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Religious celebrities. Analysis of the term in the context of mediatization processes

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Abstract

Thesis/objective:

This paper aims to analyse the constituting characteristics of religious celebrities, which it views as being closely linked to the process of mediatization. The first part of the paper-presents the current state of research on celebrity culture and outlines fundamental concepts related to mediatization as a force shaping the celebritization processes. The second part explores four key issues related to the concept of religious celebrities: the presence of religious celebrities in the public sphere and on the media agenda; the dominance of

media logic and its impact on religious identity; the distinction between religious celebrities and genuine religious authority figures; and the influence of celebrities on the shaping of religious attitudes and the understanding of the sacred. The paper contains an initiatory analytical consideration of this subject.

Research method:

The methods applied in this study include literature review and critique, as well as analysis and synthesis. The author discusses the existing theoretical research on celebrity culture and mediatization conducted by social studies scholars such as Olivier Driessens, Wiesław Godzic, Chris Hackley, and Stig Hjarvard.

Results/conclusions:

Religious media celebrities are individuals who are typically affiliated with a religious denomination through formal institutional ties. They are present in the public sphere, and their personality and activity in the domain of religion generate media visibility and interest. The processes of mediatization and celebritization, when applied in research on religious media celebrities, need to be examined within their specific contextual framework. The institutional and constructionist perspectives on mediatization facilitate an interpretive analysis of the presence of religious celebrities in the public sphere and on the media agenda. In empirical research on religious celebrities, the differences in the principles followed by institutional representatives of religious denominations and the principles of media logic should be considered. Nevertheless, the pervasive presence of digital media is a factor that transforms the way churches and other religious associations function, reflecting the broader trend of deep mediatization. When analysing religious celebrities, it is essential to consider the deontological dimension as well as the extent to which religious celebrities are aware of the influence of the media, which belong to the sphere of the profane, on the religious experience of an individual, and how such awareness shapes the presence and activities of celebrities within the media environment.

Introduction

The term "celebrity" evokes ambiguous, including pejorative, connotations in the public eye, which imply the perception of celebrities as individuals who are devoid of distinguishing qualities, skills, and achievements (Ouvrein et al., 2024; Majka-Rostek, 2019; Łapińska, 2016, pp. 31–32). The negative moral attributes associated with celebrities mayhinder their effectiveness in influencing target audiences, for example, in terms of marketing (Wang & Kim, 2020). Empirical research does not provide conclusive evidence regarding the effectiveness of celebrities' influence in various areas of public life, such as politics (Nisbett & DeWalt, 2016). However, it should be noted that they are highly effective in placing certain issues on the media agenda and persuading the public of their competence in addressing social problems (Knoll & Matthes, 2017, p. 66; Majic et al., 2020, p. 3). Public views on celebrities and their activities cover a broad spectrum, ran-

ging from interest and even admiration to contempt. In general, it is celebrities' private lives that spark the greatest curiosity. Negative attitudes towards celebrities often stem from their disregard for traditional values, etiquette and social norms, as well as the promotion of "a deficit of meaning", that is a lack of wisdom and knowledge, accompanied by the dissemination of trivial information (Guzek, 2012, pp. 118–119).

The only sufficient reason for the presence and activity of celebrities is their media visibility and the ability to attract and maintain media interest in their person and activities. From that perspective, identifying media popularity is the key criterion for calling someone a celebrity (Boorstin, 2012, p. 65). In Krzysztof Marcinkiewicz's opinion, the prerequisite for being a celebrity is to make one of the following five areas of privacy public: physical appearance, family, children, relationships or sexuality (Marcinkiewicz, 2018, p. 837). A celebrity is therefore a marketing communication tool which is founded on the image created in the minds of the audience, for instance based on a turbulent private life or eccentric behaviour (Rocha et al., 2020). There are also positive connotations associated with the concept of "celebrity" – Pope Francis is a clear example here. His attitude of tolerance and modest demeanour stand in opposition to the phenomenon of celebritism, which, in Wiesław Godzic's opinion (2018), is negative by nature.

As Chris Hackley and Rungpaka Amy Hackley point out, "since the 1950s, the celebration of being known simply for being has migrated from entertainment into many less likely spheres including politics, sport, literature, music, business, journalism, art, academia, and even cookery" (Hackley & Hackley, 2015, pp. 461–462). What determines the extent to which celebrities are promoted in the media are, by and large, commercial and marketing considerations.

