

Religion and Transnational Religious Discourses: Globality, Construction, and Resistance

Veranstalter: Martin Baumeister, German Historical Institute (GHI), Rome; Martin Schulze Wessel / Martina Niedhammer, Ludwig Maximilian Universität Munich; International Research Training Group (IRTG) „Religious Cultures in 19th and 20th Century Europe“; Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan; Charles University, Prague; Masaryk University, Brno

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The last decades saw an increasing interest in global and transnational history, and historians have highlighted the various and often complex entanglements between world regions as well as processes and practices of globalization that are by no means exclusive to the present. The history of religions provides ample examples of the interdependencies between the local and the regional, the national and the global. Global and transnational dimensions of religion since the nineteenth century was the subject of a conference at the GHI Rom that was the culmination of ten years' work.¹ The conveners aimed to discuss the often ambivalent relationship between religion and globalization while focusing on three aspects: the construction of globality through religion, religious answers to globalization, and resistance to globality and globalization.

The first panel was devoted to the latter and highlighted the relationship between religion and nationalism. ROBERT RAPLJENOVIC (Eichstätt) presented the case of »Away from Rome!«-movements at the turn of the twentieth century in Austria-Hungary and showed how a local conflict with the Catholic Church – in this case about liturgical practices, usage of language, and mismanagement in Ricmanje (today San Giuseppe della Chiusa, Italy) – gave rise to the secessionist »Away from Rome!«-movements. Rapljenovic emphasized how these often localized movements related to ideas of nationhood and nationalism for which religion became a crucial

point of reference and thus a cause of conflict with the Catholic Church.

JULIAN STRUBE (Heidelberg) discussed the role of tantric philosophy and practice for Hindu nationalism in Bengal in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Tantra was perceived as the true religion of Hinduism, as natural and original, rooted in practice, which, in the colonial setting of the Indian subcontinent and in the context of emerging Hindu nationalism, provided an alternative to Western modernism and Protestant culture. Tantra enabled its followers to embrace universal ideas and Hindi traditions and thus represented an »anti-modern« modernism.

VIKTOR YELENSKY (Kyiv) continued the conversation about the significance of religion for national movements while shedding light on more recent events in Ukraine. Whereas the relationship between church and state was characterized by indifference in Soviet times, the Orthodox Church gained more influence in the process of nation-building and had become a unifying force for the Ukraine nation while at the same time being »weaponized« in the conflict with Russia.

The second panel discussed adaptations of globality in nineteenth and twentieth century Christian theology and thought, focusing on questions of ethics and values. ALINA POTEPA (Bochum) introduced two Catholic intellectuals – the liberal German theologian Ignaz Heinrich von Wessenberg (1774–1860) and the Belgian ultramontanist economist Charles Périn (1815–1905) – and their views on economic globalization. Potempa highlighted that both understood globality as a necessary dimension of Catholicism in the modern era and thus supported instruments of the global economy such as free trade. Wessenberg's and Périn's motives and arguments differed, however, partly due to their different professional, national, and generational background. Where Wessenberg wanted to integrate Catholicism into the modern world and modernity, Périn wanted to save the modern world from moral degeneration.

ELISABETH MAIKRANZ' (Heidelberg)

¹ <https://www.igk-religioese-kulturen.uni-muenchen.de/index.html>

paper traced the value discourse within the global ecumenical movement and the World Council of Churches, founded in 1948. Based on a close reading of proclamations, proceedings, and public debates beginning with the WCC's predecessor, the World Mission Conference in 1910, and numerous conferences and assemblies of the WCC until the 1980s Maikranz showed how the very concept of »values« became an essential tool for discussing social questions and thus broadening the reach of a movement that had its roots in a Christian mission but aimed to transcend the hegemonial character of missionary work. Maikranz argued that, in the context of the post-World War II era, the value discourse provided an extra-ecclesial language that enabled the ecumenical movement to foster the conversion between the churches and the secular world and thus enhanced its global reach.

