “on the Muslim *umma* today are profound, because they ‘permitted a wider range of voices to enter the public

sphere and to articulate different understandings of Islam’ (Mandaville, 2001: 18–19), thus contributing to the creation of a new ‘Muslim public sphere.’” (235)

The researchers undertake to study five online threads from *islamway.com*, a website meant exclusively for Muslim women, and *islamonline.net*. One of the threads, titled “In Support of Al-Aqsa Mosque”, brings the conversations of women in support of protecting the Mosque, which apparently came under the Israeli destruction. All the participants of the thread write passionately, imbued with a sense of religious attachment going to the extent of one person announcing that she was prepared to sacrifice her life for protecting the Mosque. Another thread titled, “Abou Trika is a Soccer Player, But...” brings together conversations on the action of the famous Abou Trika, who displayed in the court his undershirt wherein the words “Sympathize with Gaza” was written, and for this action he received a yellow card from the referee. The participants were in praise of Trika’s action, and discussed why he should be punished while others who displayed Israeli flags were not. Both these threads, in the view of the researchers, contribute unmistakably to strengthening the collective identity / consciousness, but, they fail to add up to the Habermasian principles of rational-critical objective discussion on the matters concerned.

The next thread titled, “Do you Support the Creation of United African States?” discusses the question whether one would support the call of the then Libyan President Mu’ammur Qaddafi to create this pan-African state. All the participants of this thread oppose the call of Qaddafi, giving various reasons as to why it would not work, but instead call for a pan-Islamic union, which is homogenous in terms of religion. The researchers find this discussion again not adding up to the Habermasian principle of public sphere, because, once again, this thread too is emotional and not rational; moreover, the participants lack ‘self-reflexivity’, which is an important ingredient of those who participate in discussion in the public sphere, according to Habermas.

The next thread titled as, “What do the Current Muslim Leaders Lack?”, has only three participants who discuss openly, frankly and self-reflexively what the Muslim leaders lack. They cite the following posting of one of the participant to argue their point:

Akram: Muslim leaders lack several key characteristics, such as: the rhetorical charisma and the ability to convince others; a clear vision and strategic planning for the future; and the courage to become involved in a well-planned confrontation. They have also given in to the Western ideologies which are not a reflection of the Islamic beliefs.

Mahmoud: We do not need terrorist leaders such as Bin Laden, but we need a leader who is politically smart, and who is capable of maneuvering his way around Israel and the United States. We need a leader who knows how to manage cold wars. We need a leader who understands that this era is for chess players rather than boxers.

This thread, according to the researchers, has a rational critical element. However, since it has only three participants, the thread fails to represent any consensus of the Islamic community. The last thread analysed by the researchers is from Islamway.com, and it is on “Danish Newspapers Decide to Publish Offensive Cartoons”. The participants of this thread are outraged by the offensive cartoon, and chastise the offenders, and invoke God’s curse upon the offenders. Once again the researchers find that this thread too does not leave room for deliberations, disagreements, and controversies as envisioned by Habermas.

Going by the content of all the threads studied, the researchers conclude that the internet technology has enabled the members of Muslim Umma “to engage in online discussions and deliberations, which can help in expressing, shaping and negotiating Muslim identities.” (247). They help construct a pan-Islamic identity by living out a faith which goes beyond ethnicity, region, and language. The technology, according to the researchers, has enabled the lay-Muslims to discuss, consult, interpret and seek to arrive at consensus-building on matters of collective identity. However, the researchers point out that the selected threads studied do not add up to the Habermasian rational-critical open debates.

Hindu Virtual Public Sphere

There are a number of discussant social networks on Hinduism. For example, hindudharmaforums.com hosts discussions on a plethora of issues relating Hinduism to public life, common concerns, politics, etc. For example,

a thread on ‘secularism is poison’ (dt. March 2006)² makes an interesting reading:

Satay: I think secularism is a slow poison that is going to kill our generations to come. It is going to destroy our culture, our way of life and our way of worshipping Bhagwan. But I don't believe Hinduva the way it is being portrayed by some organizations is the answer! Their 'militant' way is only going to leave our young generations scared and think of them as some sort of gundas. A gentler more friendly approach has to be adopted.

Devisarada Namaste Satay: I agree that secularism is an insidious destroyer of culture. I cannot speak for India, having never been there, but here in Canada, where our population is so diverse, especially in the big cities, it appears to be the only acceptable compromise. (Although not one I am comfortable with)

Do you propose that India become a Hindu country, just as Israel is an Jewish country, and Pakistan is a Muslim country? It might work, considering the broad scope of Hinduism and the innate open mindedness and tolerance for many different points of view.

I believe there is nothing wrong with Christians joining in Diwali celebrations, Hindus in Christmas services, or in everyone celebrating Eid and Hanukkah.

Perhaps my ideas are naive and Utopian. but I believe inclusion is the only way to go. We should all practice our own religion, but be open to sharing our celebrations with everyone who wishes to do so. As far as I can see, Hindus already do that.

Christians, on the other hand, will only welcome you if they see you as a potential convert, otherwise, you are excluded.

Many Muslims also seem to feel that by including non-believers, they are somehow defiling their sacred practices.

Exclusion, in this global village of ours, can only lead to greater distrust and animosity. The secular approach of not having any public celebrations (unless, of course there is money to be made) will, in my view eventually turn us all into amoral automatons.

² <http://hindudharmaforums.com/archive/index.php/f-41.html>

“Tat twam asi” as far as I know, has no exceptions or conditions.

Hill Garley: Hi everyone, I'm new to this discussion board. I'm a 50-year-old woman who lives in the UK and I have been doing my best to follow the spiritual path, in one form or another, ever since my 20s.

Where I'm at now is in following the 'sanathana dharma' as laid down in the Vedas. This predates Hinduism or any other religion. In fact, I believe it's where most of the major religions spring from, although in a very much watered down and, in some cases, corrupted form.

To me, the sanathana dharma is a universal path that doesn't call for anyone to change their religion. Being brought up in the West, I was originally a Christian, and now that I know where the religion came from, I can enjoy passages from the Bible because I can see the root of the stories. i can equally enjoy the Bhagavad Gita...

The story of Adam and Eve, for example, imho, is just a watered down version, and altered to fit the local circumstances, of the well known Vedic story of Atma and Jiva, the two birds in the pipalla tree (similar to apple tree, as you can see). It is obviously a story about man becoming trapped into dualistic thinking, and nothing to do with sex and 'original sin' as many Christians, post Augustine, would have us think. The theme of him eating the apple from the tree of good and evil is a symbol for him descending into the lower state of consciousness (in some cultures sacred stories, the underworld) which is ruled by good and evil and other such dualities.

One of the books I've found to be most helpful in decoding the symbolism in the Rig-veda is the Secret of the Veda by Sri Aurobindo. After I studied this brilliant work, it was easy to spot the same pattern and similarities of thought in other religions and realise that they must, at one time, have all come from the same source or stories.

So this is just a long, rambling and round-about way (for which I apologise!) for saying that I don't believe that it's necessary for people to change their religion, or even adopt one. What they do need to change, in my view, is their hearts - and then all the rest will make sense to them.

Vajradhara: Namaste all, interesting discussion.

i suppose that i would have to conclude that my view is very different than what has been espoused thus far for i am in favor of a secular society :)

what i mean by this is that, in my view, a society which contains a broad mix of beings and religious views is more well served by a government which does not promote or endorse a particular religious view point than by a government which promotes one religious view as the "official" view.

any ideology held too strongly can warp the natural goodness which humans exhibit, in my opinion, especially when displays of ones religious conviction results in harm to another.

quite frankly, in my opinion, what is killing society isn't secularism, it is cronyism and favoritism coupled with a righteous zeal which renders the critical mental faculties inoperative and undercuts any sense of human compassion.

Needless to say that this thread takes us a long way along the kind of public sphere envisioned by Habermas. It has elements of self-reflexivity, rational-criticality, and openness which go into a healthy communicative action. It must be stated at once that this thread is not devoid of an underlying orientation towards collective identity and will to prove one's own supremacy. Moreover, an important difficulty that looms large is the authenticity of the posters in the thread – are they real or shadows?

Conclusion

Based on the above-going discussion and reflection, we may conclude that virtual public spheres have come to exist as an important component of the contemporary communicative action of humanity everywhere. And, religion forms an unmistakable part of this public sphere. Whether it contributes positively or negatively depends upon the context in which the medium of virtual public sphere is located. We may, however, no longer afford to ignore the impact of virtual religious public spheres in our world today. The nature and dynamics of the presence of religion in the virtual public sphere need much more elaborate and systematic studies.

Digital Church in the 21st Century: A Case Study from India

Leslin Bastian

Introduction

Today the world is on everyone's fingertips as everyone is connected through some medium across the web called the Internet. Cyberspace communication has seen a steady growth in the past decade with new technology been invented for faster communication and data transmission. The world is witnessing an unprecedented communication revolution in the form of digital communication since the advent of the printing press and analog technology.

His Holiness Pope Paul VI during the second Vatican Council (1963) promulgated a decree on the media of social communications in *Inter Mirifica*. The decree released, some fifty years ago, continuous to be relevant and applicable today for the Church. According to *Inter Mirifica* (1963):

Among the wonderful technological discoveries which men of talent, especially in the present era, have made with God's help, the Church welcomes and promotes with special interest those which have a most direct relation...The most important of these inventions are those media which, such as the press, movies, radio, television and the like, can, of their very nature, reach and influence, not only individuals, but the very masses and the whole of human society, and thus can rightly be called the media of social communication.

Further, *Inter Mirifica* (1963) stated that

media, if properly utilized, can be of great service to mankind, since they greatly contribute to men's entertainment and instruction as well as

to the spread and support of the Kingdom of God...It trusts, moreover, that the teaching and regulations it thus sets forth will serve to promote, not only the eternal welfare of Christians, but also the progress of all mankind.

In the book entitled *Church and Social Communication* (2014) a detailed analysis of the experiences and views of Church teaching has been described and documented (Eliers 2014). The Church has professed media as a means to sensitize, to support and to lead to active participation of its congregation and its transformation, integration and development towards human dignity and growth (Eliers 2014).

In the light of above discussion it has become imperative that an essential to empirically examine and analyze Church assertions. Hence, this paper will try to make a modest effort in this direction.

Aim

The aim of the paper is to analyze and focus on the role of digital communication that it plays in the Church today. Also, the analysis will focus on the role it can adopt in the future for the promotion and cohesion within the Church in the 21st century. The attempt will be to describe and analyze the possible influences of digital communication for the spiritual growth in virtual and physical world of the youth. The paper is based on an on-going in-depth research study among Christian youth of Gujarat.

Scope of the Study

This paper includes part of the survey data of an ongoing study. The sample includes 100 Christian youth (of both genders in the age group 18 to 30 years) using the snowball technique. The respondents live in the city of Ahmedabad and the adjacent city of Gandhinagar.

The survey questionnaire was prepared in English as the Christian youth of Gujarat, are by and large, familiar with English. It was prepared and modified after initial pre-testing. In the final questionnaire few additional questions were added. The respondents were contacted in person and requested to fill up the questionnaire. Since responses from the respondents were slow continuous follow up and efforts were made to visit the houses of the

individual respondents with a request to complete the questionnaire and hand it back. Since the author knew most of the respondents who were also a part of the Church congregation the response rate was high.

The whole process of data collection took about a month. During the data collection period the author checked and edited every completed questionnaire and in parallel. It was followed by data entry and analysis that took another half a month.

Respondents' Religo-cultural and Educational Profile

There are 53 males (53 percent) and 47 females (47 percent) in the survey of 100 respondents who belong to the age group of 18 to 30 years distributed in the age categories of below 25 (67 percent) whereas 19 percent of respondents are in the age group 26 to 30 years. There are 14 percent of respondents though youth who did not specify their age. In the total sample 83 percent respondents are Catholics followed by 7 percent Orthodox and 4 percent Marthoma (Table 1).

Further, Table 1 shows that 45 percent of the respondents are graduates, followed by 9 percent who have completed high school or are studying, while 33 percent respondents are master's degree holders and 5 percent have professional degrees. While 8 percent of respondents have other diplomas. In this way the sample consists of 55 percent students, followed by 35 percent government or private sector employees and remaining 10 percent of respondents are in to business (3 percent), unemployed (3 percent) or sports athletes (1 percent) while 3 percent did not specify.

Digital Technology Scenario, Ownership and Current Use

India has seen a rapid growth of digital technology in the last two decades. Further initiatives taken by the government like "Digital India" campaign has further accelerated digital media ownership and use to connect cities and villages to the virtual web. Today, even the poorest of the poor in the villages are owners and users of mobile and smartphones. In the sample, almost all respondents have a smartphone with internet (97 percent). Between genders, all female respondents have a smartphone, while 94.3 percent of males have smartphones with Internet (Table 2). On the whole, 93 percent of

the homes of respondents have internet facility. Seven out of ten respondents (73 percent) own a laptop while 76 percent of the respondents own a television (Table 2).

Since the Christian community in India is among the most literate minority, the digital penetration and use both in homes and offices is extremely high. It would be correct to say that among the estimated 34.8 percent of Internet users in India, a large percentage could be from the Christian community. In theory it was thought that such a high penetration among the Christian community would lead to high degree of interactive digital media for Holy Eucharist, religious services and Gospel sharing that being a very important aspect of Christianity.

The analysis on Table 3 indicates that almost all respondents use digital media for entertainment (94 percent) in which more there are females (95.7 percent) than males (92.5 percent). It is followed by knowledge and information (84 percent) and professional use (56 percent). Only 49 percent of respondents use digital media for religious information and knowledge, whereas 84 percent of respondents use digital media for secular, scientific and political information and knowledge (Table 3). Hence it would be safe to say that among the Christian community, the Internet, though widely accepted and used, is relatively less used for religious purposes and yet to be integrated in the religious domain of the Christian community (Table 3).

Specific Religious Digital Media Use

When the respondents were specifically asked to describe their use of digital media for religious purposes, 66 percent of respondents pointed out that they had shared and viewed religious videos or songs while 62 percent reported using it for festival greetings. Similarly six out of ten (58 percent) respondents mentioned about sharing Gospel messages with their friends and acquaints. With the coming of the Android technology, there are various applications for easy communications yet still half of the respondents (53 percent) did not use any kind of religious applications. The most popular app among the remaining 42 percent of respondents was the Bible application (42.9 percent) (Table 4).

In spite of the Church gradually and slowly turning into a digital Church within a virtual space and time, the popularity of these digital medium seems

to be low as of now. The observations indicate that though the Christian youth who are continuously migrating for work in non-Christian countries seems to be connected through the digital media like audio Bible and Android and iOS applications like 'Laudate,' 'The Pope App,' and 'Truth & Life' to mention a few, apart from various websites and blogs it remains limited.

However it is heartwarming to note that from other online sources as much as 79 percent of respondents use digital media to listen to Gospel songs while 60 percent have read religious e-books apart from the hard copies of religious magazines or books. Almost seven out of ten respondents have access to television and 75 percent of them are of the view that television plays a major role in the dissemination of religious information (Table 5). This can be credited to over half a dozen non-stop dedicated satellite Christian television channels for Christian viewers across India in various Indian languages aside from English.

Religious Use of Social Media

With the rapidly growing technologies and softwares, there are various platforms of social media to connect humans with different thought process, ideologies, ethnicity and race. It's all real time now. In the sample, the most popular formats of social media platform are Facebook (100 percent) and WhatsApp (98 percent). The least popular format is Twitter (20 percent) and only 25 percent of them follow any religious leaders. Almost all Christian respondent in the sample use smartphones to access their social media accounts (94 percent) followed by laptop (41 percent). Six out of ten respondents (66 percent) liked religious posts on Facebook but only 45 percent of them shared these posts and 41 percent commented on the same. Nine out of ten respondents (91.8 percent) received religious messages on WhatsApp, while only 62.2 percent shared religious messages also through WhatsApp.

Almost 76 percent of respondents use YouTube to watch religious videos. Gospel songs were widely watched (93.4 percent), followed by preaching (48.7 percent) and live worship programs (32.9 percent). Only four out of ten respondents (43.4 percent) downloaded any kind of religious videos from YouTube.

Social Media and Religious Experience

Respondents were asked to share their religious experience due to access to social media. 47 percent of respondents believe that access to social media has helped them to have positive religious debates while 35 percent believe that social media has helped them deepen their belief in religious dogma. Three out of ten respondents (28 percent) mention that social media had helped them understand Christianity while 21 percent feel that social media is nothing more than a past time and for fun.

It's interesting to note that 55 percent of respondents feel that their inclination towards religion has increased after using digital media and also their faith in Christianity has increased (55 percent) after having access to digital medium. Three out of ten respondents (33 percent), feel that their dependence on religious leaders have decreased due to digital media.

Future of Digital Media

One of the major objectives of the present study is to see whether and how the Church transforms herself into a digital Church. It was observed that even though there is a high penetration of digital platforms among the respondents, 53 percent of respondents believe that digital media does not pose any threat to the Church while 37 percent respondents were not sure about the same.

Spiritual growth is the process of becoming more mature in one's relationship with Jesus Christ. Someone who is growing spiritually will become more and more like Christ. The spiritually mature will be able to "distinguish good from evil" (Hebrews 5:14). Spiritual growth begins the moment a person comes to faith in Christ and should continue until a person enters Christ's presence after this life (<https://www.compellingtruth.org/spiritual-growth.html>).

When the respondents were asked if digital media poses any threat to their spirituality 70 percent of respondents answered no while 92 percent respondents said that they would prefer going to church rather than substituting the Internet for the same. Similarly, 87 percent of respondents believe that the physical church is better compared to a virtual church for their spiritual needs. Four out of ten (41 percent) also believe that a cyber church is not a threat to the physical church.

