

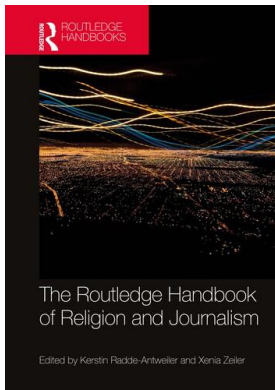
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GLOBALIZATION AS A TREND FOR JOURNALISM

Researchers' perspectives¹

Liane Rothenberger and Cornelius B. Pratt

Among the components of the religious media theory, the phenomenon of globalization is also relevant. Globalization should be clearly separated from universalism or what has sometimes been called “globalism.” Universalism is a process which depends on mutual communication among the nations, while globalization violates the concept of the nations and the boundaries among them.

(Hosseini 2008, 66)

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the interplay among three concepts – globalization, journalism, religion – strictly within the context of global journalism research guided by micro-, meso- and macro-level considerations. It is organized into six sections. The first provides an overview of globalization and global journalism and analyzes 21st-century journalism challenges that emanate from globalization. The second section analyzes the intersection of journalism and religion. The third focuses on environmental and ideological influences against which globalization theories and global paradigms are examined. The fourth examines religious content distributed through the news media, based on the premise that religion is as much an influence on journalism as are globalizing forces. The fifth explains theoretical approaches that focus on the actor level (micro), the organizational level (meso) and the societal level (macro). Finally, it presents two case studies – Hosseini's (2008) and Brink-Danan's (2015) – as coda to the evolving landscape of the interplay among globalization, journalism and religion in research inquiries. To conclude this chapter, we briefly present our suggestions for the way forward in light of evolving influences of globalization on journalism and religion.

Globalization and global journalism

Globalization in its various forms is both pervasive and ubiquitous. Its global impact is a foregone conclusion, as we observe firsthand increasing economic and trade interdependence among nations and growing multilateral agreements on the global scene.

As journalists gather and report the news from far-flung locations, they avail themselves continually of opportunities to contribute to their audiences' worldviews. In an era in which concerns over the authenticity of news are rife, one's global perspectives could be the outcome of the coalescence of the journalist's political ideology, professional practices and religious fervor. Globalization also affords all parties to the communication experience avenues to expand and rejigger their intercultural sensitivities. For audiences at the receiving end of the global news flow, there is a wellspring of news and feature stories, information, entertainment and lifestyles, also in the field of religious content, from which to choose.

In an investigation of web reporters' perceptions of their work in religious-cum-insular communities, journalists, as social actors, tend to forgo scoops and internalize their religious values and communal ideals (Golan and Mishol-Shauli 2018). This journalistic reality is fraught with challenges of, and prospects for, both the practice of and the research in global journalism.

Featherstone and Lash (2002, 1) write about globalization as "an increasingly influential paradigm in the human sciences". Our article presents globalization-related approaches such as modernization and imperialism theories and analyzes them in terms of their applicability to journalism research and to the specific issue of religion. Further, neo-institutionalist, systems-theoretical and action-theoretical approaches are related to the globalization of journalism and (dominant Western) religion and considered with regard to their benefits for empirical research. A distinction is made between religious content distributed through non-religious and religious mass media *and* religion and media as two interacting systems.

Global journalism is, as Reese (2008, 242) notes, a global news arena "where it is not expected that shared national or community citizenship is the common reference uniting newsmakers, journalists, and audience." Wars, the Olympics, natural disasters, pope coronations and religiously motivated terrorist attacks are classified as *world media events*, global crises and challenges such as climate change, pandemics, famines and stock market crashes easily find their way onto the global news agenda. Some of these crises are constructed and provided with a global frame by the news media; primarily, however, they are communicated *via* the media (Cottle 2009). Evolvi (2018) describes Pope Francis' election in 2013 as a global religious media event. In her analysis of Italian newspaper articles and television broadcasts about both the Popes Josef Ratzinger and Jorge Mario Bergoglio, she discovers three prominent patterns in the coverage of the papal election: "personalization, popularization, and globalization" (Evolvi 2018, 220) – Pope Francis being the first pope from a non-European country. The papal elections as global pre-planned media events stand in contrast to unplanned events like killings and disasters. Counter-forces within the social media world, providing unedited information, may deal with events that are repressed by traditional media. This religious transnationalism blends into the conception of global connectivity and shared online identity discourses.