The third panel was devoted to the construction of globality through universalism. PHILIPP LENHARD's (Munich) reflections on modern Jewish historiography and its various efforts to describe the »Jewish world« went beyond a mere case study and offered a conceptual framework for Jewish world history by drawing on Siegfried Kracauer. Lenhard presented three modes of modern Jewish historiography: a history of concentric circles represented by the Jerusalem School, i.e., by Haim Hillel Ben Sasson's »A History of the Jewish People«, a leaping history of ideas represented by Heinrich Graetz's »History of the Jews«, and a world/sub-world history represented by Howard Lupovitch's »Jews and Judaism in World History« or David Biale's »The Cultures of the Jews« dedicated to the plurality of Jewish historical experiences that are equally distinct and integral to the non-Jewish world. Based on a close reading of these modes of Jewish historiography against Kracauer's writings, Lenhard called for a multi-layered approach to Jewish history and world history as such that devotes as much attention to long-term historical perspectives on the macro-level as to more confined subjects on the micro-level.

STEFANIE COCHÉ's (Gießen) presentation can be understood as an example of

such an approach. Based on three case studies – Dwight K. Moody (1837–1899), Charles E. Fuller (1887–1968), Billy Graham (1918–2018) – she traced the ambivalent notions of transnationalization and Americanization in US evangelicalism. Coché showed how Moody's internationalism, especially his activities in Europe, helped to establish him in the US as a preacher of good behavior. Fuller promoted a more fundamentalist tradition that focused on belief and made extensive use of mass media. Fuller actively encouraged his followers to »discover« the world and spread the word and thus sought global outreach. In contrast, Graham's »new evangelical« tradition promoted a spiritual revival in the United States and tried to infuse everyday life and practices with evangelical thought. Although Graham became a well-known figure internationally, his evangelicalism was American in character.

The keynote lecture by YAGHOOB FOROUTAN (Babolsar / Hamilton) shifted the methodological focus from historical research to the social sciences. He discussed the interdependencies of religion and multi-religious societies, and multiculturalism and globalization from a demographic perspective. Foroutan provided a close reading of demographic data on religious groups, mostly Muslim populations in various Western states. Foroutan drew on demographical data that somewhat morphed and merged rather different and distinct Muslim populations into one sociocultural group and used this data to discuss current statistical methods and the insights they can or cannot provide on the correlation between religion and socio-economic status or »success«. As Foroutan himself and the subsequent discussion highlighted, statistical data are always the product of their social and cultural context, often building on policy questions and underlying assumptions. This should always be taken into account whether the data are used in historical research or the social sciences.

The fourth panel continued the conversation on constructing globality. RASA PRANSKEVIČIŪTĖ (Vilnius) introduced the case of the Hare Krishnas in Lithuania as an example of alternative religiosities in the So-

viet Union. Hare Krishna, through the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKON), began to reach out to the Soviet Union in the 1970s, instantly raising the suspicions of state authorities and security forces. Thus, Hare Krishna mostly remained an underground phenomenon as part of an unofficial culture, driven by an interest in Eastern philosophy and religion that was as distant from the state as it was from the established church. Although the late 1970s and 1980s saw some state support for »non-Christian« religions as a means to counter the influence of the Catholic Church, followers of the Hare Krishna movement were subjected to intimidation and repression by state authorities, which restricted its outreach.

JÜRGEN DOLLMANN's (Heidelberg) presentation discussed the Salafi movement and its relation to Al Qaeda and ISIS as global phenomena. Dollmann argued that ISIS is more »successful« in its global outreach, especially in attracting young followers – most of them male – than Al Qaeda, because it employs marketing strategies similar to those of globalized and »Westernized« consumer culture. Dollmann contended that the use of social media and the World Wide Web has been key to establishing ISIS as a global benchmark and creating a global community that embraces terrorism. Dollmann's presentation left a number of questions open: to what degree are differences between Al Qaeda and ISIS – and you might add here the Muslim Brotherhood – rooted in different goals as well as in the respective tools available for organizing, communicating and disseminating their respective ideas? Also, how do ISIS and its ideological predecessors compare to other ideological movements tending toward fundamentalist and totalitarian social and cultural orders?

The conference concluded with a roundtable discussion of the potentials of a global history of religion. In his introductory remarks, MARTIN BAUMEISTER (Rome) highlighted the scope of such a history, which the conference aimed to shed light on – processes of globalization, transregional and transnational entanglements, and the different scales of religion and religiosity in a globalized world.

