

Fact Sheet:

Religion in the Media: An International Comparison: Religion in an Ordinary Day

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Project Description and Goals:

The main objectives for the research project were:

- a) The development of an internationally comparable data set on religion and the media and to use these data sets for comparative analysis, e.g., key public controversies involving religion and the secular.
- b) To develop and implement strategies of knowledge exchange between international researchers examining religion in the public sphere.
- c) To disseminate the findings arising from comparative research on the portrayal of religion in the media.

Methodology:

- a) On September 17, 2013; September 17, 2014; and, September 17, 2015, the research team collected 23 newspapers (69 now in total) in their respective countries. The newspapers were chosen to represent national, regional, and local representation in each country. The goal of the project is to consider how religion is portrayed in media ‘on an ordinary day.’
- b) Team members reviewed newspapers for any form of religious activity. This included news stories, editorials and comments, reader responses, reviews, obituaries, advertisements, images, classified ads and public notices. Each item was coded and briefly summarized by the team member.
- c) Summary sheets and newspapers were sent to Dalhousie University in Halifax. Each identified article was scanned, turned into a searchable PDF file and uploaded onto “Dal Space” based upon the country of origin and the newspaper.

Student Involvement:

- Ashley Doyle, Dalhousie University
- Enqi Weng, RMIT University
- Haley Farrar, Dalhousie University
- Shannon Ramsey, Dalhousie University

Results:

With two years of data collected we began a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the material. Each country is working independently at this time, examining and analyzing the material for trends and patterns at the national, regional, and local level. After the third year of data is collected, coded, scanned, and uploaded to the database, we will begin a transnational comparison of different forms of religious representation.

Dissemination:

An edited volume will be developed based upon this research project. The first section of the book will examine each nation and the context of their papers, trends in representation, and analysis. Each team will write collaboratively for their country section. This section will also examine methodological issues, the

structure of the data collection, the coding framework and its context, and limitations of the study. The second section of the book will examine key thematic issues that arose when we examined conventional, common, and secular/sacred representations of religion. So far, these issues include conflict and security, gender and sexuality, alternative and minority religions, education, and law and criminality. The thematic issues will be written by various team members and will be discussed further after the last set of data is collected.