Berglez (2008, 848) introduces the concept of global journalism that "concerns the journalistic representation of complex relations". Instead of focusing on particular identities, spaces or political, religious and cultural contexts, he argues that global journalism represents these concepts as "something transnational and ultimately global" (Berglez 2008, 850), in that it sheds an outlook, e.g., on global power relationships and the interrelatedness of processes in different parts of the world. Instead, a "national outlook puts the nation-state at the center of things when framing social reality" (Berglez 2008, 847–848) and within it religion.

According to Cottle (2009), globalization arises not primarily from reports on transnational humanity and global social rapprochement, but from the globalization of crises – that is, from global threats that we must face together. Further planned major events such as sports competitions and World Church Days correspond to the type of world events, which are also important in the context of systems theory, since they can be understood as

certain artificial, repeatable, planned and deliberately established events as a form of structural formation in social systems. And if these events are ‘world events’, then world society seems to be the social system that uses the establishment of world events as a form of structural formation in itself.

(Stichweh 2008, 20, translated by the first author)

The journalism system embraces and incorporates these world events. In contrast to natural world events such as natural disasters it is no longer up to the journalism system itself to declare an event as global, because most planned, often cyclical world events, already bear such an identification in their names: World Cup, World Exhibition, Winter Olympics. Journalism, as a social system, then, includes a truly global audience (Stichweh 2008, 24). Thus, we see here the interplay between journalism and globalization, which can be located at different levels and structures: in media content; in selection, production and reception processes; in historical sequence; in local, regional, national and global circles; in different social classes and cultural contexts. To find a suitable structure for a cultural practice, for example, religion, we adopt a three-part analysis: the actor (micro), the organization (meso), the society (macro).

Journalism and religion

The realms of both ‘religion’ and ‘the media’ are themselves transforming and are being transformed. Religion today is much more a public, commodified, therapeutic, and personalized set of practices than it had been in the past. At the same time, the media (movies, radio, television, print and electronic media and more) are collectively constituting a realm in which important projects of ‘the self’ occur.

(Hoover 2002, 2)

Religious institutions benefit from widespread strategic communication (Wiesenberg 2019). They use ample possibilities such as social media, like the pope’s twitter account, and they have their own institutional body, e.g., the Vatican PR agencies like Vatican Radio, Vatican TV, Vatican Internet and the Holy See Press Office (Cohen 2018b, 3).

Thus, religion and media, in this respect, are converging, constructing and shaping the identities of individuals, societies and peer groups – and even, as Keegan and Morris (2018) note, fomenting religious divides. The fields intersect in different respects and these mutual impacts and effects of religion and journalism on each other have an influencing context, that is globalization. Even though, in general, journalists try to separate between the public and the private – and religious convictions are counted among the private – the media transport the public face of religion and transmit information about religious institutions and personnel. Above all, global digital media offer enormous distribution possibilities for religious messages. Ayatollahy (2008, 35) even notes that “globalization, defined broadly, cannot be fully understood by researchers without attention to religion”, e.g., because of the globalized

media's ability to spread fundamentalist content. Local and global spheres get blurred. Cohen argues that

... if in the past, a person's religious beliefs were regarded as a private matter and, therefore, shunned by reporters – this has moved 180 degrees in the opposite direction. Not only is religion covered by traditional media, but audiences share their religious beliefs online no less than other areas of social identity. It certainly brings religion—as well as the way the media themselves cover it—onto the public sphere. So if the media map of religion is being transformed, it also raises ethical questions about participatory journalism like online religion, as well as social media's role in the process of the construction of religious identity.

(Cohen 2018a, 11–12)

In Europe and the Anglo American world region, many countries broadcast (Christian) religious services. At the very beginning, Protestant magazines such as *Christian Century* condemned television in general as something detrimental to society's value system (Rosenthal 2002). In any event, religious broadcasts such as the so-called “televangelism” (Hoover 2002, 1) came onto the scene in the 1970s. Thus, public services are made available in private settings. The luxury of not having to be present in church allows a combination of religious service and private action such as drinking beverages while watching televised services (Linderman 2002). Saeidabadi identifies three major developments that

... have furthered the process of globalization in communications and, in turn, contributed to the globalization of electronic media. These are digitization, convergence, and deregulation.