The various digital platforms available today have connected people and brought them closer knitting them in to a one single family. The respondents (49 percent) of the study believe that the presence of the Church on digital platforms has helped in creating stronger ties among the Christian community and the same is evident within the universe of the study where almost all the Churches have presence on a digital platform be it a website, blog or a Facebook page. Almost 68 percent of respondents know about the presence of their parish on the web. But at the same time 55 percent were not sure about the information available online to be accurate and relevant and they always went back to the religious for the same. They also believe that the role of their priest or pastor will not change due to the advent of digital platform (41 percent).

Conclusion

The analysis presented so far does not give a clear direction in which digital media is leading to church or the physical church has been influenced by digital media. A more in-depth study would be required to draw a definitive conclusion.

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Muslim Religious Publics in Online and the Diasporic Malayali Muslims in the United Arab Emirates: An Ethnographic Study

Ahammed Junaid NP

This study is an effort to understand and explain the phenomenon of the emergence of the Muslim religious publics within the cyber environments, where the members of the Diasporic community of Malayali Muslims are largely participated. This study draws from in depth, semi structured and personal interviews conducted among the 40 Diasporic Mappila Muslims during the field visits of the author in the United Arab Emirates and a Netnography of the presence and activism in the online discussion groups, where the Diasporic members of the Malayali Muslim community actively participate. The author argues integration of Leon Festinger's (1962) cognitive dissonance theory and its concepts such as selective attention and selective retention with Zizi's (2002) idea of small publics would be helpful to explain the case of emerging Muslim religious publics in online with variety levels of agreements and disagreements. As a direction to the future research, this article introduces the concept of "information boats with cognitive filters in conversation and confrontation" as an effort to explain this phenomenon of people who simultaneously have shared and conflicting religious beliefs coming together and interacting with each other.

Introduction: Expression and formation of the religious identity in the networked publics

The networked publics are defined as the publics that are restructured by networked technologies (Boyd, 2010). These are the publics comprised of people who don't occupy a space, but rather an "imagined community" of those who share identity (Benedict, 2006). It is also viewed as groups of individuals who congregate around issues and media that they share an interest in, regardless of their location (Varnelis, 2010). This paper primarily

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strives to understand and explain the phenomenon of the emergence of the Muslim religious publics within the cyber environments, where the members of the Diasporic community of *Malayali* Muslims are largely participated.

Many scholars across variety of disciplinary traditions have viewed the phenomenon of religious use of the Internet based platforms as the individualized forms of religious meaning making (Hoover, 2006), a participatory new public space with nearly as many senders as receivers (Anderson and Eickelman, 1998), Muslims taking religion into their own hands (Mandaville, 1999) and the cyber Islamic Environments have the potential to transform aspects of religious understanding and expression within Muslim contexts (Bunt, 2003). Though the social world is not a uniform entity, most of these studies primarily depart either from a western understanding of society and its subjects or Muslim subjects living in majority contexts with a relatively homogenous culture. By taking the case of the South India's *Malayali* Muslims¹ engagement with the networked publics, this article attempts to understand the role of platforms around the Internet for the self identifications with the diverse trends in religion and formation the religious consciousness in a Muslim society which is collective, have the history of tolerant coexistence in a multi cultural contexts for centuries as a minority community and have collective forms of religious meaning making in the form of Islamic publications and organisations based on the ideological orientation within Islam (such as Sufi and Salafism).

This study limits its attention into a particular Muslim society since Muslim societies are not a monolithic entity having diverse social, cultural and political experience of religion and religious authority while sharing a common framework of Islam. Given this, I would argue, each of these Muslim societies can inform our understanding of religious subjects' engagement with the relatively democratic affordances of the networked publics in different ways. In other words, there is a need to understand the religious self identifications and formations of the religious consciousness as a result of the engagement with networked publics in light of the larger political and economic forces (such as globalization, dictatorships or military occupation) which are shaping their consciousness. This is particularly important in many Eastern contexts as religion has a strong role in political and social life, unlike the dominant Western understanding, or to some extent the Western experience of religion as a private affair.

Methodology and methods

This study is informed by ethnography rooted in the anthropological tradition and its assumptions of knowledge, knowledge inquiry and the relationship between the researcher and the object of the study. This study has used

the ethnographic understanding of knowledge inquiry that 'the researcher directly interacts with the people in a situation in order to understand a particular social world from an insider's perspective.' This study draws from an in-depth, semi-structured and personal interviews conducted among the 40 Diasporic *Mappila* Muslims during the field visits of this author in the United Arab Emirates and a Netnography of the presence and activism in the online discussion groups, where the Diasporic members of the Malayali Muslim community actively participate.

Mediated Muslim publics: Trends and perspectives from India

Pointing out the insufficiency of Habermas's public sphere framework to understand South Asian societies in general, Menski (2012) argues it is questionable whether the basically secular approach of Habermas applies in South Asia. Van der Veer (2001) also finds the engagement of religious communities in the public sphere has become a critical question in post-colonial discourses, especially in South Asian societies.

Pointing out the Wahhabi dominance in the mediated Muslim public sphere of India, Haqqani (2011) finds Zakir Naik, who favors the approach of Saudi Arabian Wahhabis, is perhaps the most popular preacher in the Subcontinent. He has a deep-rooted influence among the young Muslims of India and Pakistan. He, like his predecessor Ahmed Deedat, has gained religious authority even though he lacks traditional schooling. Unlike Deedat, Zakir Naik has been a staunch opponent of Sufi and Shia school of thoughts. His radical views gained animosity at one side where he gained popularity at another side (Haqqani 2011). The Mumbai-based Zakir Naik who was professionally a medical doctor appealed to the new wave religiosity among the Muslim middle classes of India (Swami 2011).

Hafis (2012) in his paper, *Globalisation, Digi-modernism: Cultural Formation of Kerala Muslims*, presents a view different from Ilyas on counter public sphere role of Islamic cyber space. The core of his argument is the counter public sphere of Muslims in the cyber space is a "neo- public sphere" with two functions, which addresses Muslims and secular public sphere simultaneously. He argues this neo-public sphere creates an "alternative modernity" through indigenous cultural products.

Mediated Muslim publics in the late 19th and early 20th century Kerala

In the context of Kerala, the earlier form of the Muslim publics using the mass media can be seen in the a number of printing presses established by individual Muslims since 1870. A press established by a former employee

of Basal mission press in 1870, *Amirul Islam* press established in 1883 and *Mambarul Huda* press established in 1880 were among them. Three small towns in the Malabar region of Kerala—*Ponnani*, *Thiruranghadi* and *Thalassary*—were known as centers of Islamic printing and Arabi Malayalam printing by the end of the 19th century. These presses became the centers of production and dissemination of knowledge on Islam, while also printing the other forms of content.

Since the early 20th century, Kerala Muslims began the practice of forming religious organizations either in favour or to counter revivalist, puritanical and political Islamist movements and trends emerged in Sunni Islam in different parts of the world and started by people like Muhammed Ibn Abd al Wahhab (1703-1792), Rashid Rida (1865-1935) and Abul Ahla Maududi. The major Islamic organizations in Kerala are the *Kerla Jamiyyathul Ulama* (KJU) formed in 1922 influenced by the Salafism, *Samastha Kerala Jamiyyathul Ulama* formed in 1926 by traditional Sunni Muslim scholars to counter Salafism, (in 1989, SKJU splitted away in to two factions, AP faction and EK faction, following the organizational issues within it), the Jamaate Islami Kerala chapter formed in the late 1940s was influenced by the ideas of the political Islamist Abul Ahla Maududi. The use of printed books, daily news papers, magazines, TV channels as the tools of religious and non religious communication by these groups created different Muslim publics within the larger Malayali public sphere. The establishment of educational institutes and running of the charity networks, direct or indirect political affiliations helped these religious groups to affect the social and political life of Kerala Muslims in more significant ways.

Three kinds of Muslim publics in the *Malayali* cyber environments

Broadly, three kinds of emerging religious publics can be seen as the result of the *Malayali* Muslims engagement with platforms around the Internet. The first kind of religious publics are a byproduct of Malayalam speaking Facebook users' efforts to start larger Facebook discussion groups where anybody can post content and comment on variety of issues. Such discussion groups in Facebook later on became a meeting point of Malayalam speaking people with diverse religious and political backgrounds and affiliations. Many of such Malayalam discussion groups in Facebook got members in thousands or even lakhs as both active and passive participants. For example, *Right thinkers*, such a Facebook discussion group started five years ago, presently have 1,620,000 members. This discussion group gets twelve to sixteen posts everyday on variety of topics range from politics, religion, and atheism to cricket. The second kind of discussion groups are

formed based on an ideology, a theme or a specific interest within Islam, having a more homogenous participants. Examples include a discussion group between Salafis and political Islamists, the idea of divinity in Islam etc. The third kind of publics emerged around comment boxes of individuals/Ulema's social media posts, as response to specific issues. These sort of publics are instantaneous.

The theological discussion groups in the social media bring Muslims with different religious orientation together beyond the geographical boundaries and without taking the fact of whether the participant is a lay believer or scholar on religious knowledge. The mediated nature of the communication gives to some extent of the formality to the expressions on theological matters in social media discussion groups. However, there is a need to mention that many prefer to use informal language and colloquial terms, sometimes even abuses, in the social media discussion groups on theological matters.

Formations of the Muslim religious publics in networked publics

The presence and activism of Malayali Muslims in the networked publics simultaneously challenge two opposite ways of understanding Muslims and Islam. In one sense, it challenges to view Muslims as a monolithic entity. In the another sense, it also challenges to view Muslims with different ideological orientations as entirely different to each other. In other words, simultaneous Internet-based platforms play the role of disintegrate Muslims with different ideological orientations on the grounds of some issues connected to religion, and integrate believers on certain other issues. In that sense, the boundaries of Muslim publics in networked publics are always getting redefined. In other words this signs into a quite larger point—Muslims have diverse and different understandings of their religion and uses variety of theological methods to make sense of their religion and its application in spiritual, social and political spheres of life, while a common framework unites them in some core aspects of religion as well as the latter enables them to debate or dialogue among themselves on what it means to be a Muslim and follow Islam.

In my participant observation of some of the online discussion groups in Malayalam, which are formed to discuss variety of issues connected to Islam and Muslims, in few occasions, it is found that the participants either share or give "likes" to Facebook posts unmindful of the ideological orientations of the source of this respective post. As a result of this, it is observed that the consensus on broader framework in Islam bring together Muslims in online platforms, especially when they get an argument to address a critique made against Islam or a new statement from the religious leader of a particular

denomination within Islam addressing the insecurities of the community in general. For example, it is observed that some Muslims who identify themselves as Sufis share the Facebook post and video of a Salafi Islamic scholar named MM Akbar addressing the arguments around the marriages of the Prophet Muhammed. While *Sufi Muslims* are in strong disagreement with *Salafis* on many aspects of the faith, their agreement on a certain topic get manifested in the form of “likes” and “shares” to the Facebook posts of the former. Quite similar to this, it is also observed that Muslims who identify themselves as Salafis and Islamists share the Facebook post of Sheikh Aboobacker Ahmed Alias Kanthapuram Ap Aboobacker Musaliar, a Sufism inspired Islamic scholar, criticizing the approach of *Mathrubhumi* Malayalam daily, the second most circulated Malayalam daily, towards Muslims and Islam. While Salafis and political Islamists are the strong critiques of the aforementioned scholar on many theological issues, they find expressions for their own thoughts in his words on a particular issue.

However, from many discussion groups it was clearly apparent that a near consensus among people who identify themselves as the followers of a particular sect or intellectual tradition within Islam, such as *Salafism*, *Jamaate Islami*, *Sufism* etc., on a variety of topics. Though, certain issues create debate among the followers of a particular sect, and networked publics play the role of manifesting such differences in the opinion. To take an example, one of the ongoing debates in an online discussion ground where Muslims from different ideological orientations within Islam present and participate, is around the issue of whether it is fine for the leaders or representatives of the Islamic organisations to pay a visit to Narendra Modi, the ruling prime minister of India, given the accusations that he had a role in the pogrom against Muslims held in the Indian state of Gujarat in 2002. There were two broader arguments which got repeated in this debate. The first set of participants argue there is a need to respect his office as a democratically elected representative. However, this argument was countered by the second with the point that engaging with a ruler who has Fascist tendencies is not justified. The second category of participants used the emotional statement of “how one can shake hands and smile at someone who was behind the massacre of thousands of Muslims.” A series of examples and pictures were used to explain these two broader arguments, as the affordances of the networked publics allow the huge traffic of content.

The interesting pattern that I have observed is the first argument comes from the adherents of Sufism and those Muslims who are the members of the traditional Sunni organization spearheaded by Sheikh Aboobacker, while the second argument is made by Muslims who identify themselves as the

adherents of Jamaate Islami, a political Islamic organization. I have used the details mentioned in the walls of Facebook profiles and the previous Facebook posts of a person to understand his ideological orientations within Islam.

The expressions of an emerging category of participants who were not identifying themselves as adherents of any Islamic sect or intellectual tradition can be observed in the Malayali Islamic cyber environments. They use these platforms to express their various levels of agreements and disagreements with different Islamic sects on different issues. As a result, their views simultaneously become pleasant and unpleasant to the adherents of different religious groups. Such Muslims are making a challenge to the conventional forms of putting Muslim subjects into different compartments.

One person in his Facebook post, gives an account of how social media platforms are redefining the interaction between Muslims who are the adherents of different religious groups or those who just identify themselves as Muslim. The post also shows how the followers of some organizations are expressing their dissidents with the methods chosen by the top brass of the religious groups to engage with the larger community. The transliteration of the post from Malayalam to English is given below.

It seems Social media is instrumental behind the interaction among the Muslims, which was previously confined to the boundaries of religious groups. Often, the discussions in the social media lead people with different ideological orientations into a consensus on a topic or an issue. Within a religious organization, often there is a difference between those who are actively engaging in the social media and those who are not. The expressions of these differences can be seen in the form of conflict of interests between the former and latter, who is less influenced by external sources on religion. When it comes to issues like Fascism, imperialism, fake or fabricated news against Muslims, there is a consensus among the Muslim netizens.

Discussion and direction for the future research

The idea of small publics and fragmented conversation introduced by Zizi Papacharisis (2002) appears as a good point of departure to explain the emerging Malayali Muslim publics in the *Malayali* cyber environments. Following the potential of Internet bring a new public sphere, she argues the Internet helps to create several online publics in the form of special interest groups of persons with common ideology. However the different platforms around internet are becoming more fragmented. According to her, this is

why the impact is mitigated. While she says the conversations are getting fragmented and small publics are emerging, she has not explained how this process is happening.

I would argue, then that Leon Festinger's cognitive dissonance theory and its concepts such as selective attention and selective retention seems as quite useful to further the ideas of Zizi by using them to explain the case of emerging *Malayali* Muslim collectives in networked publics with various levels of agreements and disagreements. As a direction to future research, this article introduces the concept of "information boats with cognitive filters in conversation and confrontation" as an effort to explain this phenomenon. The term information boats are used in reference to the religious subjects who are present in networked publics. The term cognitive filters are used in the sense of their prior understandings and logics, perhaps informed by sectarian affiliations, which determines their interaction with the others within and outside their religion. The conversation and confrontation primarily happens between the logics of different religious orientations. To take an example, according to the logic of a Sufi Muslim, visiting the grave of a Sufi saint is 'expressing respect,' while a Salafi Muslim considers it as worship. Networked publics play a role in bringing together people who are in the islands of their logics. The future research project of this author would be making efforts to understand and explain how the affordances of networked publics, such as the deliberation on multiple ideas and reaching consensus based on that are constrained by the innate nature of human beings.

END NOTE

Malayali Muslims

The Malayalam language-speaking people in the South Indian state of Kerala is known as Malayalis. Kerala has an ethnic population of 33.3 million and Muslims constitute 24.7% of it. Islam reached in Kerala by the Arabs merchants and immigrants. In the 7th century, a group of Arabs led by Malik Bin Deenar, who was also a companion of prophet Muhammed, and Malik bin Habib, constructed the first Masjid in India at Kodungalloor in Kerala.

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Goddess of the Nation: Semi-religious Iconography in the Digital Age

Unni Krishnan K

This research explores the role of visual communication with reference to a semi-religious icon of modern India. Mainly, it illustrates the role of the digital tools and its influence in the making of the semi-religious icon for a linguistic state, a state with its capital referred as the 'Silicon Valley of India.'

This icon is strongly related to the erection of the south Indian state of Karnataka which reflects the interrelation between politics, culture and religion. The icon is not merely the mother of the region, but referred to as the mother of regional language and the daughter of Mother India.

From a socio-cultural perspective, it explores how this icon has contributed in developing the identity of the state of Karnataka in close parallel to the role played by the concept of Bharat Mata, Mother India at the national level. Secondly, it illustrates the cultural influence of the mother representation and the role the goddess played during the linguistic state movement for the formation of the state of Karnataka after Indian Independence.

Keywords: Bharat Mata, goddess, iconography, identity, India, Karnataka, Thayee Bhuvaneshvari, Digital Age, Mother Goddess, Visual Culture, visual communication

Visual communication historically has been one of the most effective and ancient forms of communication, if one is to examine the ancient civilizations the visuals are evident and has been the evidence of the story

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telling traditions. The visual as such surpasses the limitations of the 'written text' and complements the 'orality,' therefore could be read by anyone, including the illiterates, thus the power of communication and its applicability. To emphasize the value and the potential of visual, one can observe the nature of learning in human beings: as a child is born the child looks and learns the image as argued by John Berger, 'seeing comes before words.'¹ In fact the letter of any language is itself an image initially for the child.