Subsequently, MARTINA NIEDHAMMER (Munich) showed how global and transnational entanglements become visible in the most localized Jewish history with the example of Bohemian Jewish villagers confronted with East-European Jewish migrants in need of help in the early twentieth century. Mostly poor, these East-European Jews fled Czarist Russia in the wake of the Russo-Japanese War to avoid conscription and tried to make their way to Western Europe and the United States. Thus, as Niedhammer highlighted, Jewish history allows and requires a multilayered approach that includes micro-historical and macro-historical perspectives equally and acknowledges that it is characterized by transregional, transnational, transcontinental, and sometimes global entanglements all at once.

FRIEDRICH WILHELM GRAF (Munich) drew more broadly on nineteenth century concepts of global history as general history (»Universalgeschichte«), which, with respect to religion and religiosity, should focus on teleological narratives, their theoretical (theological) foundations, their claim to normativity (»eternal truth«), and the subsequent body of knowledge about the world they contribute to. Graf argued that a global history of religions should thus focus on processes of transfer and adaptation, as well as processes of convergence and divergence, between adherents of religions such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and called for a conceptual history of religion (»Begriffsgeschichte des Religiösen«).

REINHARD SCHULZE (Bern), too, saw the need for such a conceptual history that has to question how universal (and sometimes normative) the concepts and ideas are that we generally use to speak about religion and religiosity. Furthermore, Schulze asked what a global history can offer for a history of Islam and highlighted the need for a deeper understanding of linguistic changes and process of translation in a globalized world of religions. The round-table discussion highlighted some of the common themes of this conference but also explored topics crucial to a global history of religion that could not be discussed, such as rites and practices or the meaning of gender, class, and race for a history of religion on the various spatial lev-

els, from the local and national to the trans-regional and global. Building on the research agenda of the International Research Training Group (IRTG) »Religious Cultures in 19th- and 20th-Century Europe«, this conference tried to tie together case study-driven presentations and conceptual perspectives on a global history of religion, shed light on the conditions and constraints that religious movements have faced in transnational and global contexts, and draw on examples that affirmatively embraced globality as well as those that resisted the influence of transnational and global players and processes of globalization.

Conference program:

Martin Baumeister (Rom) / Martin Schulze Wessel (Munich): Greetings

Panel I: Resisting Globality: Religious Nationalism

Robert Rapljenović (Eichstätt): „Away from Rome!“ Movements at the Turn of the Twentieth Century as a Catalyst for National Denominational Processes

Julian Strube (Heidelberg): (Anti-)Modern Religious Nationalism in Bengal: Tantra and Hindu Identity in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century

Viktor Yelensky (Kyiv): Globalization and Religious Renewal: The Changing Role of Religion in Ukrainian Nation-Building

Chair: Martina Niedhammer (Munich)

Panel II: Answers to Globalization: Adaptions

Alina Potempa (Bochum): Thinking Global Economy from a Catholic Perspective – the German Theologian Wessenberg (1774-1860) and the Belgian Economist Périn (1815-1905)

Elisabeth Maikranz (Heidelberg): „Values of the Gospel.“ The Value Discourse in the Global Ecumenical Movement as a Strategy to Cope with Globalization

Chair: Franz Xaver Bischof (Munich)

Panel III: Constructing Globality I: Universalism

Philipp Lenhard (Munich): What is „the Jew-

ish World“? Remarks on a Historiographical Problem

Stefanie Coché (Gießen): From Moody to Graham: On the Ambivalence of Transnationalization and Americanization in U.S. Evangelicalism

Chair: Jana Osterkamp (Munich)

Keynote Lecture

Yaghoob Foroutan (Babolsar / Hamilton): Religions, Multiculturalism, Globalization: Methodological Perspective

Chair: Friedrich Wilhelm Graf (Munich)

Panel IV: Constructing Globality II: Global Subcultures

Rasa Pranskevičiūtė (Vilnius): Formations, Resistances and Manifestations of Global Alternative Religiosities in the Soviet Union: The Case of Hare Krishnas in Lithuania

Jürgen Dollmann (Heidelberg): Salafismus zwischen Prophetentradition und Internet: Ein islamistisches System zwischen regionalen Konflikten und globaler Subkultur

Chair: Kärin Nickelsen (Munich)

Round Table: Global History of Religion

Friedrich Wilhelm Graf (Munich) / Martina Niedhammer (Munich) / Reinhard Schulze (Bern)

Chair: Martin Baumeister

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