(Saeidabadi 2008, 85)

Saeidabadi (2008) explains that digital techniques had an impact on every step of the production process, that converged newsrooms and more exchange with the audience were new developments and that no cross-border common regulation policies had been established. This leads to the question of whether the media and within these religious programs are dominated primarily by market forces or by ethical norms and values. If the latter, media producers might view religious content as symbolism in global media that “might be used as a resource in the shaping of identity within local groups” (Lundby 2002, 328). When transmitting religious content, it can be done, on the one hand, as simply mediated religion, which is media as a mere tool for transmitting religious teachings. Alternatively, as religious media per se, they can apply the unique characteristics of the media “to achieve religious objectives, ultimate goals, and divine aspirations, rather than monopolistic teachings and beliefs of religion” (Hosseini 2008, 67). In this regard, then, it does not matter whether the media are publicly or privately owned or owned by religious institutions; the important consideration, however, is the way they create and disseminate religious content.

Globalization theories: diversity, not unity; nation versus culture

It is not surprising that a single, exclusive globalization theory does not exist. The many different definitions of globalization have a small common core:

There is a certain banal agreement that globalization means greater interconnectedness and action at a distance, but beyond such generalities theories differ in fundamental

ways. To take one egregious example, the leading theorists are divided over the relation between globalization and that other central contemporary concept in social theory, namely modernity.

(Sparks 2007, 126)

This modernity refers to the economic-capitalist, social, political and cultural realms.

At present, and this is the main criticism of debates to date, globalization is seen primarily from a Western point of departure. Such debates were in part fueled by globalization theorists, some of whom assumed the role of dissidents of nation-state sociology that views critically the pivoting of analyses of global society to the nation-state as a principle of order:

As a 'container', the state provides a territorial unit in which statistics on economic and social processes and situations are systematically collected. In this way, the categories of state self-observation become the categories of empirical social sciences.

(Beck 1997, 50–51, translated by the first author)

This refers as well to central categories of observation and analysis of journalism. Global journalism, on the other hand, does not operate only within national borders. Such journalistic preference – or bias – also affects journalism research: Not only are most theories from the West, but to answer questions of globalization, typical research subjects such as *CNN* or *BBC* are often used.

Not only is power seen as emanating from the West to the rest but so too is cultural influence, with media seen as the conduit for Western notions of fashion, taste, politics, and modernity.

(Curtin and Shah 2010, 3)

In addition, Islam, as a quite dominant religion in Western media now, is seen from almost purely Western and Christian perspectives: as *the other*. Global (Western) media companies are presented as innovation factories that challenge local, regional and national competitors to adapt in terms of formats, content and even administrative structures. The origin of these views lies in the modernization theory of the 1950s and the 1960s

... when it was suggested that exposure to mass media from the West would democratize nations and modernize the economies of Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East.

(Curtin and Shah 2010, 3)

Figure 25.1 illustrates this trajectory of globalization theories and shows the sequence in which further approaches have developed. These are systematically described below.

In contradistinction to modernization theory is that on media imperialism, which, as Curtin and Shah assert, is

... an approach that grew influential during the 1970s by positing that Western media subject populations around the world to an increasingly homogenized set of values that serve the interests of Western capitalist institutions. According to this critique,

Global Dominance Paradigm		Global Public Sphere Paradigm	
Modernization theory	Media imperialism	Hybridization/ Glocalization	Interconnectivity/ Participation
1950s and 1960s	1970s	1990s	2000s

Figure 25.1 Phase model illustrating (periodical) apogees and paradigm affiliations of globalization theories.

subordinate countries come to embrace Western media and the values they promote, such as individualism, consumerism, and commodity exchange. Rather than uniting people for positive social change, media imperialism fosters an exploitative global system that offers few opportunities for genuine advancement.

(Curtin and Shah 2010, 3–4)

Following Kuhn’s (1976, 32) paradigm concept, this old school can also be called an imperialist paradigm: The (Western-led) media know what is good for recipients in developing countries and communicate their standards, worldviews, expertise and religion. According to Curtin and Shah (2010), the participatory paradigm, on the other hand, sees the possibility of giving emerging societies a voice in the media and finding their own way. Rahimi (2018, 367) uses the example of the Shia online news agency *Shafaqna* to point to “an increasingly participatory culture within religious institutions.” He sees this agency still in line with the long tradition of education and public service to a transnational audience by Islamic news agencies. Yet, as an evolution, he sees that the agency for Islamic online news is

... integrating network strategies with the employment of new technologies so as to consolidate transnational associational ties within a long tradition of religious networks revolving around clerical authority.

(Rahimi 2018, 367)

In view of globalization, the media are not assumed to have a direct influence, but an indirect one, in that developing societies open up to the content available through the so-called world media and, e.g., get motivated to strive for liberation and to turn against overdue authoritarian regimes. The approaches are based on the transfer of Western ideas and see globalization as dominated by Western democracies.

