



THE RELIGION AND DIVERSITY PROJECT/RELIGION ET DIVERSITÉ

**Christopher Helland, Dalhousie University**

**Project Report:**

Title: *Religion and Media* (2012-2013)

1. Project Goals:

The initial plan was to continue with the collection and coding of newspaper articles in Canada that had any component of religion or religious representation (regional and national level). Our earlier research identified differences in news coverage over regions and between news sources in how religion stories were covered generally, and the manner in which specific religious groups were portrayed. In this follow up study we narrowed our focus to one religious group and one series of events to create a deeper and more textured analysis of the regional and sources differences in the reporting of religion. The resignation of Pope Benedict XVI on February 11, 2013 created an unprecedented opportunity to examine Canadian news coverage of the resignation and subsequent selection of a new Pope at national and regional levels. From February 11, 2013 to March 15, 2013 we manually collected all news stories referencing the Pope during the target period from selected print, radio, and television news sources. Stories were collected from in English for all jurisdictions and in English and French for Quebec regional sources. Collected stories were then matched against the Eureka and Factiva news archives to validate comprehensiveness of coverage. We have developed a clean data set of about 2000 news articles related to this event. Preliminary analysis has already identified a pattern in reporting of specific events from an initial neutral tone reporting to commentary to the subsequent negative “echo”. We anticipate seeing additional regional and source differences in the frequency, depth and tone of reporting. For example where did the stories of Cardinal Ouellett’s candidacy receive coverage, and was the tone of coverage the same across sources.

A large component of the project has been to continue with the development of a searchable database. This allows for articles and images to be archived in a web accessible archive to allow the team members across the nation to access, code, and

analyze the data, and to share those results within the team.

## 2. Researchers and Students Involved

Dr. Christopher Helland (PI)  
David Michels (PhD Candidate)  
Dan Wiebe (MA Candidate)  
Ashley Doyle (MA 2013)

## 3. Rationale

Based upon an earlier research, we saw this as a promising project to further highlight differences in representations of religious diversity within the media in Canada.

## 4. Methods:

See project goals

## 5. Ethics, permissions (include any delays)

Although the funding had been released to Dalhousie University in September, there was confusion with Dalhousie University Research Services and the funds were not internally released until November. Initially, research ethics was required from Dalhousie however; REB approval for this project was not needed.

Due to the delay in the release of funds, we have approximately 30% of the original funding still in place (see section 9 finances). We will be using these funds to continue to support students as they code the data and to aid in any costs associated with the completion of the online searchable database.

## 6. Summary of Activities

PI held regular meetings with all students involved in the collection and coding of data. There have been ongoing meeting with Dalhousie concerning the creation and development of the searchable database.

## 7. Outputs

A paper has been accepted for publication in a special issue of the Canadian Journal of Communication (CJC) "Visible-Invisible: Religion, Media, and the Public Sphere.". The article is provisionally called "Publishing the Pope: An Analysis of the Papal Election in Canadian National and Regional Print Media"

A second journal article is being prepared called "Framing the News: How Religion is represented in the Print Media in Canada"

8. Finances (template on page 3)

<b>Breakdown of Expenses</b>				
<b>Student Funding*</b>				
	Amount	Name	Dates	Project
Dan Wiebe	4448			
Ashley Doyle	1200			
<b>Research Funding</b>				
	Amount	Project	Dates	Specifics**
Funding for Research Costs				
Computer Software	229			
Funding for Research Travel				
Funding for Administrative/Supply Costs Related to Research				