The visuals in Asia, especially in India, has had a very important role to play in communication. Much of the rituals and performances are even today in visual forms, and passed on through visual practices. The visuals in India are simple yet complicated, the irony that exists in every spiritual visual icons, with layers and layers of meaning and symbolism encoded within it.

Visual culture in Asia is deeply rooted within the minds of the people due to the socio-religious system. For example, the image of Durga Goddess has been in the public sphere for more than a century, yet the image plays a vital role not just in the public sphere but also in the personal space of the Hindu population and other groups. Such iconography are not merely limited within the spiritual sphere but also in social, cultural and political sphere. This diverse approach of image can be noticed in almost all regions of Asia. The images are not necessarily a part of any religious sects but from various mixture of society. The visuals thus play a vital role in society and the role of visuals in Asia may not necessarily be of the same nature of other regions.

In this paper, I wish to present a case study of one such iconography that played a very important role in post-Independent India for the state unification process. The image of Goddess of a regional state in parallel to the mother of nation draws a very interesting role of visual in democracy.

Darshan

The seeing of image, the concept of 'Darshan,' scholars argue that the as the audience see the image, especially of the gods they are 'touched' by their 'presence' (Pinney, 2004). Sandria Freitag has suggested that it was the religious and political procession that carved out a public sphere in colonial

¹ John Berger. *Ways of Seeing*. London: British Broadcasting Corporation and Penguin Books, 1972.

India.² From the political image of Indira Gandhi to the image of Vajpayee, the visuals played a significant role on the Indian socio-political space, for it has contributed immensely on who the next leader would be. The Image politics in recent times has given much more of the complexities. For instance the election campaign of President Obama in the United States and of Prime Minister Modi in India clearly gives us enough of cases to explain the power of Image and power of visuals in the Image making process.

The politicians in South India have experimented with the image of Gods in the public domain for many years in various contexts. The presence of their image with the image of gods in public domain often puts them into an unusual perspective. Jayalalitha has used the image of Hindu gods and goddesses and the Christian God in politics (Jacob, 2008). Similarly, the usage of Durga goddess with Indira Gandhi. The terms such as *Didi*, *Amma*, *Behan Ji*, have also been of a common usage. It's also surprising to see temples built after living political leaders such as the Vajpayee temple in Gwalior, Sonia Gandhi temple in Karimnagar, now in Telangana, and a temple of the *shivling* with that of Narendra Modi at Kaushambi, Uttarpradesh. While this country has seen temples built on MGR and Gandhi in contrast with attempt to build temples on Naturam Godse as well. The invasion of culture over politics or *politisation* of culture by public is a never-ending debate, but one needs to think what kind of image culture we are witnessing.

In this context, a critical question may rise, does a "political" development and concern 'need' a 'religious' backing as is reflected in Darshan? Not always necessary but the backing of any symbol with religious support makes the symbol more prominent and effective as the symbol is more easily connected and 'personal.' For instance many political parties use such religious symbol as a part vote bank politics some caste based and some religion based, examples would be the usage of green flags by Muslim party and saffron colour for right wing parties and so on. Here the religious symbol of Mother Goddess play the role more effectively because of the nature and identity of the icon as a mother symbol. The role of mother in India is of a high moral, ideal and worshiping nature. The mother is often given more respect than the father. According to Hindu texts, the mother has a deeper emotional, psychological, social and cultural position; for instance

² Sandria Freitag: *Picturing the Nation: Iconographies of modern India*, Orient Longman 2007

in the cultural context *Mathrubhoomi* meaning mother earth is often referred to as the native motherland and similarly, *mathru basha*, the mother tongue. In Karnataka with various mother goddess worshipped the idea of mother goddess and the idea of motherland and mother tongue was fused together in the making of the icon. This subsequently evolved the idea as the mother of the state of Karnataka and Kannada-speaking people who is referred to as the daughter of mother India in the State anthem.

Historical significance of Karnataka, Kannada Goddess and its socio-cultural role

In 1956 during the formation of a united Karnataka by grouping all the scattered Kannada speaking regions, there were a number of minor geographical populations speaking languages like Kodava, Konkani, Byari, Havyak, and so on. These languages had a very strong oral cultural history but did not have a definite script and hence were written in the Kannada script. Karnataka unification brought together such various sectors of diverse cultural communities, including migrants from other states. During this process there had been a tremendous socio-political rise in Kannada awareness, and Kannada 'nation making.' These didn't happen over a long period of time unlike the Indian struggle for independence. However, over the past five decades this struggle for Kannada identity had contributed to several milestones and important incidents which benchmarked the identity making in Karnataka in great challenging circumstances in the time and space of developing India from the post-independence period to the post-modern context, culminating in the global growth of contemporary cosmopolitan Bangalore, the Silicon Valley of India, and the capital of Karnataka. The interesting irony is that the basis on which the state formation process was formed has itself eventually been the highly ignored area of the state—the language and culture.

By the nineteenth century, the British had divided India for administrative purposes on the basis of the three Presidency towns of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. With the expansion of power, other territories such as the Central Provinces and Coorg were added. Besides all these territories, there were the princely states under indirect British rule through British advisers. At the time of Independence in 1947, the area that is now Karnataka was divided among the provinces of Madras, Bombay and Coorg and the princely states of Hyderabad, under the Nizam, and Mysore, under the Wodeyar kings. Mysore

was the precursor to the state of Karnataka, but nearly two-thirds of what is now Karnataka fell outside it.

Kannadigas in these regions outside the state of Mysore did not enjoy administrative patronage. For example, Kannadigas in Hubli-Karnataka came under the rule of the Bombay Presidency where Marathi was the official language. Those in the Hyderabad-Karnataka region came under the Nizam's regime where Urdu ruled. Kannadigas in South Canara were part of the Madras Presidency which used Tamil as the main language. There was, therefore, discontent among Kannadigas outside Mysore, who felt that their interests and their language were being mortgaged to the interests of the speakers of these other languages. Thus, while the Kannadigas under the Nizam felt that Urdu was being thrust on them at the expense of Kannada, those in the Bombay Presidency felt similarly vis-à-vis Marathi. Economically also, these Kannada-predominant areas remained neglected and backward. It was against this backdrop that the movement that started as a protest against linguistic oppression, soon morphed into one for creation of a separate state consolidating all Kannada-speaking regions. It was thus the frustration of the Kannada-speaking populace that galvanised the unification movement, eventually leading to the formation of present-day Karnataka.

Multiple issues jostled for voice in the clamour that rose in post-Independence India for the formation of a separate state for Kannada-speaking populations. There were territorial issues, linguistic issues, multiple caste and sub-caste concerns. All these had to be harnessed in tandem to lend heft to the demand for recognition of the Kannada identity and, in turn, statehood. It was in this context that the mother goddess Thayee Bhuvaneshwari¹ was created, to define Kannada identity and serve as a focal centre for the idea of the state of Karnataka.

The seed of the idea of linguistic states was sown during the Independence movement when the Indian National Congress, which held meetings across the country, formed groups under the respective regional leaders, to address the people in the local language in order to unify regional linguistic populations. These linguistic groups later acquired a more concrete identity. Several awareness programmes were initiated in 1890 by organisations such as the Karnataka Vidyavardhaka Sangha that paved the way for setting up several other organisations such as the Kannada Sahitya Parishat (in Bangalore) in

1915, the Karnataka Sangha (in Shivamogga) in 1916 and the Karnataka Samithi (in Kasargod). In 1920, the Karnataka State Political Conference was held in Dharwad. In this conference, a unanimous resolution was passed demanding the unification of all Kannada-speaking areas. The conference also exhorted Kannadigas to attend the Nagpur Congress to be held later that year. Almost 800 delegates responded and attended the Nagpur conference, where the Indian National Congress took the landmark decision to create the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee. Later, the state of Karnataka, as it is called today, was declared as the state of Mysore on 1 November 1956. It was only in 1973, after many years of demand, that it was further renamed as the state of Karnataka, as the term 'Mysore' had referred largely to south Karnataka regions under the rule of the Mysore kingdom and later to the princely state of Mysore alone.

The State of Karnataka, 1973 On November 1, 1973, during the chief ministership of Devaraj Urs, Mysore State was renamed as Karnataka, as the name 'Mysore' was not inclusive of all other regions and 'Karnataka' represented the totality of all Kannada linguistic regions. Though the Fazal Ali Committee's recommendation made the Kannadiga population unified under the State of Mysore sigh with relief initially, it soon began to rankle that a few important regions were not included. This is especially true with the non-inclusion of Kasargod (which went to Kerala) which was a serious disappointment as ironically, it had been a consistent supporter of the Ekikarnana movement. Leaders like Kayyara Kinhana Rai continued to fight for Kasargod's merger with Karnataka even after the State formation.

**Bharat Mata and her Beloved Daughter,
Kannada Thayee Bhuvaneshwari the semi-religious Mother Goddess of
Karnataka.**

The concept of Bharat Mata² evolved from the Hindu Goddess Durga. As Sumathi Ramaswamy shows in *The Goddess and the Nation* (2010), the idea of representing the nation as a goddess was germinated in Bengal in the late nineteenth century. Thus was born *Baṅga Mātā* 'Mother Bengal,' drawing on the mythology and iconography of Durga. This concept was then extrapolated to India, by transforming *Baṅga Mata* into *Bhārat Mātā* 'Mother India.' Bharat Mata, in turn, inspired Kannadigas to incarnate a mother goddess to help address the 'unity' issue, thereby defining the identity of the proposed

state. It was not only Karnataka that incarnated a goddess of its own, inspired by Bharat Mata—neighbouring states too followed the trend. So Tamil Nadu had its *Tamil Tayi*; Andhra Pradesh with *Telugu Talli*; Maharashtra with *Jai Bhavani*; Kerala with *Malayala Mata*, and so on. These icons played a vital role in the process of the formation of the respective states, by uniting diverse communities for a common cause. Regional artists interpreted and gave form to the various vernacular versions of the national Mother Goddess.

These visuals present a plethora of visual representational politics. We can begin with the depiction of Bharat Mata by Abanindranath Tagore (Figure 1).³ He originally titled her *Baṅga Mata* (Mother Bengal), but later changed the name to Bharat Mata.



Figure 1. Bharat Mata. Chromolithograph of Abanindranath Tagore's water colour 'Bharat Mata' (dated 1904-1905) (OSIAN'S Archive, Research and Documentation Centre, Mumbai.) Image courtesy: Sumathi Ramaswamy, *The Goddess and the Nation*.



Figure 2. Brij Lal, March to Independence: *Raahe Azaadi*. Printed by Sudarshan Studio, circa 1947. (Courtesy of Urvashi Butalia, New Delhi). Image courtesy: Sumathi Ramaswamy, *The goddess and the Nation*



Figure 3. “Jaya he Karnataka Mathe,” Dr Rajkumar riding the chariot of Karnataka Mother Goddess Bhuvaneshwari, Raja Verma Arts. Print 1997. In Karnataka a rural pedestrian who looks at this poster, salutes at it, if one were to ask why he says ‘Annnavru and Thayee,’ meaning it’s our elder brother Dr Rajkumar with mother.”

In the popular poster entitled ‘Jaya he Karnataka Mathe’ (Victory to Mother Karnataka) (Figure 3), the artist depicts Mother Karnataka in a golden chariot drawn by the popular Karnataka matinee idol, Dr. Rajkumar, widely perceived as a local patriot and often referred to as the beloved *son of Mother Karnataka*. The chariot is modelled on the chariot of the Sun God in the shrine at Hampi. The imagination of the artist transports viewers to a mythological realm with charismatic appeal, almost like the popular posters of Raja Ravi Varma, portraying Krishna driving Arjuna’s chariot in the battlefield in the Mahabharata. The colour palette of golden yellow and vermilion dominates. The image of Rajkumar with Mother Karnataka is parallel with that of Gandhi with Mother India in Brij Lal’s ‘*Raahe Azaadi*’ described above, as the two mother goddesses represent the quest for unification and freedom of the nation and the state respectively. If the national mother goddess unified the country in the struggle for freedom, the state goddess helped unify the various linguistic territories, and caste and religious denominations, in the process of framing the map of Karnataka.

In fact, if there is any single object that rivals the mapped form of India in parallel with mother Bhuvaneshwari, it is the flag of the Kannada nation with which she is associated, thereby setting her apart from other goddesses as a deity of a distinctive ‘country.’ The flag is one of the signature elements that make the most prominent difference from the rest of the Hindu goddesses. In this light, the attempts of Mother Karnataka’s artists to supplement the outline map of Karnataka in the ways that I have documented in this study stand out, by following the trend of setting out influential factors from the nation’s leaders and their representations.

Religion, Culture and Goddess

In Sanskrit, the word Bhuvaneshwari is a compound of the words *bhuvana* ‘worlds’ and *īśvarī* ‘goddess,’ meaning ‘goddess of the worlds,’ where the worlds are the *tri-bhuvana* or three regions of *bhuḥ* (earth), *bhuvah* (atmosphere) and *svah* (heavens). Bhuvaneshwari means “the queen or ruler of the universe.” But since *bhuvana* can also mean the earth, she is also perceived as the divine mother earth, as one of the main Shakti³ goddesses.

³ Shakti meaning ‘power,’ is the *primordial* cosmic energy and represents the dynamic forces that are thought to move through the entire universe in Hinduism. Shakti is the concept, or personification, of divine feminine creative power, sometimes referred to

There are several temples dedicated to Bhuvaneshwari. One, which is one of the sixty-four *śakti pīthas* or sacred places of the mother goddess, is located in Nainativu (Manipallavam), off the shore of the Jaffna peninsula in northern Sri Lanka.

In the case of Karnataka, there is an ornate shrine to Bhuvaneshwari at the Virupaksha temple in Hampi. This deity is worshipped even today as the *Kannada kula devathe*, meaning ‘the family deity of Kannada.’ Several meetings and conferences were held in front of this Virupaksha temple during the unification movement for the state of Karnataka. Another prime temple of Bhuvaneshwari is at Mysore, located on the northern side of the Mysore palace fort, built in 1951 by Jayachamaraja Wodeyar who was the 25th and the last Maharaja of the princely state of Mysore from 1940 to 1950.

The term Bhuvaneshwari was used even before the state formation movement, and before Indian independence in 1947. The term was used to address Bhuvaneshwari as the mother of Kannada, around the time of the formation in 1956 of the enlarged state of Mysore (renamed Karnataka in 1973). The concept of Kannada nationalism and its need for an icon was inspired from the early heritage of Kannada, referring to the literature in Kannada and the dynasties that spoke it, especially the Hampi Vijayanagar empire and the Hoysala dynasty. With reference to the part of the earth that these dynasties ruled, the mother of earth was referred to as Kannada Bhuvaneshwari—or Thayee Bhuvaneshwari, using the Kannada word for ‘mother.’



Figure 3. Bhuvaneshwari, from an illustration by Kondachary⁶ in *Karṇātaka Mahimna Stotra* (Doddametti 1969: 2)⁴

Figure 3 shows one of the many illustrations which accompany the poetic hymn on the Mother Goddess of Karnataka, entitled *Karṇātaka Mahimna Stotra*, by Andanappa Doddametti, a frontline activist of the Karnataka unification movement. *Karṇātaka Mahimna Stotra* is a conceptualized visualization of the Kannada goddess to inspire the struggle for the unification of Kannada-speaking regions in the 1950s; it became a sacred book of the movement. This *stotra* (hymn of praise) on Thayee Bhuvaneshwari was first published in 1953 and again in 1957 after the declaration of the state

as ‘The Great Divine Mother’. In Shaktism, Shakti is worshipped as the supreme being. In Shaivism, Shakti embodies the active feminine energy of Shiva and is identified as *Mahadevi* or Parvati. Bhuvaneshwari is one of her several representations.

⁴Kondachary, who was closely associated with the Kannada unification movement, was both an illustrator and a sculptor. He drew over 12 illustrations for *Karṇātaka Mahimna Stotra*. He was influenced by temple sculptures at Hampi and Badami. He followed the standards of *tantra śāstra* in the depiction of Hindu mythological figures.

of Mysore. It describes about 16 versions of the Kannada goddess, based on the *śakti pīṭhas* (the principal sacred places of the mother goddess) as a structural framework, to establish a connection between the well-established historic sacred temple goddesses and the new Kannada goddess Thayee Bhuvaneshwari. The line drawings which illustrate the stotra are the work of an artist named Kondachary, an intimate friend of Andanappa Doddametti. They show the influence of various forms of art found in south Indian temples, especially at Hampi.