Cottle distinguishes between the Global Dominance paradigm and the Global Public Sphere paradigm:

Studies within the “global dominance” paradigm generally work within and update the critical tradition of political economy while those conducted under the global public sphere paradigm represent a more diffuse grouping of recent disciplinary infusions from cultural studies, anthropology and approaches to the global “network society”.

(Cottle 2009, 28)

The Global Dominance paradigm (e.g., Boyd-Barrett 1997, Thussu 2019) approaches global power issues from the perspective of determining geopolitical and (market) economic structures and interests. The Global Public Sphere paradigm (representatives are, e.g., Appadurai 1996, Volkmer 2003), on the other hand, focuses on the emergence of cosmopolitan citizenship, transnational cultural flows and assignments of meaning, mobility and networks. *CNN International*, for instance, is able to promote cosmopolitanism through its international approach and new journalistic forms.

Nederveen Pieterse (1998) views globalization as neither unification and standardization nor as Westernization of the world in modernity; he argues that globalization should be seen as a process of hybridization that creates a global *mélange*. It is advancing in a wide variety of fields, such as politics, religion, economics and communication, since there are as many types of globalization as there are agents, dynamics and impulses that drive it forward (Nederveen Pieterse 1998). Similarly, Hepp (2006, 10) asserts that such (transcultural) networks have a specific “communicative connectivity.”

The term globalization by no means refers exclusively to something large comprehensive at the macro-level, but can also take place on a small, local and micro-level:

... ‘globalization’ asserts the global- in-the-local, that is to say that the local is suffused and pervaded by a global which simultaneously extracts and selectively disseminates the local.
(Boyd-Barrett 1997, 15)

That is one reason Robertson (2002) introduced the term *glocalization*, which links the poles *global* and *local*. *Glocalization* means, for example, that companies operate globally, but adapt and market their products (trans)locally. Globalization is not considered a loss of cultural, religious or local identity, but can be described in this alternative view as hybridization, which means the active process of mixing resources of different cultural contexts (Hepp 2006, 76). Hybridization can thus be understood as the nourishment of identity from elements of different cultural origins, which is also visible in the field of religion and religious practices.

Most researchers view globalization as oscillating between different poles; however,

... (t)he binary logic which seeks to comprehend culture via the mutually exclusive terms of homogeneity/heterogeneity, integration/disintegration, unity/diversity, must be discarded.

(Featherstone 1990, 2)

The global media world should no longer be divided into dichotomies such as “global-local, West-rest, elite-ordinary” (Cottle 2009, 166) – and, one might add to those divides, Christianity-Islam. A news-distribution system that historically places Europe and the USA at the center and the *recipient countries* at the periphery is inconsistent with the current situation, even though the concept of the nation state cannot be entirely refuted (Sparks 2007).

Religion in the media

The media are a conduit for assembling congregants, for expanding the number of adherents, for undermining contrary faiths, and for expressing and projecting one’s religious beliefs. On the heels of televangelism as a global practice, news and social media sites became a veritable force for contributing, through religion, to unity, tolerance and national culture

(Potts 2018) and even to the polarization, the disruption to secularism and to cultural reality (Abubakre 2018, Sommier 2018). In this way, cross-border journalism, user-generated content, satellite television and above all the Internet offer new opportunities for an increase in the number of contents dealing with religious issues and for a better mutual understanding. The religion-media nexus is, thus, an enduring, even if an occasional, barometer of sorts of public sentiment, more so in a global context. In the following sections, we distinguish between religious content distributed through non-religious and religious media; thereafter, we analyze religion and the media as two interacting systems.

