

Religion and (dis)information: establishing a new research agenda

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Research on the impact of religion on societies has increasingly had to acknowledge how religion is being reconfigured in alignment with global mass media, information and entertainment trends. Accordingly, various case-based studies have interrogated mainstream religious actors' engagement with (dis)information and its implications in various global settings. Others have interrogated the relationship between extreme or fundamentalist religious belief and belief in false information and conspiracy theories.

Yet despite this empirical boom, little work has made the cross-case comparisons necessary to conceptualise the ways in which religious actors can function as information actors beyond the religious realm, or how religious organisations' engagements with information relate to the nature of their host regime or the broader global media ecology. This panel offers such a new direction. It combines insights from across IR, Religious Studies and area studies and touches upon the religion-information relationship across Eastern Orthodoxy, Slavic Paganism, Turkish media-politics, the Catholic Church in the Philippines, Falun Gong in China, and Rastafari online spirituality. Building on this broad base, the panel seeks to build some conceptual and analytical coherence to the exciting work currently being undertaken on the topic of religion and (dis)information.

Track Classification: Critical Alternatives for World Politics Working Group