Kondachary's drawing (Figure 3) shows the goddess Bhuvaneshwari, framed by the backdrop of the Virupaksha temple of Hampi.⁵ On the right of the goddess is a small sculpture of Lord Ganesha, a reference to the Hampi Ganesha idol, and to her left is a partial depiction of the Vitthala temple at Vijayanagar.⁶ She is addressed as Kannada Mahashakti 'the great power-goddess of Kannada' in one of the verses, as the goddess of Kannada land, and as '*Kannada kula devathe*'—the family deity of Kannada. The poem beseeches her to reside in the hearts of all Kannadigas and weave them in one string of thought to fight for unification and Kannada pride. Referring to the goddess residing beside the sacred Tungabhadra river, the poet pleads with her to inspire her Kannada children to unite. Here, the name of the Tungabhadra river is invoked again to symbolize the territory of the Kannada-speaking people. The poet aspires to unite the dispersed Kannada areas with their respective local goddesses. Though he refers to the deities of all the main temples of Karnataka, Bhuvaneshwari gets primacy. The reference to Hampi and the Vijayanagar Empire, with its resident goddess Bhuvaneshwari and her shrine in the Virupaksha temple complex, is the only direct historical foundation we can observe for the goddess Bhuvaneshwari

⁵ Hampi (Kannada: Hampe) is a village on the banks of the Tungabhadra river in northern Karnataka. It is located within the ruins of Vijayanagar, the former capital of the Vijayanagar Empire. Predating the city of Vijayanagar, it continues to be an important cultural centre, with the prominent Virupaksha temple, as well as several other monuments belonging to the old city. The ruins are a UNESCO World Heritage Site, listed as the 'Group of Monuments at Hampi.' The Virupaksha temple is the main centre of pilgrimage at Hampi and has been considered most sacred over the centuries. It is fully intact among the surrounding ruins and is still used in worship. The temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva, known here as Virupaksha (virūpākṣa 'odd-eyed', referring to his third eye); the name is especially associated with Hampi. He is the consort of the local goddess Pampa, who is associated with the Tungabhadra river.

⁶ The sixteenth-century temple of Viṭṭhala, a form of Vishnu, with its elaborately sculptured columns, is among the most notable in Vijayanagar.

as Mother Kannada, in *Kannada Mahimna Stotra*. This not only reveals the religious influence but also explains the importance of Hampi Bhuvaneshwari in moulding the persona of Mother Kannada.

The goddess is depicted sitting on a throne in the *padmāsana*⁷ posture, a posture common to idols of goddesses in Hindu temples. In her lower left hand is the Shiva linga, a reference to Lord Virupaksha, and in her upper left hand is the *pāśa* or noose, symbolizing control. In her upper right hand she holds a *paraśu*, an axe, a symbol of destruction and elimination of everything negative, while her lower right hand is held up in the *abhaya mudrā*.⁸ The goddess is heavily ornamented, and her eyes are half-closed, to indicate a sense of meditative seriousness. The first layer of the background, behind the halo which surrounds the goddess's head, is the majestic entrance tower of the Virupaksha temple. The second layer of the background is the map of Kannada, inked in black.

The persona of the goddess was very consciously crafted on the lines of a Hindu deity to inspire appreciation and, more importantly, respect. This played a major role in the success of the unification movement. The goddess in *Kannada Mahimna Stotra* is more inclined towards Saiva symbolism but in other popular representations she is presented as a Vaishnava deity. The representation of the Vitthala temple in Kondachary's picture of the goddess, though it is less prominent than the Saiva temple of Virupaksha, shows a wish to include Vaishnavism as well as Saivism.

Both the image of the goddess and the unification movement owe much to Hampi especially the Virupaksha temple. The temple was the symbolic hub of the movement, with political meetings and annual conferences of major Kannada activists and organizations being held here, both before and after Independence. It was in this temple that Aluru Venkata Rao (1880–1964), one of the main leaders of the Kannada unification movement, found inspiration. Also, in addition to the Kannada language, the unification activists based their aspirations for a Karnataka state on the Vijayanagar Empire which had a rich tradition of literature, art, architecture and culture. Thus the Virupaksha temple was a symbolic centre of their aspirations.

⁷ *Padmāsana* is a term derived from Sanskrit *padma* 'lotus' and *āsana* 'seat; throne; sitting posture.' It may refer to the meditative lotus position.

⁸ *Abhaya mudrā*, 'the gesture of no fear', is a hand pose which dispels fear and gives reassurance and safety, according divine protection and bliss to the devotee. The right hand is held upright, with the palm facing towards the viewer.

To illustrate the intensity of Kannada activism, and its connection to Vijayanagar, even in post-modern times, it would help to recall an incident that took place in August 1997: on a quiet Saturday afternoon, the renowned Kannada activist and historian Chidananda Murthy attempted to end his life by jumping into the Tungabhadra at Hampi out of sheer frustration that Kannada was losing ground in Karnataka. That he chose the Tungabhadra at Hampi to attempt self-immolation underscores the importance of these two leitmotifs in the Kannada movement.

Here I wish to also specify on the reason why I call this icon as semi-religious goddess, firstly the icon though inspired from the Hindu references and Hampi iconography, later the idea evolved in a broad view of mother goddess as the mother of Kannada land, language and culture, secondly the idea later evolved itself to a conceptual mother of language in abstract sense through various poetry and literature, example the Kuvempu's state anthem itself. Thirdly after the DTP and digital revolution, icon was no more restricted to any specific religious form, but as a *desha devathe*, the goddess of nation, more in the parallel of *bharath matha* and her visualizations. Finally the icon is now represented as her flag, title and name, and as an *easy sticker* brand icon available at all sticker cutting centers where most automobile stickers are available in readymade fashion. She is thus not limited as a goddess of Hindus and for Hindus but been welcomed by all on the day of Kannada state formation day November 1 by all caste and communities of Karnataka, she is not installed in any Hindu temples as such but at all cultural centres of Karnataka as an ambassador of Kannada.

The Digital and the Goddess

With the few visual examples presented, it is quite evident to understand the usage of technology from DTP to Digital era. The extensive usage of digital tools such as Adobe Photoshop is evident. The culture of manual poster disappeared in early 1990's as a result of the emergence of digital print era, all manual artists had to migrate themselves to digital mode. With this two major change occurs in representations: firstly, the content was not necessarily original, that is the basic body of work may be from existing source but the additional features such as the 'visual effects' added the attraction and secondly the image and image making process becomes more of 'copy and paste' with the 'instant' DTP culture. However the core framework of goddess in this case still remains intact but her visual appearance changes as per the trend and need of time.

It is very important to note that despite the visual appearance of the goddess being 'Hindu' in nature, she was not totally rejected or ignored by the minority populations of Karnataka, especially during the unification movement and the actual state formation. Jains, Muslims and Sikhs, who had lived in the region for centuries, seem to have felt that this representation was necessary to unite all Kannada-speaking areas and communities, and that the priority was not to debate whether the goddess was represented as Hindu or otherwise. Hence, the representation was not controlled or limited in terms of its usage by religious imperatives. On the contrary, this icon created an open space to draw in multiple castes, religions and regions, which shared the common bond of language. Language was the priority, the language was termed 'the Mother', and thus the Kannada Thayee was born. The language in turn represented the culture, rights, needs and identity of its speakers, who sought to be clearly defined by a region. This icon, therefore, led to unification of religions and communal harmony.

However, in a rapidly changing modern India, where communal tensions are increasing by the day, and where, besides the majority Hindu population, there are minorities such as Muslims, Christians, Jains, Sikhs, Buddhists and even atheists, it was realized that the idea of a mother goddess might not find favour with all. To overcome this problem, the government decided to choose, as anthems, poems that present an *abstract* goddess who would find wider acceptance. Thus, the national anthem for the country and the state anthem for the state of Karnataka were chosen from poems that depicted the beauty of the geographical territory; in addition the state anthem highlights several historical figures as well. Ironically, these abstractions co-exist with the visual representations of the popular culture.

In the digital IT Hub, Bangalore the silicon valley of India, the need for this goddess is evident in all the public space, the image of goddess and her flag installed in all corners of the city reminding the 'territorial' idea of space and claiming it as of the local against the global and 'outsiders'. The tension is reflected with few minor incidents that occurs in the city on regular basis. The idea of goddess thus is also becoming a point of debate not only on the religious grounds but also on the socio-cultural plurality grounds. Finally is it an inclusive concept or an exclusive concept?

Social media domain has enlarged the influence of Thayee Bhuneshwari and has broadened the scope of her religious influence in Karnataka among

Hindu and Non-Hindu communities, for instance the amount of Kannada activism on the Internet and social media is extensive. Kannada blogs, Facebook accounts and groups are pro-active on the spreading and awareness on Kannada patriotism with the image of goddess over flooding especially during November 1 every year, in competition amongst Kannada group on who will make it the biggest and populist. The youth centric drive on Kannada activism though been criticized by various Kananda literature and senior critics, they have not given up on their constant quest to spread and claim the web space as well. Like the installation of Kananda flag in all corners of the state, hundreds of groups are competing loudly in the web space as well, for example there are various youth-centric Kananda groups in the United States where they would represent their groups with names such as ‘Malleswaram’ Jayanagar group and so on, wherein these names are major centers of kannada activism in Bangalore.

Here I wish to present an argument on the fact that *public icons, inspired from socio-religious roots, over time are evolving, experimented becoming a tool for social change, challenging and addressing the concerns*. However it is difficult to determine if the change is for the betterment of all or for specific communities. This phenomenon is not just happening to local situations but global situations. For instance, the image of Obama on HOPE Poster is another example for cultural and digital fusion. Digital on another hand is taking this experimentation to another level, the idea of icons are much highly used on web space and used in various means. These extension to web space is the next phase of change, one of the ideal example would be the concept of live ‘Darshan’ of temple and events of church, Mecca and so on. The live webcast of ‘Shirdi Sai Baba’ deity is one of the classic example to analyze the idea of religion and digital in contemporary time and space.

ENDNOTES

¹Thayee Bhuvaneshwari (tayī bhuvaneśvarī) is the name of the patron goddess of Karnataka. It is derived from the Kannada word tāyī ‘mother’ and the Sanskrit words bhuvana ‘earth’ and īśvarī ‘goddess’. In Sanskrit, the word Bhuvaneshwari is a compound of the words *bhuvana* meaning worlds and *īśvarī* meaning Goddess, meaning “goddess of the worlds”, where the worlds are the *tri-bhuvana* or three regions of *bhuḥ* (earth), *bhuvah* (atmosphere) and *svah* (heavens). Bhuvaneshwari means the queen or ruler of the universe. But since *bhuvana* can also mean the earth, she is also perceived as the divine mother earth, as one of the main Shakti goddesses. There are several temples dedicated to Bhuvaneshwari. One, which is one of the sixty-four śakti pīṭhas or sacred places of the mother goddess, is located in Nainativu (Manipallavam), off the shore of the Jaffna peninsula in northern Sri Lanka.

²Bhārat Mātā is the national mother goddess of India. In Hindi, the national language of India, Bhārat means India and mātā means ‘mother’. For further reading on Bharat Mata in cultural studies, see Ramaswamy (2010).

³Abanindranath Tagore (1871-1951), brother of the Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore, was one of the early artists of modern India, with an academic style of painting.

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Language, Printing, Art and Education in the History of Early Christianity in the Philippines

Kenneth E. Rayco

This study presents the intercultural communication dimension of the missionary endeavors of the Spanish missionaries in the Philippines from 1565-1898. It looks into four areas where intercultural communication is evident: literature, architecture, religious practice and education. In order to achieve this, analysis of historical works by prominent Philippine Church historians were studied. Learning the local languages for ministry was mandated by the 1582 Synod of Manila. The missionaries studied the local languages and their expertise in linguistics proved to be helpful in this endeavor (Vibar, 2012, 2). This resulted in the publication of various literatures on Christian doctrine, local customs, dictionaries and grammar on vernacular languages among others. The architecture introduced in the country by the missionaries was an adaptation to the local climate, topography, and seismic conditions in the (Ipac-Alarcon, 2008, 5). In the area of religious practice, the general practice was not to forbid or eliminate the pagan practices without any Christian practice that would stand in its place. This was in line with the policy of "making Christianity permeate the culture and its institutions in the same way as the popular pagan beliefs had done" (de la Costa, 1961, 156). In the area of education, the missionaries took advantage of the locals' interest in music to teach them not only music but also religion, arts and trades, reading and arithmetic (Bazaco, 1941, 18). The findings show that through intercultural communication, the missionaries did not impose their culture and Christianity to the locals but used the elements in local cultures to introduce Christianity which gave birth to a unique Filipino Christianity.

Keywords: mission, intercultural communication, Filipino culture, Spanish missionaries

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Introduction

The Philippines, an archipelago in Southeast Asia, was discovered in 1521 by the Portuguese explorer Fernando de Magallanes for the Spanish crown. However, the formal colonization of the islands only started in 1565 as Magallanes was killed by the group of Lapu-lapu, the local chieftain in Mactan Island, Cebu.

The 1565 expedition to the islands was led by Miguel Lopez de Legazpi and a group of Augustinians: the navigator Andres de Urdaneta, Martin de Rada, Diego de Herrera, Andres de Aguirre and Pedro de Gamboa.¹ In the Augustinian group, Urdaneta and de Rada returned to Spain to report to King Felipe II about their journey to the Orient while the remaining three remained to look after the spiritual needs of their fellow Spaniards and to start the Christian mission to the Filipinos.

In the succeeding years, reinforcements—both civil and ecclesiastical—arrived from Spain and Mexico but their scant number proved to be challenging. Their influence was limited to Cebu, Manila and in some surrounding regions.²

Domingo de Salazar and the Manila Synod of 1582

In 1579, the Dominican Domingo de Salazar, a missionary in the Americas, was elevated to the episcopate and was assigned to head the See of Manila. In September 1581, de Salazar arrived in Manila and in 1582 convoked the Synod of Manila “to address the problems affecting the Spaniards and the natives.”³

Among the resolutions of the Synod was the method to be used by the missionaries in their evangelization of the early Filipinos e.g., the need to learn the local languages, the use of the vernacular for preaching and the use of

¹ Rolando V. de la Rosa, *OP. Beginnings of the Filipino Dominicans* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 1990), 59.

² See Lucio Gutierrez, *OP. Domingo de Salazar; OP. First Bishop of the Philippines: 1512-1594. A Study of His Life and Work* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2001), 120.

³ Gutierrez, 23.

ecclesiastical books translated from Spanish to the vernacular.⁴ It was also in this Synod of 1582 that it was declared that the islands belonged to the Filipinos and “no other languages would be used for evangelization except their own.”⁵

Learning the Local Cultures

Fred E. Jandt says that in order “to begin to understand a culture, you need to understand all the experiences that guide its individual members through life, such things as language and gestures; personal appearance and social relationships; religion, philosophy, and values; courtship, marriage, and family customs; food and recreation; work and government; education and communication systems; health, transportation, and government systems; and economic systems.”⁶ In the case of the Philippines, the Spanish missionaries studied and familiarized themselves with the different areas of Philippine life.

Language Learning

Language learning was an integral part of religious instruction during the Spanish colonial period. It was through the local tongues that the missionaries were able to lead and shepherd the Filipinos to the Christian faith. A common misconception among Filipinos, which persists until today, is that Spanish was not taught in order to keep the Filipinos ignorant and to prevent dissent against the authorities.⁷ However, historians point out that the missionaries

⁴ See Jose Luis Porras, *The Synod of Manila of 1582. General History of the Philippines*. Part I Vol. 4. (Manila: Historical Conservation Society, 1990), 110, 120.

⁵ Arwin M. Vibar, “Linguistic and Grammatical Activity during the Period of Spanish Presence in the Philippines: The Legacy of the Spanish Grammarian Missionaries,” *CAS Review* 8, no. 1, (August 2013), 7.

⁶ Fred E. Jandt, *Intercultural Communication. An Introduction. Second Edition*. (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 1998), 8.

⁷ Pio Andrade, Jr., “Education and Spanish in the Philippines,” *Asociación Cultural Galeón de Manila*, Accessed 27 May 2016 from <http://www.galeondemanila.org/index.php/es/estudios/111-education-and-spanish-in-the-philippines-by-pio-andrade>.

Pio Andrade points out that when the Americans began to colonize the country in the 1900s the Americans were ‘forced’ to speak “bamboo Spanish” or crude Spanish in order to communicate to the natives (including the Chinese) across the

learned the local languages in order to minister more effectively to the Filipinos. Arwin M. Vibar argues that the missionaries did not impose their language for practical reasons like the scant number of Spanish speakers in the islands most of whom were centered in Intramuros, the old walled city of Manila.⁸ In fact, the missionaries preserved the local languages an example of which is the *baybayin*—the indigenous Tagalog writing system—by copying it and explaining it in their books.⁹ Two existing legal documents written in *baybayin* dated 1613 and 1635 can be found at the Archives of the University of Santo Tomas in Manila and were declared National Cultural Treasures by the Philippine government in November 2014.¹⁰

According to the Augustinian Policarpio Hernandez, the first Augustinians in the country had Juan de Villanueva, who was well-versed in the Tagalog language. De Villanueva was appointed on July 16, 1599 as an examiner of the Tagalog language to his brothers who were to be assigned to the local parishes.¹¹ Another example is the Augustinian Alonso de Mentrída who was assigned in Ogton, Iloilo in 1607. His mastery of Hiligaynon allowed him to become a powerful preacher in Aklan and produced numerous writings in the said language earning him the title *Apostolico ministro de la provincia de Bisayas y Demostenes de aquella lengua*.¹²

islands. Quoting Henry Jones Ford of Princeton University's report to US President Woodrow Wilson, Andrade explains that one would not be treated with respect if one speaks English instead of Spanish. This is because Spanish is the language of business and social intercourse.

⁸ Vibar, 8.

⁹ Rebeca Fernández Rodríguez. "Early writing and printing in the Philippines." *History and Philosophy of the Language Sciences*. Retrieved 8 April, 2015 from <http://hiphilangsci.net/2013/07/10/early-writing-and-printing-in-the-philippines/>.

¹⁰ Edgar Allan Sembrano. "UST documents in ancient 'baybayin' script declared a National Cultural Treasure," *The Philippine Daily Inquirer*: 25 August 2014. Retrieved 15 October 2015 from <http://lifestyle.inquirer.net/169646/ust-documents-in-ancient-baybayin-script-declared-a-national-cultural-treasure/>

¹¹ Policarpio Hernandez, OSA. *The Augustinians in the Philippines and their contribution to the Printing Press, Philology, Poetry, Religious Literature, History and Sciences*, trans. Marionette O. Martinez. (Makati: Colegio San Agustin-Makati, 1988), 3.