Religion in non-religious media

The first issue that is apparent in a discussion of media and religion is ownership of news media by non-religious institutions. Religious content does not have a significant presence in today's (Western) programs; in predominantly Muslim countries, however, it is a staple of daily news feeds. In Indonesia, for example, national television stations broadcast Islamic programs one to two hours daily and allot up to one hour to other religions (Birowo 2003). The religious groups who produce these programs do not have to pay for airtime, only production costs. In this regard, we already have a hybrid form of religion in the media as it is not religious information produced by independent broadcasters but by religious institutions that use the independent media as transmitters but do not own a channel themselves. Most programs are in talk show and interview formats or in a monologue format (Birowo 2003). Birowo presents the *Penyejuk Imani Katolik (PIK) program*, produced by the Catholic institution *Studio Audio Visual (SAV) Puskat* in Yogyakarta, as a case study. Since 1995, this program has been aired by *Indosiar TV* twice monthly, on Sunday afternoons. Before that, starting in 1969, *SAV Puskat* produced religious content through other media forms such as audiocassettes, comics or photo novellas (Birowo 2003). The first television activities were educational: promoting "justice, peace, and the integrity of creation, based on and inspired by Christian traditions, without ignoring what people of other religions have to say" (Birowo 2003, 88). The *Studio*, for instance, invited a Muslim scholar (Ulama) to present his opinions on certain social problems (Birowo 2003). The problems caused by globalization may lead to a renewal of religion(s):

The global problems of modernity along with the inability to create a better life has led many to rebuff secular attitudes and approaches. This, in turn, may lead to a re-establishment of religion.

(Ayatollahy 2008, 40)

If that were the case, the amount of religious content in (non-religious) media will become apparent.

Religion in religious media

The difference between secular and religious media is also visible as the latter can use their own outlets strictly for educational purposes without borders. Religious scholars and clerics can get in touch with parishioners and interested people worldwide and vice versa. Because global media enable encounters of geographically dispersed people, identity construction no longer is limited to on the spot experiences. For instance, in Africa, transnational influence of former colonial church structures is enriched by "American electronic-church 'televangelism'" (Lundby 2002, 329). Television broadcasts such as the Christian Broadcasting

Network's *The International 700 Club* are watched, for example, by local communities in Zimbabwe as a modern way for constructing identity and for obtaining a feeling of belonging, "an offering of global interconnectedness" (Lundby 2002, 338), because "they experience that their problems in handling modern life are somewhat similar to those portrayed in the program" (Lundby 2002, 338). This is especially important as Africans were forced by colonialism into adopting hybrid identities and supporting cultural fragmentation.

Beyond Christians, Buddhists and all other religious factions, it is now possible to operate one's own media and communication channels, but, as Ayatollahy (2008, 40) stresses, Muslims attach importance to the possibility of disseminating unfiltered information into and within powerful Western countries. "Petitions and publicity, such as the boycott of anti-Muslim American companies, are examples of such activities" (Ayatollahy 2008, 40). Other influences of globalization include the change of roles (formerly shaped and dominated by religious laws and beliefs). For example, the first newspaper by an Iranian woman was published in 1910. Today, there are "hundreds of women [...] working on dozens of female-oriented periodicals as well as on other newspapers" (Shahidi 2002, 70). If, in the beginning, a female publisher on receiving a publishing license averred not to cover political topics, globalization has engendered more interest in global politics and urbanization, an increase in literacy and in participation of women in various sectors of the economy (Shahidi 2002). This suggests that globalization of journalism is dependent and will always be dependent on openness of a certain (religious) regime. However, global networks are growing stronger and more expansive and may not be controlled easily. Thus, communication that is relatively impersonal – that is, without robust opportunities for face-to-face engagement – contributes to disseminating thoughts and information and to building interpretive communities that are no longer limited to borders, making them also vulnerable to influence by media owned by religious institutions.

Religion and the media as two intersecting systems

Media and religious systems separately and collaboratively seek to provide solutions to social problems. Audiences and congregations seek the support of both systems in managing life's daily challenges, resulting in a mutual influence of the two systems. Cultural and, within them, religious practices no longer belong to a certain territory but are re-territorialized in other environments. According to Ayatollahy (2008), mass media distribute and enhance values; but religious values, he says, often contrast with those of neo-liberalism and globalization, which promote individualism, pleasure seeking and goal attainment. Westerners, due to their secular state systems, often neglect religion as an important part of social life that exerts influence on the media; and journalists sometimes experience ethical dilemmas over decisions of their media companies whose foci are on the next clickbait.

Because of the domination of the West or the Global North and a USA media industry that places the influence of media content above the influence of religion, some scholars criticize a loss of identity in Western societies (e.g., Ayatollahy 2008). In times of global mobility and interconnections, media can serve populism or they can promote global diversity. With *kebhinekaan*, the cultural diversity in Indonesia, in mind, Dzuhayatin opines that

... global media have a huge impact on Muslim communities that are marginalized in terms of the relationship of world power as well as in the accesses to capital and technology.