¹² See Nestor C. Impelido, SDB, "Pastoral Writings of the Religious Orders

The Dominican Rolando V. de la Rosa states that the Franciscans, who arrived in the Philippines in 1578, first busied themselves with the study of the native languages before proceeding to their mission stations in the Tagalog and Bicol regions.¹³

The missionaries' knowledge of language and linguistics proved to be an advantage. Their compilations on Filipino language studies "enabled their fellow missionaries to learn the newly encountered tongues, paving the way for the preaching of the Gospel to all peoples in the very languages that their own mothers had taught and raised them with."¹⁴ This strategy was part of the resolutions of the 1582 Synod of Manila. It is worth noting that there were members of the Spanish secular clergy during the early days of the conquest, as early as 1569, but they were ineffective since they lacked knowledge of the local languages.¹⁵

Printing

The Philippines is composed of various ethno-linguistic groups scattered throughout the archipelago. Because of this variety of languages in the country, the missionaries focused on the main languages used in their mission areas. With this, they were able to produce grammars and dictionaries as references for their use and for the use of future missionaries.¹⁶ As soon

(1700-1750). Sources for Philippine Church History," In *Chapters in Philippine Church History*, ed. Anne C. Kwantes. (Manila: OMF Literature, 2001), 93.

¹³ de la Rosa, 61.

¹⁴ Vibar, 2.

¹⁵ John N. Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History* (Quezon City: Loyola School of Theology, 1979), 41.

The Spanish secular clerics served as chaplains to the Spanish community in Manila. In some places, they held the position of parish priests until such time the religious priests took over their posts. An example would be Pedro Chirino's account of a certain Don Juan de Vivero of Llerno, Extremadura who was already a priest for 57 years who became the Dean of the Metropolitan Church of Manila and was raised archdeacon in 1581 by Domingo de Salazar.

¹⁶ Emmanuel Luis A. Romanillos, *The Augustinian Recollects in the Philippines. Hagiography and History* (Quezon City: Recolletos Communications, 2001), 113.

as they were adept with the local languages, they tapped into the local literary and cultural resources and from there introduced Christianity. Victor Arenas Maynigo says that the missionaries, “having learned the dialects [sic] of the people, they not only carried out their task of preaching the gospel in the vernacular, but helped out lexicographies of Philippine dialects [sic], prayer books and catechisms.”¹⁷

Among the early adaptations of the missionaries in their ministry to the Filipinos were the writing of the Tagalog grammar and vocabulary as well as catechisms in the local languages (an example is the *Doctrina Cristiana en lengua Tagala* by the Franciscan Juan de Plasencia published in 1593). The publications, “the *Arte* or Grammar, the *Vocabulario* or Dictionary and the *Doctrina* or Catechism were necessary means for the missionary to learn the native languages more easily and, thus, be able to communicate in a more accurate and effective way, the message of the Gospel to his listeners. This variety of languages influenced decisively the planning of missionary strategy of the religious orders in charge of the evangelization of the Filipino people.”¹⁸

The following sub-section will discuss how the five religious missionary orders took the task of initial evangelization of the islands according to their own methods. At first, the missionaries converted the Filipinos with “the simple acceptance of Christianity and baptism following the memorization of the *Doctrina* Christiana and proof of their acceptance of the basic norms of Christian life”¹⁹ but eventually, the need for deeper religious formation was seen.

a. Augustinians

The Augustinians were the pioneer missionaries in the Philippines. The first four friars landed in the country in 1565. Three years later, additional friars arrived and eventually an independent Augustinian province was erected—the *Provincia del Santisimo Nombre de Jesus*. They centered their efforts in the Tagalog, Pampango, Ilocano, Hiligaynon and Cebuano speaking areas. Having learned the local languages, they were able to write grammars, dictionaries,

¹⁷ Victor Arenas Maynigo, *Evangelization and Philippine Culture in the Light of the Second Vatican Council* (Aachen, West Germany: Institute of Missiology, Missio Internationales Katholisches Missionwerk, 1978), 13.

¹⁸ Hernandez, 37.

¹⁹ Schumacher, SJ, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 30.

catechisms and religious books in the said languages.²⁰

The Cebu mission was started by Martin de Rada, Diego de Herrera and Pedro Gamboa in 1565. Their first task was to learn the Visayan language. De Rada, the first prior of the community in Cebu, is said to have learned to preach fluently in Cebuano in five months.²¹ Pedro Chirino notes, “Fray Rada was the first to make Christians in the Philippines through his preachings in the same language of the pagans, and that he wrote the first *Vocabulario* which I myself have seen and used for my studies.”²²

In Luzon, Juan de Quiñones and Diego de Ocho were experts in the Tagalog and Pampango languages. In a letter to the members of the Province dated August 20, 1578, the prior provincial Agustin de Albuquerque encouraged his brothers to dedicate themselves more to the learning of the Filipino languages. He especially asked de Quiñones and de Ochoa “to place in order within the shortest possible time, the grammars, dictionaries, and confessional books in the Tagalog and Pampango languages respectively.”²³

It was in their printing press in Lubao, Pampanga that they were able to produce a book on the life of St. Nicholas de Tolentino in Pampango by Felipe Tallada and a Pampango dictionary in 1614. Three years later, they printed in Macabebe, Pampanga the *Arte y Reglas de la Lengua Pampanga* of Francisco Coronel. This printing press was later moved to the Convent of San Pablo in Manila (the present day San Agustin) and from there the Ilocano translation of Francisco Lopez’s *Libro a naifuratan amin ti bagas ti DOCTRINA CRISTIANA nga naisurat iti libro ti Cardenal A. Agnagan Belarmino, ket inaon to P. Fr. Francisco Lopez padre a S. Agustin, iti Sinasantoy* was printed. The Augustinians also wrote in Zambal, Igorot Isinay, Hiligaynon and Cebuano languages from which various *artes*, *reglas*, *diccionarios* and translations of the Christian doctrine were made.

²⁰ Hernandez, 37.

²¹ John Leddy Phelan, “Pre-baptismal Instruction and the Administration of Baptism in the Philippines during the 16th Century” in *Studies in Philippine Church History*, ed. Gerald H. Anderson (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1969), 26.

²² Pedro Chirino, *Relacion de las Islas Filipinas* as quoted by Pedro G Galende, OSA, “Apologia Pro Filipinos,” (Manila: Salesiana Publishers, 1980), 81.

²³ Hernandez, 40.

It was among the strategies of the Augustinians to give informal lectures and sermons. "In the evenings, regularly, the missionaries gathered the natives voluntarily at the convent to teach them the doctrine."²⁴ Here, de Rada made use of canticles and poems. Pedro Galende says:

First, he would recite the doctrine set in verse; then he would adapt the verse to music of popular canticles so that, with the help of the melody, it would be easier to have the doctrine imprinted in their minds. This must have made such an impression on the neophytes that they would leave the catechetical session filled with enthusiasm singing the songs as they went along the streets.²⁵

The conversion of the Filipinos were also carried with sufficient ease because "people tended by nature to imitate. And so, they accept with certain naturalness, external forms like clothes, language, ceremonies and other attitudes and customs brought to the Islands by the Spaniards."²⁶ One interesting reason why the natives were so eager to be baptized is that they see the baptismal water as medicinal. Thus, they brought the sick and the dying to missionaries to be baptized hoping that by doing so, the sick and the infirm will be restored to health.

b. *Augustinian Recollects*

The Augustinian Recollects landed in Cebu on May 12, 1606 and reached Luzon in the same year. They were originally founded as a contemplative Order dedicated to prayer and recollection. However, their acceptance of the Philippine missions made them contemplative and active at the same time.

The first batch of Recollects who left Cadiz in 1605 was comprised of ten priests and four brothers. Unfortunately one priest, Andres de San Nicolas, died on the way to Manila. They arrived in the country after the royal decree of 1595 partitioning the country among the different religious orders. Nevertheless, they were able to have their own mission territories in the unpacified mission areas of western Pangasinan, Zambales and Mariveles, Bataan.

²⁴ Pedro G. Galende, OSA, *Apologia Pro Filipinos* (Manila: Salesiana Publishers, 1980), 61.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 83.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 64.

The Augustinian Recollects were originally contemplative in their way of life. It was founded within the Augustinian Order as "an attempt to implement reformist goals of dignity of worship, seriousness of studies, formation of novices, restoration of an authentic common life and unity of the Order."²⁷ Thus in 1602, the Order of Augustinian Recollects was born from the Augustinian Province of Castile as a separate province. Their acceptance of the Philippine mission, however, turned them to become both contemplative and active at the same time.

Aside from Cebu, they were assigned to the mission areas of Tarlac, Pampanga, Rizal, Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Sorsogon, Capiz, Surigao, Misamis and Zamboanga. They were also entrusted with the spiritual care of the people in Mindoro, Lubang Island, Masbate, Palawan, Negros, Siquijor, Calamianes and Camiguin. In the provinces of Bohol, Romblon, Zambales, Mindoro and Palawan, the Recollects founded towns, built forts and watchtowers to ward off frequent Moro raids.²⁸ They also busied themselves with the writing and translating of devotional materials and compiled sermons delivered by their brothers in the local languages for the use of their brothers and their parishioners.

Some of their works include Tomas de San Jeronimo's *Explicacion de la Doctrina Cristiana* published in Manila in 1720 and his *Practica del Catechismo Romano y Doctrina Cristiana* published in 1731. In Cuyunin (language spoken in Cuyo Island, Palawan) Pedro Gilbert de Santa Eulalia published in 1871 the *Lacted nga tocosan nga casayodan sa pagaradalan sa mga cristianos* or *Brief Questions on the Truths Every Christian Must Learn* and in 1887 the *Mga pangaradien nga crisanos ig lacted nga pagruro o casaisayan sa mga pono nga camatundan, nga taques maelaman ig tutumamanen sa tauo, nga maliag magpacun sa langit* or *The Christian Doctrine and Brief Explanations of the Chief Truths People Who Wish to Go*

²⁷ Cf. Romanillos, 4.

Tomas de Villanova is credited with the laying of the foundations of the Recoletos, i.e., "contemplation, excellence of divine worship, fraternal charity, reading of the Scriptures, discipline, zeal for the salvation of souls and the practice of walking barefoot according to the spirit of the primitive Augustinian monks." See Emmanuel Luis A. Romanillos, *The Augustinian Recollects in the Philippines. Hagiography and History* (Quezon City: Recoletos Communications, 2001), 4.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

to Heaven Must Know and Obey.²⁹ In Tagbanua, Cirpiano Navarro published in 1899 his *Compendio de la Doctrina Cristiana* and in 1873 Jose Ma. Learte's work in Zambal *Catecismo sa sarita zambale a mangapalaman nin dao dasal tan maanter a pamalicas a cunama* was published.

3. The Franciscans

The first batch of Friars Minors arrived in the Philippines in 1578. They were originally destined for the Solomon Islands but were ordered by King Felipe II to sail for Manila while they waiting in transit in Seville. They set sail for Mexico on June 24, 1577 and landed in Manila on March 2, 1578. They were appointed as ministers in Bicol, Bulacan, Laguna, Bohol, Rizal and in Sta. Ana in Manila where they administer the parish until today.

In Manila, the group dedicated themselves to the study of the Tagalog language “so that they could devote themselves to the conversion of the natives, they studied for two months after their arrival.”³⁰ They were following the example of Juan de Ayora, the Franciscan who devoted himself to the study of Nahuatl language during his ministry in Mexico.

The Franciscan Chapter of 1580 in Manila appointed Juan de Plasencia—one of the pioneer Franciscans in the Philippines—to prepare a Tagalog grammar book and dictionary and translate the Catechism to Tagalog. Paul Arvisu Dumol tells us:

by the time of the Synod he had composed, at least in rudimentary form, a grammar—*Arte de la lengua tagala*—a dictionary, and apparently also a collection of Tagalog phrases. Most important, he had composed a catechism, called *Tocsohan*, that is, a Christian doctrine in the form of question and answers together with common prayers. The Synod adopted this as the basis for religious instruction, and recommended his other works for missionaries working among the Tagalogs.³¹

²⁹ Ibid., 111.

³⁰ Leandro Tormo Sanz, “Metodo de Aprendizaje de Lenguas Empleado por los Franciscanos en Japon y Filipinas (ss. XVI-XVII)” in *España en Extremo Oriente. Filipinas, China, Japon. Presencia Franciscana 1578-1978* (Madrid: Editorial Cisneros, 1979), 385.

³¹ Paul Dumol in de Salazar, xxix.

The books written by de Plasencia cover topics like the laws and customs of Filipinos, ancient Filipino practices, rites and ceremonies. This was done “in order to penetrate the genius, conditions and customs of the natives of the islands.”³² Another Franciscan, Juan Oliver of Valencia, who arrived in 1581 was adept with the Tagalog and Bicolano languages that he was able to produce eighteen books in the said languages besides those which discuss Christian virtues, spirituality, doctrines, homilies and lectures. He also improved and added entries to the grammar book and dictionary of de Plasencia.

The systematic religious instruction by Juan de Oliver to the people of Balayan, Batangas in 1582-1591 should be mentioned. John Schumacher states that in the work of de Oliver, he explained phrase by phrase the prayers of the *Doctrina*, the Sign of the Cross, the Ten Commandments, the Commandments of the Church, the sacraments, the corporal and spiritual works of mercy and the seven capital sins and relates it to the day-to-day realities of life. “This compilation which, its modern commentators are agreed, was in close contact with the realities of Tagalog life, evidently was not simply for Oliver’s own use, or that of a few missionaries, but was obviously copied and recopied by hand.”³³ These works were eventually known as *Explicaciones*.

One interesting note about the Franciscans is that they did not limit their preaching of the Gospel from the pulpit. Jose Calleja Reyes narrates that those who were gifted in music taught the natives the art and rudiments of western music. “Others wrote travelogues describing the natural beauty, flora and fauna of the region. Some have even written on such secular subjects such as the folklore and folk-beliefs of the pre-Christian Bikol.”³⁴ They also ran hospitals for the locals and taught grammar and theology.³⁵

³² Sanz, 386.

³³ Schumacher, SJ, *Growth and Decline*, 31.

³⁴ Jose Calleja Reyes, “The Franciscans—Apostles of Bicol,” *Boletin Eclesiastico de Filipinas* 53, nos. 592-593, (March-April 1979). 154.

³⁵ Marcelo de Ribadeneira, OFM, *Historia del Archipiélago y otros Reynos* [History of the Archipelago and other Kingdoms], trans. Pacita Guevara Fernandez (Manila: Historical Conservation Society, 1970), 332.

4. *The Dominicans*

The Dominicans arrived in the Philippines on the eve of the Feast of St. Mary Magdalene in 1587. Aside from their motherhouse in Manila and their apostolate among the Chinese in Binondo and Parian, the first missions entrusted to them were the provinces of Bataan and Pangasinan. By 1750, they were present in Cagayan, Batanes and Babuyan Islands.

The Dominicans were charged with the Chinese community which in 1587 numbered around ten thousand.³⁶ This was in view of planting the faith in the Middle Kingdom. Among those who missioned to the Chinese was the future bishop of Manila Miguel de Benavides and Juan Maldonado. The first task they did was to study the Chinese language. It was said that Benavides could preach in Chinese after six months of study. Their ministry with the Chinese included religious instruction, celebration of masses in the local tongue and the education of children. “This was a very propitious event indeed, since it served as a means with which to enter and penetrate the remote provinces of greater China.”³⁷

Aside from the education ministry which was their main apostolate in the country, the Dominicans were also engaged in the printing ministry. Their target audience were the local inhabitants and the Chinese population who lived outside the city walls. Damon Woods tells that “printing was used as a part of the Dominican strategy to evangelize the Christian population in the Manila area, as well as the Tagalog population. Printing was done to serve three audiences: the friars, Tagalogs and the Chinese.”³⁸ Records show that out of the sixteen works printed by their press between 1593 and 1610, only two catered to the Spanish population. Between 1593 and 1700, there were twenty-seven books written in Tagalog and fourteen in Bicol, Bisaya, Iloko, Pampango and Pangasinense.

In 1593, they published a *Doctrina Cristiana* in Spanish-Tagalog written by the Franciscan Juan de Plasencia and a Spanish-Chinese version by de Benavides. They include the Lord’s Prayer, the *Salve*, the Creed, fourteen

³⁶ Pedro Tejero, *Binondo. 400 Years of Dominican Apostolate* (Manila: Dominican Fathers, Binondo Chinese Parish, 1993), 7.

³⁷ Ribadeneira, 332.

³⁸ Woods, 67.

articles of faith, the seven sacraments, seven capital sins, seven corporal and spiritual works of mercy, the Ten Commandments, the five commandments of the Church, and thirty-three catechetical questions. In the same year, Juan Cobo, who had acquired a grasp of the Chinese language, produced the book *Shih-lu* or *Dialogue in Reality* which tackles the truths of the Christian faith by explaining “how by considering the marvels of creation one can come to the knowledge of the true God.”³⁹ This book was directly aimed at the educated sectors of the Chinese community. Rodel Aligan tells us that the use of the printing press in mission has an end: “through the native languages and the printing press, the task of integrating folk tradition and Christianization was carried out. Oral lore collected by missionaries in their apostolic and parochial work formed a nucleus of a culturally re-oriented literature.”⁴⁰

5. *The Jesuits*

The sons of Ignacio de Loyola arrived in the Philippines in 1581. Their first members who arrived in the country were Antonio Sedeño, Alonso Sanchez and Nicholas Gallardo. Interestingly, Chirino’s account of the appointment of Sedeño to the Philippines by the Jesuit Superior General in Rome says that Sedeño was sent to the Philippines “with the faculty to establish a residence in the city of Manila and from there attend to the conversion and evangelization of the neighbor, depending on their proper disposition and condition, or as he judged the situation best.”⁴¹

The Jesuit official Juan de la Plaza instructed that “as soon as they arrive in the Philippines, apply themselves to learning the language of the people. In order to help them save their souls as far as they can according to our usual methods.”⁴² These “usual methods” include preaching the Gospel, hearing confessions, religious instruction and missions. Thus, they occupied themselves with hearing confessions of Spaniards and some locals. Later on, they proceeded from one town to another preaching in the *barrios* without

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁴⁰ Aligan, 8.

⁴¹ Pedro Chirino, *History of the Philippine Province of the Society of Jesus*, trans. Jose S. Arcilla, SJ, ed. Jaume Gorriz Abella (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2009), 11.

⁴² Horacio de la Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1961), 8.

becoming resident missionaries—similar to their method in Europe. However, they later realized that such mission tours were not effective in the country. Thus they requested permission from their superiors in Mexico for them to accept permanent mission stations. After securing the needed approval, the Jesuits in Manila started to learn Tagalog following the recommendation of de Plaza. This allowed them to have the facility of language in their mission territories in Balayan, Batangas, Taytay and Antipolo in Rizal. They were also entrusted with the ministry in Iloilo, Samar, Leyte, Bohol, Cebu, Butuan and the entire island of Mindanao.

Similar with the Dominicans, the Jesuits were also engaged with the ministry to the Chinese community. They did their apostolate in Tondo and the Chinese immigrants who came via the Chinese junks. To this, Francisco Almerique dedicated himself to the study of the Chinese language to which he was able to convert some into the faith.⁴³

The first from their ranks who did formal missionary work in the Philippines was Pedro Chirino who ministered in Balayan, Batangas, Taytay and Antipolo in Rizal, and Tigbauan, Ilo-ilo. One of the strategies of Chirino, which was continued and strengthened by succeeding missionaries, was to permeate the local cultures. De la Costa notes,

Like all primitive religions that of the Tagalogs were closely interwoven with their culture and traditions. It governed not only ritual and sacrifice, fast and festival, but almost the entire life of the individual and the community. ... In a primitive culture, religion touches everything; there is nothing completely profane.⁴⁴

By this, Chirino worked for the conversion of the Tagalogs through their children. With the Filipinos' natural fondness of children, whatever the children like would eventually spark the interest of the adults around them. As such, after every morning mass, Chirino would instruct the children with their basic Christian prayers. But this was not purely rote memorization. Chirino would let the children sing basic Christian prayers using traditional Tagalog chants. Since music has long been used in pagan practice, it became a vehicle from which Christianity was introduced. De la Costa narrates, "as soon as the children had learned to chant the

prayers, the catechism class began with a procession. They would gather at the end of the village and go through it singing to the church. Many of the parents would follow, and catechism class would begin for both children and adults."⁴⁵

Architecture

The architecture introduced by the Spaniards was an adaptation to the climate, topography and seismic conditions of the country.⁴⁶ It also took into account the country's technical and material limitations. Contributing to the distinct Filipino architecture was the influence brought by two centuries of Galleon Trade between Manila and Acapulco which not only facilitated that exchange of goods but also the flow of ideas between the two distant colonies.⁴⁷ Alicia Coseteng notes, "the sustained relationship between the two colonies—through the Galleon Trade and friar exchange—allowed the flow of artistic influences from Spanish America to the Philippines, influences which were most manifest in the area of architecture."⁴⁸

Hispanic Baroque, which was prevalent in the Philippines from the 17th to 18th centuries, is "marked by a strong personality and expressive character, notwithstanding indigenous touches and ethnic differences."⁴⁹ This is reflected in religious and military architectures examples of which are San Agustin Church in Manila, Santo Tomas de Villanueva Church in Miag-ao, Iloilo, the walled city of Intramuros, Fort San Pedro in Cebu, Church of San Antonio de Padua in Pila, Laguna and the Saint Augustine Church and watchtower in Bantay, Ilocos Sur.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 141.

⁴⁶ Norma Ipac-Alarcon, *Philippine Architecture during the Pre-Spanish and Spanish Periods*, (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2008), 5.

⁴⁷ The Galleon Trade between Manila and Acapulco lasted for 250 years (1565-1815). During this time, goods and metals like silver from Europe and fruits like pineapples from the Spanish Americas were traded with silk, gold, plants (including *abaca* or Manila hemp which was the monopoly product of the Philippines), tobacco, fruits (mangoes), spices from the Philippines and porcelain jars from China and other products from Asia.

⁴⁸ Coseteng, *Spanish Churches in the Philippines*, 4.

⁴⁹ Antonio Bonet Correa, "Hispanic Baroque," in *Endangered Fil-Hispanic Architecture. Papers from the First International Congress on Fil-Hispanic Architecture*. (Manila: Instituto Cervantes, 2009), 2.

⁴³ Chirino, *History of the Philippine Province of the Society of Jesus*, 11.

⁴⁴ de la Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines*, 140.

1. Fortifications

Fortifications were built by the missionaries mainly as defense against the persistent Moro raids, attacks of mountain tribes and other groups who reject Spanish rule in the country. Examples of such fortifications are the Fort Santiago in Manila and Fort San Jose (later renamed Fort del Pilar) in Zamboanga. Although these were built mainly for defense purposes, it also became “nodes for the diffusion of culture.”⁵⁰ As these fortifications became centers of power and control in the territory it was erected, the fortifications also became centers of religious, social, economic, military and political power. Rene B. Javellana adds:

by providing protection for the Spaniards, the fortifications allowed missionaries to penetrate frontier areas and establish a foothold, even in areas where the population was hostile. For instance, in the sheltering shadow of Fort San Jose (1632, later called Fort Pilar [1719]), the Jesuits were able to establish a college, and a church that served the Lutaos (Sama Badjao) who had converted. Zamboanga City grew from this core of fort, school and parish.⁵¹

It should be made clear, however, that the fortifications in the Philippines were by no means European inventions but innovations of the Filipino type.⁵² The fortifications already existing were known locally as *muod*, *kuta*, *ili*, or *ilihan* and *ijang*.

2. Vernacular Filipino Houses⁵³

⁵⁰ Rene B. Javellana, SJ, “Guarding the Western Frontier: Spanish Colonial Fortifications as a Cultural Route” in *Endangered Fil-Hispanic Architecture. Papers from the First International Congress on Fil-Hispanic Architecture*. (Manila: Instituto Cervantes, 2009), 67.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Dr. Ma. Christina Turalba advocates the use of the term “vernacular” when referring to indigenous architecture as it is a more appropriate description of the non-formal architecture by locals for themselves with or without assistance from local craftsmen or artisans. It is a product of the demands of the environment and available building materials and “an expression of identity, culture and beliefs, vernacular architecture evolved over a period of time to address changing needs and external influences.” See Turalba, Maria Cristina V., “Living with the Earth,”

Vernacular Filipino houses can be considered utilitarian and built to adapt to local climate and topography. Ma. Corazon Hila traces the ancestry of the vernacular Filipino architecture to the Austronesian type. The Austronesian type has the following characteristics: “an elevated living floor, buoyant rectangular volume, raised pile foundation and voluminous thatched roof.”⁵⁴ In the design of the vernacular house, the floor is elevated in order to allow passive air to cool the house from below and as protection against animals. The large roof provides protection from the heat of the sun and water from rains. The high ridge, meanwhile, allows air to circulate. This type generally corresponds to the local *bahay kubo*.

The Spanish period in the country saw the emergence of the *bahay na bato* (wood-and-stone style) which would eventually replace most of the *bahay kubo* especially in urban center. This new type is a combination of wood and stone; also known as *arquitectura mestiza* from the Latin word *mixtus* or mixed. The ground floor is usually enclosed by thick walls and a second floor made of wood with *capiz* shell windows. This design combined elements of Hispanic and vernacular building traditions. It put into consideration the dangers posed by fires, earthquakes, typhoons and rains. Aside from the environmental factors, the *bahay na bato* was also a product of socio-economic change. “At that time,” Maria Christina V. Turalba adds, “the economic and the social stature of the homeowner basically determined the size of the house.”⁵⁵ This progress can be attributed to the Galleon Trade and the rise of industries like tobacco, Manila hemp monopoly and sugarcane to name a few.

In terms of construction, the use of lime and mortar in construction was introduced in the country during the Spanish period. This was first used in the Spanish fortifications and in their constructions of the *conventos*. Stone and lime mortar was merged with indigenous materials like bamboo, hardwood, *nipa*, *cogon* or *anahaw*.

in *Philippine Heritage Architecture before 1521 to the 1970s*. (Pasig City; Anvil Publishing, 2005), 1.

⁵⁴ Lico, 16.

⁵⁵ Maria Christina V. Turalba, “Documentation of the *Bahay na Bato* of the Hispanic Period,” in *Endangered Fil-Hispanic Architecture. Papers from the First International Congress on Fil-Hispanic Architecture*. (Manila: Instituto Cervantes, 2009), 195.

These houses first started to rise in Intramuros and gradually spread outside the city walls. These houses made use and combined European elements, elements of Chinese traditional houses, architecture and climate-responsive elements of the *bahay kubo*. Its unique features include the *capiz* windows, “extensive use of sustainable elements such as double façade, wide eaves and awnings, louvers, floor-to-ceiling operable walls and partitions to maximize the natural daylight and ventilation, cross and stack ventilation systems, and open courtyard as sun and wind catchers.”⁵⁶

In the 1790s Vigan, however, brick was used on both stories instead of wood and stone. Fernando Zialcita attributes this to a fire that razed the area in the late 18th century. While it is similar to the *bahay kubo*, the Vigan *bahay na bato* has thicker walls which also serve as load bearing walls that carry the weight of the floor and the roof.

3. Religious Architecture

The basic plan type of a church complex in the Philippines was the presence of the school, baptistery, convent, belfry, the church and the *plaza*.⁵⁷ As mission stations were established in different parts of the country, the designs of the complexes were also revised according to the area. However, one thing was constant with religious architecture—it always occupied prime land. As being always in the center of the town, it became “the nucleus of the community around which the social and religious life of the people revolved.”⁵⁸

The early missionaries who came to the country were not only *doctrineros* but also builders. Antonio Sedeño is credited with the construction of the fort and the chapel of the Nuestra Señora de Guia in Intramuros. Together with Domingo de Salazar, Sedeño is credited with introducing construction in stone in the Philippines. The former discovered the quarry site in Makati while Sedeño led the training of the locals in masonry, quarrying and construction.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Rino D. A. Fernandez, *Diksiyonaryong Biswal ng Arkitekturang Filipino. A Visual Dictionary on Filipino Architecture*. (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2015), 55.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁵⁸ Coseteng, 13.

⁵⁹ See Edgardo Mar A. Castro, “Ladrillos: Brick Artistry in the Philippines,” in *Endangered Fil-Hispanic Architecture. Papers from the First*

The missionaries led the construction of churches and infrastructure wherever they are assigned. Eventually, competent Filipino and Chinese-Filipino builders, masons, master masons and carpenters emerged. At the beginning of the 18th century, names of Filipinos appeared on official records and blueprints of construction projects like masons Juan de Ayco, Jeronimo Quibon and Jacinto Caba who undertook the construction of the Cebu Cathedral in 1700 while Andres de la Cruz and Pedro Eulogio took charge of the repairs in Vigan. The Sangley Miguel Guanco, meanwhile, was recorded to have constructed the stone church in Pagsanjan in 1690.⁶⁰

The *convento* is said to be a modification of the traditional nipa hut. This is reflected in the method of construction (e.g. tabique), the use of local building materials (e.g. limestone, adobe, corals, *molave*, *narra*, bamboo, rattan) and other features like the *capiz*-shell windows, *azotea*, balustrades and the like. Gerard Lico offers us an explanation of the ingenuity of the local builders:

One fine example of the ingenuity of the local builders was their own rendition of the wattle-and-daub construction popular in Europe. Instead of using pliant branches of plants with a mixture of mud and straw applied on both sides of the wall and allowed to be sun-dried, the local builders used pliant bamboo with a mixture of mortar composed of sand, lime, and water. This was referred to as *tabique pampango*; tabique from the Arabic word *tasbbik*, meaning “wall”; *pampango* from Pampanga, the name of the place where it was probably introduced and popularized.⁶¹

Another example of adaptation to the local cultures is evident on the pediment of the Santo Tomas de Villanueva Church in Miag-ao, Iloilo built in 1787. Here, St. Christopher is portrayed as a farmer garbed in Filipino garments carrying the child Jesus holding on a coconut with guava and papaya trees around them.

Chinese and Muslim influences can also be traced in churches in Bohol, Cebu and parts of Mindanao. This is because Muslims and Chinese were also employed in the construction of these houses of worship. Notable among the churches in Cebu and Bohol is the influence of the *Mudéjar* style (as seen

International Congress on Fil-Hispanic Architecture (Manila: Instituto Cervantes, 2009), 244-255.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁶¹ Lico, 135.

in the onion shaped domes of the churches in the areas). It was a style that developed in the twelfth century in Aragon and influenced by Islamic tradition. However, UNESCO states that it is not entirely European or Islamic. It is a combination of Christianity, Islam and Jewish cultures.⁶²

It must be noted that aside from the location of the church complex, the size of the convent and the church communicates an idea. By its location in the center of the town, it communicates its spiritual authority; by its size and scale, it tries to instill a sense of awe to about the Christian faith paving the way for architecture to be a vehicle for the propagation of Christianity in the country.

Education

In 1555, a royal decree was promulgated directing the founding of universities and *studia generalia* throughout the Spanish Empire including the colonies. This resulted in the establishment of parochial schools (schools attached to the local parish church where religious instruction is conducted), which later on became centers of higher learning.⁶³ The *encomenderos* were also enjoined to support the missionaries and the schools before they were granted an *encomienda*. As for the Philippines, the “missionaries opened schools as soon as they arrived; everywhere they went, chapels and schools went together; there were not Christian church without its elementary school.”⁶⁴ Thus during this period, education and religious instruction were intertwined with the missionaries also acting as teachers. It also prompted the founding of seminaries for the training of natives who were deemed fit for the ministry. With this, “the burden of carrying on the work of education fell almost wholly upon the Church.”⁶⁵ The missionaries established two schools, one for boys and one for girls, if the situation permits.⁶⁶ Secular

⁶² “Mudejar Architecture of Aragon.” UNESCO, Retrieved 20 January 2017 from <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/378>.

⁶³ Evergisto Bazaco, OP, *The Church in the Philippines*, (Manila: UST Cooperative, 1953), 63.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Sister Catalina Dychitan, RVM, “Education in the Philippines under the Spanish Regime,” (MA Thesis: University of Santo Tomas, March 1933), 7.

⁶⁶ Pablo Fernandez, *History of the Church in the Philippines (1521-1898)*, (San Juan: Life Today Publications, 1988), 139.

education, meanwhile, started with the founding of the Escuela Nautical de Manila (present day Philippine Merchant Marine Academy) in 1820.

In 1582, Salazar also issued a directive to the different religious orders about education. This includes: (1) compulsory education to children of both wealthy and laborers;⁶⁷ (2) recording of attendance of students as basis for future censure; (3) catechism, reading and writing in the dialect, music and arithmetic must be taught; and (4) the teaching of trades and industries. He later on urged Governor General Dasmariñas to compel the *encomenderos* to support the schools within their territory. Thus in November 4, 1636, a decree was handed down mandating the promulgation of all laws on public instruction. It argues that a “knowledge of reading and writing, of the Christian doctrine, and of Spanish language was essential to the welfare of the Filipinos and the glory of Spain; that the knowledge of Christian language would protect them against oppression by local officials and enable them to appeal directly to the higher authorities in case of trouble.”⁶⁸ Evergisto Bazaco, however, laments that the teaching of Spanish in primary education was given little attention. He gives six reasons:

1. The native dialects—it was thought—were as good as the European languages;
2. In order to rapidly propagate Christian education as it was easier for one to learn the local language rather than all Filipinos to learn Spanish;
3. To win the confidence of the Filipinos;
4. To make the teaching of religion easier and clearer;
5. To prevent Filipinos from reading anti-religious writing written in Spanish; and lastly
6. The defect of the Spanish officials which led to the period of decline in the Iberian Peninsula.

Bazaco stresses that earliest forms of schools in the country can be traced

⁶⁷ Education could not be entirely free. Thus parents have the responsibility of covering the expenses for the education of their children. The poor, however, were exempted from paying fees.

⁶⁸ Consuelo S. Pacquing, “A Study of the Spanish and American Systems of Education Implanted in the Philippine Islands and Deductions Thereof for a More Suitable System for Filipinos” (MA Thesis: University of Santo Tomas, 1937), 24.

back to young men who congregate in the house of the religious. Because of this, the missionaries found out that Filipinos were generally interested in music. They took advantage of it and used it as a vehicle to bring young men into the Christian fold. “These schools so started for music but with a higher end, carried with them not only the learning of reading and writing for a better understanding and practice of religion, but also, many other useful things, in accordance with the circumstances, like good manners some arts and trades, counting and other applications of arithmetic... which environment under European teachers who were naturally communicative and inclined toward teaching, gave impetus to education.”⁶⁹ It can be said that the main theme for education then was still religious instruction.⁷⁰ The teaching of arts and trades by the missionaries won the confidence of the people making the latter skillful in new industries.