(Dzuhayatin 2003, 75)

Media are dominated by certain worldviews because media staffers have their own values, religions, beliefs and norms that – consciously or unconsciously – affect their behaviors. Journalistic mass media tell us about the sociopolitical order, about social life, culture, figures of identity, as religion does, too. That the media system distributes religious content and that the religious institutions use the media to fulfil their missions are additional substantiations for the interconnectedness of these two systems.

The next three subsections will now address the influence of globalization on the media system on the three societal levels: micro, meso, macro.

Micro-level: journalists and recipients as actors in the globalization process

Mobile life and a strong activism, as characteristics of modernity (Stichweh 2008), are consistent with a view of globalization aligned with an actor-theoretical perspective, because globalization is now often described as a process and the outcome of interactions. Global theories of action support the assumption that all social action takes place within an overarching framework: the capitalist world system (Beck 1997). Transnational spheres of action arise from actors who produce and maintain them. At the same time, Beck (1997) continues, the actors are also the starting point of a new cosmopolitanism, which manifests itself in fragmented identities and transnational morality, thinking, for example, of the reactions to the prophet Muhammad caricatures. When audiences are exposed to the same images, contents and mind sets, arguably a homogenization of cultures occurs. The influence of the media on global culture and the global public sphere continues to be at the heart of the sociological debate on communication (Volkmer 2003). In this regard, we also have to consider the digital divide (Hafez 2005, Thussu 2019). This divide engenders inequality of actors (communicators and recipients alike) in different living environments, which require different levels of globalization and cosmopolitan actions. Moreover, we must remember that the technical infrastructure, language skills and legal accessibility are prerequisites for the reception of global media offerings.

Cultural studies emphasize the context of the reception of journalistic content and the recipients' own experiences that are linked to the local place and to its prevalent traditions and habits; this would lead to a re-localization of the products of the global cultural industry (Wagner 2001). These transnational social spaces (Beck 1997), wafting between the global and the local, are well suited to the micro-level of research on religion and media, as they place equal emphases on the mobility and *glocal* living circumstances of both recipients and producers of religious contents. Hepp (2006), however, states that prime time on television is rather equipped with national or culturally close products than with foreign ones. Program decisions are the responsibility of individual actors, who are certainly involved in institutional structures and overarching horizons of orientation. Working in a primarily national or rather global company has an impact on the journalists' work. However, it should not be forgotten that journalists live in their own cultural milieus through their socialization and through other factors that cannot be ignored in everyday workplace.

Meso-level: globalization of media companies

Most globalization processes are analyzed at the level of media organizations (Hafez 2005, Thussu 2019). Many media companies are jumping on the globalization bandwagon because they expect this to improve their revenues. This aspect makes economic theories seem suitable for understanding globalization phenomena at the meso-level. Economic theories

explain globalization primarily from a market-economy perspective: Here, the market is conceived as the only reliable mechanism that promotes prosperity and any segmentation or isolation is interpreted as a loss of prosperity (Prisching 2007). In terms of journalism, this means that only global market structures could solve the current problems of the media. In this context, then, the economy is conceived as an engine of globalization.

Further, if religiously active and committed people own publishing houses, this might have an influence on news-selection and content-framing processes adopted by corporate journalists.

Macro-level: influence of the systems

Globalization processes can be understood at the macro-level from a systems-theory perspective. A global political system, a global economic system or a global scientific system exists; however, it is often subject to fluctuations that point again in the direction of regionality (Luhmann 1997). Whether a global religious system exists is still a bone of contention. Rühl (1995) applies this perspective to journalism and describes it as a structured social system and a differentiated subsystem of world society. However, system theoreticians do not satisfactorily explain the previously raised antagonism that journalism, in addition to its global characteristics, operates structurally and functionally clearly on a national or at least culturally or linguistically limited level. Because journalism still remains bound to national publics, national journalistic standards and national topics (Scholl and Weischenberg 1998), the benefits of a priori modelling journalism as a global system are questionable.

The Internet makes global journalism possible and changes it. Laws and regulations enacted by states follow the rapidly developing global market. Globalization can therefore mean an impairment of national sovereignty or its altiloquent projection of that sovereignty by a nation-state, even as the latter no longer has absolute power over certain networks (in terms of technology and content). The field of technology should once again be emphasized here as a very decisive prerequisite and determinant of globalization in journalism in the field of religion. “In many ways, technological change is the most important factor in the extensity and intensity of transnational communication” (Thussu 2019, xiv). Technological innovations made it possible to release the communication process territorially and to create channels that are no longer bound to face-to-face communication within parishes.