Primary education in the country was initiated by the Augustinians in Cebu with the *Escuela de Sto. Nombre de Cebu* in 1565. Together with the teaching of the Christian faith, missionaries also taught the students how to read, write and the rudiments of music. The same is true with the Franciscans who established primary schools in their mission stations in Manila, Laguna, Bicol, Quezon, Bulacan and Cavite. The Dominicans founded in Santo Domingo Convent the *Escuela de Tiples* in 1587 where resident young boys were taught reading, writing and arithmetic alongside their training in music “as this was the means to bring the natives into the church.”⁷¹

⁶⁹ Evergisto Bazaco, *Disputed Questions on Philippine Historical Pedagogy* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Press, 1941), 18.

⁷⁰ Consuelo Pacquing in her study of Spanish System of Primary Education in the Philippines quotes Encarnacion Alzona that the system of primary instruction was repetitive and memorization. Arithmetic was taught, writing was done by imitation. In secondary education, the subjects were mostly classical—Latin and Greek.

⁷¹ Alonso Fernandes writes, “The boys are taught to read and write in Spanish, to serve in the Church, to sing plain songs and accompanied by the organ. Teachers are brought to teach them to play the organ, the flageolet, the flute and other instruments. With these exercises they have acquired much dexterity, especially the neighbors of Manila, where there were to be found good choir singers and skillful players and with good voices, as well as many good dancers and musicians of other instruments; they adorn and solemnize the feast of the Blessed Sacrament, and our Lady of the Holy Rosary, and others more in the year. They represent religious plays and comedies in Spanish and in their language with charm:

In Tigbauan, Iloilo in 1592, the Jesuits established a residence-school for children who live from afar. Under this set-up, the children lived under the care of a missionary who also acted as their guardian and teacher. This residence-school was a means to bring them into Christianity. By educating the children first, the children then led the adults toward the Christian faith. This boarding school-like set up was effective especially to those who would later on become catechists and became essential to the expansion of Christianity in the country. They also opened up an elementary school in 1859 in Manila, the *Escuela Municipal* the present-day Ateneo de Manila University.

Secondary education can be traced to the Dominican lay brother Diego de Santa Maria in 1632 who founded the school-orphanage *Colegio de Huerfanos de San Pedro y Pablo* and attached it to the Dominican Convent of Santo Domingo in Manila. Here, young men were trained in the industrial arts and were sent to the nearby *Colegio de Santo Tomas* for further instruction. This institution was later merged with another older orphanage, *Colegio Niño de Huerfanos de San Juan de Letran*, upon the death of its founder. This later on became the present-day *Colegio de San Juan de Letran*, the oldest secondary educational institution in the country.

In May 1864, a royal decree reforming secondary education in the Philippines was put in effect. Studies in Chinese, French and English languages were also authorized.⁷²

Higher education in the country was introduced by the Jesuits in 1590 with the *Colegio de Manila* (also known as *Colegio Seminario de San Ignacio*). They also founded in 1601 the *Colegio de San Jose* (present day San Jose Seminary) “with an aim ‘to instruct and train the youth in virtue and learning ... and to train ministers of the Gospel for which there is great need in this land.’”⁷³ In Cebu, the Jesuits established the *Colegio de San Ildefonso* in 1595 a grammar school attached to the Jesuit residence in that city. In 1611 a seminary-college to prepare men for the sacred orders was founded

this and all the others are due to the care and curious activity of the religious.” See Evergisto Bazaco, *Disputed Questions on Philippine Historical Pedagogy* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Press, 1941), 34.

⁷² Evergisto Bazaco, OP, *History of Education in the Philippines* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Press, 1953), 49.

⁷³ San Jose Seminary, <http://sanjoseseminary.org/about-us/history>, Accessed 7 July 2016.

by Dominicans—the *Colegio de Nuestra Señora del Santísimo Rosario*—the present day University of Santo Tomas.⁷⁴

Institutions for the education of women were also founded though they were more for the practical arts than the present day understanding of educational institutions. Examples of which are the *Colegio de Santa Potenciana* founded in 1589 and *Colegio de Santa Isabel* founded in 1634. Later on, the two were merged with the latter as the surviving entity.

Compulsory universal education for children from seven to thirteen started in the country with the Education Reform Act of 1863. This royal decree mandated the Insular Government to open schools for primary instruction, normal schools and colleges. Schools for girls and for boys were opened. Courses include reading, writing, arithmetic, history, Christian doctrine, Spanish, agriculture and music.⁷⁵ It fell on the shoulders of the governor general, the archbishop and an education council to see to it that the decree was promulgated. At the cessation of Spanish rule in 1898, some 2100 schools were in operation. “Gunnar Myrdal,” says Pio Andrade, Jr., “had in his monumental classic ‘Asian Drama,’ wrote that the Philippines was ahead of other colonized Asian countries in education in the second half of the 19th century. The Philippines had higher literacy than other Asian countries, even

⁷⁴ The University of San Carlos (USC) in Cebu claims that they trace their foundation from the Colegio de San Ildefonso. However, a study made in 2011 by Fr. Aloysius Cartagenas of the Archdiocese of Cebu refutes this position. He explains that the latter ceased to exist in 1769 with the expulsion of the Jesuits from the country. The facility was not demolished by the civil government as per request of the Cebu bishop Mateo Joaquin Rubio de Arevalo as he was to found a diocesan seminary to be housed there. In 1783, a diocesan seminary, the Colegio-Seminario de San Carlos was founded taking over the facilities of San Ildefonso. In 1867, the Vincentian Fathers took over the administration of the college-seminary and started to offer secondary education for boys who are not intending to become priests. It is from this institution which was founded in 1867 that the USC traces its roots and not the Colegio de San Ildefonso. With the directive of the Holy See in 1924 decreeing that seminaries should only be for priestly training, the seminary and the college split. See Aloysius Cartagenas, “Which is the oldest university? revisiting the conflicting claims of the University of Santo Tomas, Manila and University of San Carlos, Cebu in light of the history of Seminario (Mayor) de San Carlos of Cebu,” in *Philippiniana Sacra* 46, no 136 (2011), 30-59.

⁷⁵ Dychitan, 7.

higher than Spain, according to data submitted by [William Howard] Taft to the US Congress.”⁷⁶

A foreign observer in the late 1800’s wrote that there were very few Filipinos who cannot read. And those Filipinos who were serving in the ships could write more easily than the British sailors who served in the same ships.⁷⁷ Bazaco, quoting Ferdinand Blumentritt, says, “If the general condition of the civilization of the Tagalogs, Pampangos, Bicolanos, Bisayans, Ilocanos, Cagayanes, and Zambaleños is compared to the European constitutional countries of Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria and Greece, the Spanish-Filipino civilization of the said Indian districts is greater and of larger extent than that of those countries.”⁷⁸

Conclusion

The Philippines was first seen as a base for foreign missionaries to evangelize the people of China. The failure to fully gain a foothold on the Middle Kingdom meant that the Philippines was for centuries became a both a sender and recipient of the flow of people, culture, ideas, traditions, customs and the like to and from both the East and the West thanks in part to the two and a half centuries of Manila-Acapulco Galleon Trade which linked this part of the world to the West. This has led to the local cultures being enriched by the foreign cultures that come to the Philippine shores. Thus, the Malayo-Polynesian culture and tradition present in the country were enriched with Spanish and Mexican cultures to name a few.

⁷⁶ Pio Andrade, Jr., “‘Padre Damaso’ and the friars: Myths vs reality,” *The Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 25 January 2016. Retrieved 7 July 2016 from <http://lifestyle.inquirer.net/220264/padre-damaso-and-the-friars-myth-versus-reality#ixzz4DhjzCSon>.

⁷⁷ Cf. Gutierrez, *Historia de la Iglesia en Filipinas*, 141. The original text reads “Hay muy pocos Filipinos que no saben leer, y yo he observado siempre que los hombres de Manila que sirven a bordo de barcos y componen su tripulación pueden escribir su nombre en los articulos del barco con más facilidad que los marinos británicos que sirven a bordo de los mismos barcos.”

⁷⁸ Ferdinand Blumentritt, *La Solidaridad* Oct 1899 in Evergisto Bazaco, OP, *History of Education in the Philippines*. (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Press, 1953), 63.

The Catholic missionaries' method of evangelization was to introduce Christianity through the local cultures. This can be traced to the influence of Antonio de Montesinos, the Dominican friar who denounced the injustice inflicted by the Spaniards to the natives of Hispaniola (present day Dominican Republic and Haiti), and Bartolome de las Casas the social reformer in the New World, to Manila's first archbishop Domingo de Salazar. Salazar's thrust was for the missionaries to treat the natives as equal to the Spaniards and to introduce Christianity to the Filipino people while putting into consideration the indigenous cultures and traditions.

By communicating the Christian faith in the said manner has resulted in a Christianity that is the natives could identify. It had effectively discovered and brought out the Christ in the culture. There were failures and abuses of Spaniards along the way but this does not diminish the fact that this approach was effective in spreading Christianity in this part of Asia.

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REPORTS

9th ARC Roundtable Conference "Religions in Digital Asia II: Realities, Experiences, Visions"

Centurion University of Technology and Management
Bhubaneswar, Odisha (India)
February 6-9, 2017

The 9th Roundtable Conference of the Asian Research Center for Religion and Social Communication (ARC) dealt with the theme "Religion in Digital Asia II: Realities, Experiences, Visions," and was hosted by the Centurion University of Technology and Management (CUTM) in Jatni, Bhubaneswar from February 6-10, 2017. Twelve research papers were presented by communication scholars and researchers from India, Bangladesh, Thailand, and the Philippines. This year's conference was a continuation of the 8th ARC Roundtable held at Saint John's University in Bangkok in 2016.

The conference formally opened with the welcome address of Dr. Chandrabhanu Pattanayak, director of the Institute of Knowledge Societies of CUTM. Dr. Binod Agrawal, the India coordinator of the ARC, also welcomed the delegates. Dr. Anthony Le Duc, svd, assistant director of the ARC, gave a report and overview of the previous roundtable. Dr. Abasara Beuria, former ambassador of India to the United States and Dr. D. P. Pattanayak also graced the occasion.

The opening of the roundtable coincided with the inauguration of the photograph exhibit on Jagannath of Puri. Dr. Franz-Josef Eilers, director of the ARC, cut the ribbon to mark the formal opening of the photo exhibit. He also led the lighting of the lamp along with the delegates and guests. Dr. Eilers shared in his message the meaning and significance of arts and culture and how they manifest the human expression of religiosity and convictions.

Dr. Chainarong Monthienvichienchai, chancellor of Saint John's University in Bangkok, Thailand presented the brief history of the ARC and delivered his message to commence the first session of the roundtable.

Dr. Eilers delivered the keynote address, which once again underlined the need for a more extensive and developed research on the relation between religion and social communication especially in view of new technological developments. All religions in Asia are “confronted” with the possibilities but also of developments of new ways of communicating in a digital world. How far are religions aware of this development? How do they react, see and develop possibilities of integrating existing spiritual groundings. How to develop them into a digitized world, which, however, does not exist without an analogue identity? In Religion books analogue and digital are to be related and developed in a (modern) new way to respond to basic human needs for the life of the community and also in view of the formation of students beyond technology and to equip them for a full life based and nourished by religion.

Over the next two days, the papers were presented in the following order:

	Title	Author	Affiliation/Origin
1	Digital Media and Concept of Time and Space in Multi-religious Sub-Continent: An Analysis	Dr. Binod C. Agrawal	Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad, India
2	Online Religion and Public Sphere in India	Dr. Gnana Patrick	University of Madras, India
3	Positive Contributions of Digital Media in Catholic Youth Movements: An Analysis	Mr. Leslin Bastian	MICA, Ahmedabad, India
4	Buddhist Environmentalism in the Digital Age	Dr. Anthony Le Duc, svd	Assumption University, Bangkok, Thailand; Saengtham College, Samphran, Thailand
5	Neo-Buddhism Goes Online: The Digital Revolution of India's 'Oppressed Dalit'	Dr. Keval J. Kumar	MICA, Ahmedabad, India

6	Goddess of the Nation: Semi-religious Iconography in the Digital Age	Dr. K. Unni Krishnan	Manipal University, Mangalore, India
7	Religious Sensitivity and Freedom of Speech and the Recent Trends of Killing Nastik (Atheists) in Bangladesh: An Overview	Dr. Md. Abdur Razzque Khan	University of Dhaka, Bangladesh
8	Expression and Formation of the religious identity in the networked publics: Exploring the case of the Malayali Muslim Migrants in the United Arab Emirates	Mr. Ahammed Junaid NP	MICA, Ahmedabad, India
9	Multi-religious Expressions of Non-Christian Foreign Students in a Christian School: The Digital Dimension	Mr. Jose S. Destura Jr. and Mr. Nelson V. Arnante	University of Santo Tomas Graduate School, Philippines; De La Salle Health Sciences Institute, Philippines
10	Mediatization of Jain Religion in 21 st century Digital Age: A Critical Appraisal of Jain <i>Diksha</i> Ceremony	Dr. Komal Shah	LJ Institute of Media and Communications, Ahmedabad, India
11	A Study on the Usage of Online Media by Selected Hindu Temples in South India	Dr. Padma Rani	Manipal University, India

12	The Role and Impact of Digital Technology Use in Pilgrimage in Thanjavur Region, South India: An Investigation	Dr. Sebastian Periannan	Saint Peter's Pontifical Institute, Bengaluru, India
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The participants visited the tribal museum of Odisha. This museum is a showcase of the different artifacts belonging to the descendants of tribal communities of Odisha. It appears that the State of Odisha India has the largest number of tribal communities in any single state of India. A dinner was also hosted at the museum by the director of the museum to formally welcome the participants.

On the afternoon of the second day, the participants visited the 12th-century Sun Temple in Konark, Odisha. Listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site, the temple was built by king Narasimhadeva I of the Eastern Ganga Dynasty in 1255. It is shaped like a chariot with intricate stone carvings. The temple is dedicated to the sun god Surya.

In the concluding plenary, Dr. Eilers expressed his gratitude to Dr. Pattanayak and Dr. Agrawal for the hosting and financially supporting the 2017 Roundtable.

The Vice Chancellor of CUTM, Dr. Haribandhu Panda expressed his thanks to ARC for trusting CUTM to host the roundtable. He is fully convinced of the need to inculcate among students the value and principles that emanates from our religious beliefs and convictions. As a sign of this conviction, he is soliciting support from the visiting educators and presenters on how to proceed with offering a mandatory subject which will be incorporated to their existing curricula.

The next ARC Roundtable is slated on October 8 to 11, 2018 at Saint John's University, Bangkok with the theme "Religious Communication in Multi-cultural Asia: Realities, Experiences, Challenges." The conference will look into the religious communication dimensions of different Asian culture and their ways of communicating.

Kenneth E. Rayco and Jose S. Destura, Jr.

ARI: Religion and Globalization Cluster

The Asia Research Institute (ARI) of the National University of Singapore envisions itself "to be a world-leading hub for research in Asia" (Vision) through "inspiring new knowledge and transferring insights into Asia" (Mission). Within these concerns and research there are several programs and activities including a cluster named "Religion and Globalization." In the 2016 annual report of the Institute, this cluster lists projects and activities which can be seen also in relation to social communication. Though there is no special program yet like the one of our Asian Research Center for Religion and Social Communication (ARC) at St. John's University in Bangkok.

Some of the ARI initiatives, however, can also be seen and might be contribute to our concerns. Thus the 2016 report (p. 36 f.) of cluster leader Prof. Kenneth Dean lists as central research questions for of one of their projects: "How do religion and development interact, engage and transform each other in the Asian region? Can engaging with religion in development processes help improve outcomes in areas such as poverty alleviation, conflict mitigation, disaster response and sustainable development? In what ways does engagement with religion present a challenge to established models both development practice and traditional conceptions of religion and its role in Asian societies?" On this concern also a public event was offered under the title "How to study religion in time of crisis? (June 28,2016).

Also the "established storyline of development's sudden invention by American and European powers in the Second World War" was questioned instead of considering the longtime history of Christian mission which "emerged as particularly important." "Some argue that development is a child of missionaries drawing direct moral and political and also organizational patterns, from earlier extensive extensive missionary activities in education, health, fundraising, and advocacy. Others contest this view. Regardless, it is becoming increasingly clear that an adequate understanding of the rise and operations of development must take into account a range of religious actors that have previously been ignored and sidelined." For this kind of concerns apparently several empirical case studies have been made in different Asian countries.

A further project for which a bigger grant has been given studies “Religions and NGOs in Asia” under the following four policy dimensions: “1. Policies of states towards religious NGOs; 2. Policies of development organizations...in engaging with religious NGOs;. 3. Policies and tactics of religious NGOs in responding to states and transnational actors and 4. Internal policies and practices of religious NGOs”.

The ARI Cluster on Religion and Globalization has 15 academically qualified members and in addition six associates which are mainly from the National University of Singapore. Unlike the Bangkok-based ARC, the Singapore cluster operates on a number of qualified (and paid) cooperators with quite a generous funding.

Franz-Josef Eilers, svd

NOTES

10th ARC Roundtable “Religious Communication in Multicultural Asia” October 8-11, 2018, St. John’s University, Bangkok

The 10th roundtable academic conference of the Asian Research Center for Religion and Social Communication (ARC) is planned for October 8 to 11, 2018 at St. John’s University in Bangkok. The theme will be: *Religious Communication in Multicultural Asia: Realities, Experiences, Challenges*.