Two case studies: Hosseini (2008) and Brink-Danan (2015)

Instead of presenting a single case study in this penultimate section, we introduce Hosseini’s three-part approach to religion and media. Hosseini contends that studies range from total acceptance to total rejection of the media: Total acceptance in this regard

... considers the nature of the media as a mere tool and instrument of religion; total rejection considers the nature of the media, television in particular, as contradictory to the nature and ultimate objective of religion and religious inclination.

(Hosseini 2008, 57)

To consider the media as a functional tool for the dissemination of religious ideas is propagated by *functionalist approaches* (Hosseini 2008, 57); according to this, religious institutions should avail themselves of the media. *Essentialist approaches*, on the other hand, state the independent cultural and historical nature (or essence) of the media (independent of the development and

essence of sacred religion and not serving as a tool for mankind), but they admit that there can be mutual interactions even though in general, the two seem incompatible (Hosseini 2008, 59). An *interactive approach* calls for interaction between the social institutions of religion and media (Hosseini 2008, 62) as both belong to the wider concept of culture.

As a solution and an alternative to these contradicting approaches, Hosseini recommends *religious pluralism through the media*:

Based on this religious pluralism theory, the way the media interacts with religion is based on the acceptance of all religions as divine manifestations of oneness. Thus, in religious media, instead of paying attention to the exclusive teachings of religion, their ultimate objectives, goals, and meanings have to be taken into consideration. This sort of attention to religious media could even take place through non-religious and irreligious programs. For instance, if a fully entertaining program, piece of music, or video clip is aimed to fulfill the main objectives of religion (bestowing the meaning and direction to human life), such programs are included in the general category of religious media, even though explicit religious teaching is not distributed.

(Hosseini 2008, 68)

Even though this is a broad approach to describing the goals of religion, it might be a useful starting point. Similar to Hosseini, Abdullah (2003) writes about peaceful co-existence and intercultural dialogue that should be promoted by the media through different actions such as training of journalists to obtain a better sensitivity to the other; exchange visits of journalists, writers, filmmakers, artists; and filmmaking with both Muslim and non-Muslim actors and actresses. Whether the role of the media in stimulating and constructing an inter-religious dialogue will increase, remains to be seen.

Brink-Danan (2015, 247) views “lived cosmopolitanism” of journalists also in the “awareness of multiple audiences, some of whom might be antipathetic ones.” He builds his opinion on a case study of the Jewish diaspora in Turkey. Religious communities of the diaspora are a phenomenon of increasing mobility and globalization, entailing a global media ecology. The parallel to religious communities of the diaspora developing minority newspapers are somehow an anti-trend of coming to a cosmopolitan worldwide-shared meaning and media culture. However, despite their smallness and link to the local environment, they reflect global issues and challenges.

The Jewish press flourished in the Ottoman Empire as Jews were more deeply integrated into the Turkish society. Today, there remains only *Şalom* as a Jewish newspaper in Turkey. Published in Turkish, it runs a weekly page in Ladino (Judeo-Spanish). There are few Jews living in Turkey today. Their number stands at about 18,500 (Jewish Virtual Library 1998), making them a minority in a nation of nearly 80 million inhabitants. According to the World Zionist Organization, 75% of Turkey’s Jews subscribe to *Şalom* (Brink-Danan 2015) and the *Şalom Gazetesi* Twitter feed has around 24,000 followers. As in some cases, Turkey’s political dissents were silenced and free speech was not guaranteed, “Turkish Jewish practice of self-censorship is, frankly, taken for granted” (Brink-Danan 2015, 249). Brink-Danan’s (2015) study analyzes news articles of *Şalom*, directed at a minority of diaspora Jews in Istanbul but also at “a surprising diversity of audiences in mind, including advertisers, politicians, and even (or especially) anti-minority readerships” (Brink-Danan 2015, 246), keeping in mind that they might interpret pieces of the article out of context in a negative (anti-Semitic) framing – which happened in the past. It is because of that fear of an antipathetic audience that *Şalom* often publishes articles without authors’ bylines. The editors and

journalists are mostly female volunteers, some of whom hold other jobs. An important finding of Brink-Danan's (2015) study is that the small newspaper directed at a minority religious diaspora community takes the global flows and system's perspective such as clash of the religions of Islam and Judaism into consideration. Thus, the global sphere intrudes into the local religious community, again enunciating the presence of the key concept of glocalization.

Up to now, there is no major multi-country empirical study on the influences on journalism and religion (for comparative studies without a focus on religion, see Weaver and Willnat 2012, Hanitzsch et al. 2018). It is questionable whether one should examine nation states comparatively in an empirical analysis or rather use transcultural semantics of comparison (Hepp 2006, 78–80). Examples worthy of investigating in the context of journalism, religion and globalization are the diverse diaspora communities that are created today by the increasing mobility of recipients. Fact is, global communication channels in general and journalism in particular create cross-border common spaces of ethnic diasporas, religious communities and alternative social movements.

Conclusions and the way forward

Globalization theories of journalism have been dissociated from ideas of the nation state and have adopted a *glocalization* or network approach. In this field of research,

... the assumption of linearity and the 'either/or' underlying the axiomatics of the nation-state would be replaced by assumptions of 'both-as-well': globalization and regionalization, attachment and fragmentation, centralisation and decentralisation are thus dynamics that belong together as two sides of the same coin.

(Beck 1997, 54, translated by the first author)

Despite increased transnational and transcultural communication, a dissolution of local ties – both of recipients and producers – is not in sight.

Even though Cohen (2018a, 5) asserts that “religion news has become a bigger story because the world is more compact and has become a wired global village”, his anthology of religious news in various countries across the globe shows that – even though globalization has had a significant influence – there are specifics in reporting about religion in every single nation (Cohen 2018b). Religion has become more relevant a topic that people wear more “outwardly” (Cohen 2018a, 4). In addition, religious institutions now employ former journalists to bring organizational communication to perfection (Cohen 2018b, Wiesenberg 2019). On the other side, editorial offices have experts on the beat *religion*. There are media that aggressively dissipate religious messages, focusing on church personalities, conflicts and religio-political decisions – topics that are in line with the journalists' fact checking working routine (Cohen 2018a).

Media are both a prerequisite and part of globalization (Krotz 2005). It is important to accept them as a phenomenon and as a central object of analysis in journalism research. Differences between Western and non-Western influences on (non-)religious programs, questions of morality, ethics and religion in journalism must now be investigated on a global level. It will be useful for future research to continue to distinguish between religion in (non-religious) media, religious media and religion and media as two interacting, converging and perhaps sometimes conflicting systems.

Finally, the two case studies present implications for journalism research in an increasingly globalizing world. On the one hand, it points to the merit of Hosseini's (2008) pluralist

thinking as encapsulated in the concept of religious pluralism in an age in which disparate voices, perspectives, worldviews and perceptions are the hallmark of vibrant, engaging communities. It, therefore, stands to reason that such pluralist theory can, at the ground level, serve to assuage conflicting views that have led to a world torn apart by centrifugal stresses. Hanson (2016, 14) describes religious pluralism as lived and experienced, that is, as “the range of responses to living in a diverse religious community, or the state of living in such a community.” The way forward, then, in our understanding is this: If reflected in the news media, that will open doors to interfaith communications and understanding and to knock-on effects on community engagement and relationships, as well to an expansive range of research options.

On the other hand, it raises the stakes of Brink-Danan’s (2015, 247) “lived cosmopolitanism” as a driver of globalization that expects accommodating, tolerating and bridging constituencies that are repositories of global issues and challenges. Journalism research can appropriately extend its reach into the ecology of the interface among news, religion and globalization geared toward constructing a society that embraces and projects “oneness” (Hosseini 2008, 68). Such journalistic research can pivot journalism as a practice to its roots, espousing its mission through religion: the media’s social and civic responsibility – in a very normative sense – is to serve as both agent of change and of social cohesion (oneness), with a diminution of raging societal conflicts.

Note

- 1 This article, to a great extent, is based on Rothenberger (2016).

Further readings

- Berglez, P., 2008. What Is Global Journalism? *Journalism Studies*, 9(6), 845–858.
Berglez takes a fresh and to a certain extent normative attitude in describing and demanding new global journalism (research).
- Hosseini, S. H., 2008. Religion and Media, Religious Media, or Media Religion: Theoretical Studies. *Journal of Media and Religion*, 7(5), 56–69.
Taking into account various studies, Hosseini develops her threefold categories of the relationship between media and religion before introducing her own concept of religious pluralism.
- Reese, S. D., 2008. Theorizing a Globalized Journalism. In: Löffelholz, M. and Weaver, D., eds. *Global Journalism Research. Theories, Methods, Findings, Future*. Malden: Blackwell, 240–252.
Theory work on global journalism is rare. This is one of the first articles that conceptualizes globalized journalism in depth.

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