The very broad theme will be subdivided into several sections asking e.g. what do we mean in Asia by “religious communication” or by ‘multicultural Asia’? Do Religions influence or even determine cultures and what does this mean for social communication? Who are the main persons or bodies in such communication? What hinders or also promotes religious communication and who are the main ‘promoters’? What kind of communication does exist in and for religions in Asian cultures? Which are the main institutions for religious communications and how do they operate? Any research done already in the field? Which one? Where? By whom? Any already existing academic studies: which ones? Where? What are urgent research needs?

ARC roundtables are academic conferences with a maximum of 20 Asian scholars presenting their papers and research proposals. Participation is only by invitation and depends on the quality and theme of papers presented. Participation is free, travel, however, has to be paid by the participants.

Church, Communication & Culture (CC&C): A New Periodical

Church, Communication & Culture is a new professional periodical of the Pontifical University of Santa Croce in Rome which is published since 2016 first in online editions and now in an apparently annual print edition as well, presenting the main articles also this way in cooperation with Routledge, and Taylor & Francis Group in Britain (Volume 1, 2016). The new periodical wants to “complement” the “consolidated work of other well-known Journals in the field... It attempts to add new topics and enlarge the communications perspective with a more holistic and interdisciplinary comprehension of religion and communication” (Editorial).

The editor of this first printed issue further qualifies that “the publication is especially referring to the Catholic Church: which is labelled as a ‘spiritual and moral power’” to “respond to the spiritual desires of human beings.” This seems to be also expressed in the first term of the title “church” which is specifically a Christian concept. The word “culture” in the title of the new periodical is labelled as “essentially to study and comprehend better the role that culture plays in its relationship with communication and religion:” to study and comprehend better—as the editor says—the role that culture plays in its relationship with the field of communication as well as with actors of communication and culture of such an importance as the catholic Church and other Churches.

Content

The periodical presents after an editorial several articles followed by case reports, an interview and some book reviews. All articles of this print edition were already part of two online editions last year. One special feature is and will be also in the future a longer overview of ‘Church Communication Highlights’ at the beginning of the year. Since the university program of Santa Croce is on Institutional Communication, one might expect especially contributions to this field also in view of so called ‘new media.’ The present volume thus carries an article *Accessing Changes in the Study of Religious Communities in Digital Religion Studies* by Heidi A. Campbell and Alessandra Vitullo and a case report on *Digital Leadership, Twitter and Pope Francis* by Juan Narbona.

Another feature, which is promised also for coming years, is a longer in-depth interview with selected scholars. Here it is a conversation with Clifford G. Christians (Urbana-Champaign) on Communication Ethics where he also confirms his “collaboration with some Catholic scholars and compares his idea of ‘faith and reason’ with that of an influential thinker” (Abstract). This report of the discussions with Clifford Christians is complemented apparently by the interviewer Robert Z. Cortes with some notes and explanations including also two catholic friends and cooperators of Christians, Frs. Robert A White, sj (Footnote No. 33) and Michael Traber, smb (no. 31,38) which do not respond to the quality which the new periodical promises. White was beside his short years as director of the London-based Centre for the Study of Communication and Culture and over some 20 years the director of the Interdisciplinary Communication Studies at the Gregorian University in Rome. Michael Traber (Footnote 31,38) was a Swiss Bethlehem Missionary and journalist in Rhodesia where he was expelled 1968 by the white government because of his defense of the ‘black’ population. Over many years he was a leading figure at the ecumenical World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) in London, where he also founded the still existing periodical *Media Development*. It was also he who developed with Christians the *Proto-norms* in ethics (Their joint book is mentioned in the interview but seems not to be in the reference list of publications).

While most of the contributions in the new periodical are in English, occasionally contributions in Spanish can also be expected. The publication is a welcome addition to a slowly growing literature on religion and social communication, though it seems to be confined to Christianity and especially Catholicism only.

BOOK NOTES

Christensen, Christa Lykke and Line Nybro Petersen (Eds.): *Being Old in the Ages of Mediatization*. In: *Nordicom Review, Journal from the Nordic Information Centre for Media and Communication Research. Special Issue 1/Volume 138*. Gothenburg (Sweden), 2017. 124 pp.

Nordicom, the Journal from the Nordic Information Center, Gothenburg, has published a special issue 'Being old in the Age of *Mediatization*.' The publication presents after the introduction eight contributions on the field with concerns like "healthy ageing and mediated health experiences," on the role of television productions for elderly, on "digital use and non-use" of Octo- and Nonagerians, on the role of public libraries and senior citizens, on the difference between "aging" and "being old" of elderly in a mediated world and the "media-generational positioning of elderly people."

Some of the contributions were presented at a seminar of the University of Copenhagen on "Becoming Old in the Age of *Mediatization*." The contributions reveal that "older people are in fact active media users: it also shows in depth how and for what purposes older people use different media and thus how media become a resource even in older age" (p.4).

With the rapidly increasing number of older people also in Asia a similar study should be initiated in respective Asian countries like the Philippines. Here the cultural and religious dimension has to be considered in a special way: Is there any relation between the strong 'reverence' for elders in Asian cultures also in view of new ways and means of social communication? Up to now there seem to be no studies yet in this direction which would be important in view of the rapid digitalization of the young also in many Asian countries. Here the initiative from the Nordic European countries should be a good stimulus!

The present publication beside presents the majority of authors from Scandinavian countries but also include a few scholars from German universities (Bremen, Augsburg) because the concerns of the studies are not limited to certain countries only.

BOOK REVIEWS

Averbeck-Lietz, Stefanie (Ed.). *Kommunikationswissenschaft im internationalen Vergleich (Communication Studies in international Comparison)*. Transnationale Perspektiven. Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien, 2017. 454 pp.

This book is of international interest despite the German title. In fact out of the fifteen articles of the publication eight are actually in English, so that also non-German speaking scholars can profit from it. The volume presents the history and academic development of the field of communication studies in different countries. In some cases this begins already with journalism and literature studies at the end of the 19th century and 'ends' today with a mushrooming but also growing consolidation of the field towards the end of the 20th century. This is reflected for Germany for example in the growth from only three (3) University Institutes in the field in 1960 (Berlin, Muenster, Muenchen) to some 25 academic institutes for communication studies at the beginning of the 21st century (p. 114). There is also a clear move from media to a broader field of communication and many parts of the book document beside a more cultural approach a sociology approach and especially the influence of Habermas' *public sphere* (less his *communicative Action*) on the development of the field.

The first part of the book presents studies of European countries like the United Kingdom, Netherlands, Flanders, Germany, France, Spain, Finland, Czechia, Austria and Switzerland. A second part of the book presents studies on selected non-European countries like the United States (*Faulty Reception: the Institutional Roots of U.S. Communication Research's Neglect of Public Sphere Scholarship*), Mexico (*Critical Concerns and Commercial Interests*), Brazil as well as communication study approaches in Egypt and in Japan from 1920 to the 1990s.

The book presents four research models: 1. The German Model with *Publizistik* ('to make public'), political communication. 2. The French Model related to semiotics, culture, interpersonal communication. 3. The British Model's cultural approach and 4. A Euro-American Model based on sociology, interdisciplinary and interpretative approach (p. 13).

The book documents the development of studies from single media into broader perspectives and the mutual international influence which is also reflected in outstanding personalities representing the field, some of them listed in respective country overviews at the end of the volume (p. 437 ff.) under the heading “Founding Fathers/Mothers” in the countries presented in the volume. Here also “relevant manuals, handbooks, encyclopedias” are listed as presented by the authors of the different country presentations in the body of the volume.

The quality of the country ‘reports’ of the book, however, differ in several ways—probably according to the personal interests of the writers: some are quite factual, straight forward while others seems to be a little bit “opinionated,” left leaning instead of being straight ‘objective.’ The influence of Habermas’ considerations on “public sphere” appear relatively often while the his “communicative action” seems to play a lesser role. The whole volume of 454 pages is not a dictionary or fully ‘objective’ presentation but more collection of useful data and insights from the view of the different authors.

From Asia, only Japan is presented and only for the years between 1920 to 1990s, showing a relatively strong European influence from original Journalism but also cultural studies. The press is presented as a means of spiritual exchange (p.413) but also the influence of cultural studies is documented (p. 424 ff.).

There seems to be no special consideration on the role and influence of religion in the developments presented though they might be considered indirectly by some parts within cultures.

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It would be a very challenging initiative to develop a similar presentation for at least some Asian countries which have more to ‘present’ than we might think. Thus the rich British-inspired journalism training and studies in India (Eapen) have developed into a much broader reach and field with quite a number of also academic publications which unfortunately seem to confine themselves mainly to the Indian market (Kumar, Pradip Thomas. Agrawal). Korea has quite an impressive number of—mainly US trained—Korean scholars who are limited partly in their academic expressions because

of language. Hong Kong has several universities offering research and studies in the field (Baptist, City...) and also Taiwan with Georgette Wang and her students made quite a contribution. There is even an academic group Pacific and Asian Communication Association with its own journal within the United States. Also mainland China is coming up with its own growing number of specialized studies.

The importance of Buddhism in the field is reflected in works from Sri Lanka and beyond though developing and presenting for example the concept of ‘mindful journalism’ (Dissanayke, Guanaratne). The original concept of ‘Development Communication’ was developed in the 1970s at the University of the Philippines in Los Baños (UPLB) by Nora Quebral before it was ‘highjacked’ by US scholars who further developed it in their way. Singapore develops into Asian communication studies especially with the *Asian Journal of Communication*.

Some Indonesian universities should take up the challenge especially under the perspective of Islam where there is already a growing literature also in view of the Internet and modern technical developments. The field of religion and social communication is addressed by our own Asian Research Center for Religion and Social Communication (ARC) at St. John’s University in Bangkok with this journal and the ARC book series published by the University of Santo Tomas Publishing House in Manila.

Franz-Josef Eilers, svd

John, Nicholas A. *The Age of Sharing*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017. 200 pp.

This study presents the history, developments and insights of the expression ‘sharing’ not only in a historical but also analytic way. “The purpose of this book and the analyses it offers,” the author writes, “is not to have the final word in scholarship about social media, forms of intimate communication or the sharing of economy. Rather, its purpose has been to explore a single word ‘sharing’ and through that to say something about how we live and hope to live today.” The insights from this are beside others that “the notion of ‘sharing’ today involves the expansion of the public at the expense of the private in a manner that is increasingly mediated by digital, for-profit enterprises” (p. 146).

The word ‘sharing’ was originally related to “divisions of material resources as constitutive of social relations” up to the early 21st century. This developed into ‘sharing’ as an ‘act of communication’ as exemplified in the use of the word by the ‘Oxford Group’ (p. 17), a Christian group from where the ‘Alcoholic Anonymous’ originated as a therapeutic group where ‘sharing of sins’ became a central method and part in handling respective addictions. Here is the insight and experience that there is not only the simple “communicative aspect” but also the “insight that sharing as communication that also implies a certain style of interpersonal relationship, one that is based on honesty, openness, mutuality, caring, equality and trust and fairness” (p.15).

As for social media, they seem not to reflect only a “culture of sharing” but rather a “sharing of culture” (p. 44) where the word becomes an “umbrella name given to the myriad activities we carry out online” (p. 52 ff.). It is this way that for example Facebook changed from their original text as “online directory” for making contact to “help you connect and share with people in your life” (2008). This study places the “watershed in terms at the years 2005-2007” (p.59). Now ‘sharing’ is considered not anymore as distribution only but rather as a “communication.” From here the author also concludes that after people experience a sense of connectivity ‘online’ they also wish to reproduce it also as an ‘offline’ experience which could have as well certain consequences for religious practices and experiences (cf. p. 88ff.).

In its latter part the study comes back to a more detailed description and handling of the ways of the Oxford Group’s practices of a Christian ‘sharing’

in ‘confessing’ to their group sins as a way of self-disclosure and “sharing about emotions” (p. 111) to conclude that sharing is “central to how we live today and especially to our interpersonal relationships” (p.111). Under the chapter “Sharing our Feelings” the author lists in this perspective three criteria which will have also a bearing on religion: 1. To be authentic and reveal one’s innermost self, 2. Contributing to strong interpersonal ties, and 3. being non-judgemental.

Especially this part of the study can lead to quite challenging questions and consequences for religions where for example also the ‘confession’ practices of the Roman Catholic Church come in, which considers ‘confession’ as a sacrament.

Other parts of this study like the considerations on relations to the Internet and the ‘sharing’ of economics and files consolidate the understanding of the word ‘sharing’.

This is not an easy to read book but it is an enriching experience in a more and more connected—shared—world.

Franz-Josef Eilers, svd

Campbell, Heidi A. and Stephen Garner: *Networked Theology, Negotiating Faith in Digital Culture*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016. 175 pp.

This book is not on Theology in the strict and academic sense as a special field of doctrines and teaching but rather on Pastoral Theology as the application of theological insight into daily living, here in a special way in the digital world. Thus the "theology" of the title refers more to religion in daily living especially under the perspective of "network" which plays already a role in general communication studies at least since Everett Rogers and D. Lawrence Kincaid's study on "Communication Networks" establishing their "convergence model of communication" in 1981. 'Network' is also shown in the title of this book referring to Christian Churches, institutions and other houses related with each other in a digital world.

Heidi A. Campbell, one of the two authors, is a well known pioneer in the field of 'online religion' while the other author Stephen Garner is a Theologian and head of a school of Theology in Auckland, New Zealand. The publication is an "active pursuit of making meaning of the world through the eyes of (Christian) faith" (p.10). Thus the authors say that their concern in publishing this book is not the meaning of faculties of Theology in universities or even theological schools, but their first object is "Theos" and even not the "meaning of the world." Thus they start with "identifying an authentic theology of new Media that relates to their faith communities" (p. 2).

The work starts with the concept of a "networked theology" because "the network has become a popular and powerful metaphor in digital culture." It offers a dynamic image to portray how the Internet functions, the nature of social interactions online work in an infrastructure supporting our information based society... Because the network has become an important framing concept, "we must," the book says "unpack the assumptions and expectations embedded within this image to see how they affect our understanding of doing theology within this context" (p.3 f.).

The authors see in the Internet a "new forum of society, a networked society which is characterized by four characteristics of being: personal, multi-user, multi-tasking and multi-threaded" in the understanding that all this things can be done more or less simultaneously (p. 9). It is important

to see that these networks are not hierarchical, which often must be said from existing church structures.

"Networked theology" is about "theology and media in dialogue which seeks to understand the Gospel in the light of the world in which we live and to faithfully communicate that understanding in both word and deed in this networked world" (p. 12).

The purpose of this book, the authors say, is "to bring new media studies and theory into conversing with theology in a new way" (p. 15). For this author Heidi Campbell who has researched in this field and developed appropriate studies over some 20 years is the proper person. Therefore this "effort to understand the impact of new media and network society in Christianity requires a more In depth and multidisciplinary conversation than is currently taking place within Christian scholarship" (p.16).

The highly qualified authors give a thorough presentation of the technical developments and possibilities under theological perspectives. While the first three chapters present more the technical developments and situations, the second half of the book—also in three chapters—position the new technical developments and possibilities into respective consequences for pastoral ministry.

The first part of the book highlights in chapter one "some of the negotiations that have taken place around technology and media" (p. 37). The following chapter tries to understand "New Media and the Network Society" (p.39 ff). The third chapter considers "'Networked Religion': Considering how Faith is lived in a Network Society" (p. 61 ff.). Here also the role of the 'prosumers' is explained—in contrast to the traditional producer' and consumer as the one who are "taught not to take what they are given at face value but rather to investigate, experiment with and even change reality in the light of their preferences" which enables them to "challenge the traditional media hierarchies and interpretations that come from established authorities" (p. 49) frequently prevailing in religious communities!

The "rise of religion online" since the 1980s is presented (pp. 62 ff) and it is shown how digital technologies "present opportunities and challenges how to relate to others." The question is asked "how we relate to others in a religious

culture where a “religious culture and landscape” is facilitated by “network society” which might flatten traditional hierarchies (p. 64). As key traits of these developments are listed: 1. A networked community; 2. “storied identities;” 3. Convergent practices; 4. Shifting authorities; and 5. ‘multisite realities.’ which are treated in more detail. The ‘multisite’ situation is beside others reflected in young people who “often have multiple involvements of varying depth in a variety of groups, allowing them to move between and explore different forms of religious experience without holding firm commitments to any one group or ideological orientation”(p.67). For them the internet becomes a tool to perform the religious persona they seek to portray...”

The study states that “religion in a network society exists at the intersection between the online and offline worlds, between the digital and the embodied view and practice of religion” (p. 78).

After this first part the book presents in its second part—also with three chapters—the ‘applications’ of these insights into pastoral realities and pastoral challenges starting with the biblical question: Who is my neighbor in digital culture? (p. 79 ff.) Here theological considerations on ‘neighborhood’ starting from Jesus’ teaching are presented as a “theologically informed response to digital media” (p. 97). Based on 15 different case studies Campbell found out that even beyond Christianity there was not so much the religious tradition that dictated the particular response to technology.. but it was rather the groups’ goal, mission and core values that guided its response to technology” (p. 101). This might also indicate further directions for similar studies and reflections in other religions in their response, use and application of a networked digital society.

The approach and considerations of this small and professionally solid volume are precise, well founded and solid in a way which is not easily matched by other publications trying to consider the relation between religion and digital community. The book must be considered as one of the most informative, balanced and at the same time practical presentations for “negotiating Faith in digital culture.” The presentations are backed up with an eleven page bibliography and an index which helps to further study and even go beyond common sources.

Franz-Josef Eilers, svd

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