Celebritization is considered a metaprocess, expressed through three significant indicators: democratisation processes (increased by, e.g. the social media and ordinary people's access to becoming "stars"), diversification processes (celebrities are not only present in the worlds of media, entertainment and sport, but also in politics, business, academia and gastronomy) and migration processes (celebrities diversify their activities within the field in which they have established their celebrity status) (Driessens, 2013, pp. 641–657). This definition justifies the dynamic shift in the understanding of the concept of "celebrity" and the process of becoming one.

In his research on the Polish phenomenon of celebritism, Wiesław Godzic states that celebrities are generally perceived in a negative light. In his opinion, a celebrity is someone who is recognisable in the social sphere and thanks to that enjoys certain privileges in life, yet also has to cope with a range of inconveniences. Being a specific construct, role model, or role as such – but not necessarily a specific person whose name is generally known – a celebrity is radically different from a star. On average, women are more likely to become celebrities than men. There are no taboos in the life of a celebrity. They discuss topics such as pregnancy, marriage, illness, fashion, nutrition, fitness, marital infidelity and chari-

table work. The most popular celebrities include actors, musicians and journalists, while politicians are the least popular (Godzic et al., 2019, pp. 12–13).

In foreign literature, there are numerous theoretical and empirical studies on the processes of celebritization, published by representatives of the social sciences, including Olivier Driessens (2013, 2015), Mark Wheeler (2014), Swapnil Rai and Brandy Monk-Payton (Rai, 2019, Rai & Monk-Payton, 2024). In Polish literature, too, there are publications in this research area, by scholars such as Wiesław Godzic (2007, 2016), Henryk Domański (2023), Dagmara Głuszek--Szafraniec (2016), Dorota Piontek (2013), Olgierd Annusewicz (2011), Krzysztof Marcinkiewicz (2018).

Mediatization as a force that shapes celebritization processes

Mediatization is a process in which the media have a key role in exploring the world, as they contribute to the internalisation of the attitudes, patterns and norms they propose to their audience (Peruško et al., 2014, p. 143). Nick Couldry notes that mediatization processes significantly determine person's long-term dispositions, skills, and competences, as well as thought patterns. Referring to the anthropology of Pierre Bourdieu, Couldry states that the media influence the individual's habitus (Couldry, 2004, pp. 353–361; Couldry, 2003, pp. 659, 668). Moreover, Couldry and Hepp note that the first three stages of mediatization – i.e. mechanisation, electrification and digitalisation – are followed by the datafication phase, which results in the redefinition of mediatization (*deep mediatization*) (Couldry & Hepp, 2017, p. 34). Deep mediatization involves the multi-layered impact of the media on one's individual life and on society's life; it is an advanced stage of the process in which all components of our social world are closely linked to digital media and their underlying infrastructure (Couldry & Hepp, 2017, pp. 34–35; 48).

The studies of mediatization make an important distinction between institutional and constructionist mediatization. The institutional perspective emphasises the dominance of media logic, which is reflected, among other things, in negligent reporting, journalistic storytelling, distrust between politics and the media, declining public confidence in public institutions, media populism, pack journalism (Matusitz & Breen, 2007, pp. 54–55; Pienias, 2013, pp. 208–209), horse--race journalism (Broh, 1980, p. 527), media hype, negative reporting, soft news (Furman, 2012, p. 62), sound bites, personalisation, simplification, dramatisation, and sensationalisation (Brants & van Praag, 2017, p. 399). As Łukasz Wojtkowski notes, the institutional perspective means that "the media catalyse cultural and social change, while other institutions become to some extent dependent on the media and their evolution. (…) Mediatization describes long-term processes of social transformation caused by changes in the media. Media institutions are a driving force in this process, which is related to the symbolic dimension of media activity, which takes the form of the media's symbolic power in social communica-

tion processes" (Wojtkowski, 2018, pp. 161–162). The constructionist perspective treats mediatization as a fundamental change in the forms and practices of communication, both in quantitative and qualitative terms. In the quantitative dimension, this perspective implies that the number of institutions using the media in communication processes, as well as the number of their mediatised relationships with stakeholders, is increasing. On the other hand, the qualitative nature of mediatization emphasises the aspect of communication practices that contributes to social change(Nowak-Teter, 2019; Kołodziejska, 2022, pp. 143–144).

Olivier Driessens (2011) notes that manifestations of celebritization are driven by three separate shaping forces: mediatization, personalisation and commodification. When these forces are applied to the area of religion, it is assumed, following Stig Hjarvard, that the mediatization of religion is a social process in which the media determine how religion and religious practices are perceived (Hjarvard, 2008, p. 24). The commodification of religion in postmodern culture is reflected in religion being treated as a commercial product, trivialised or ridiculed, but also in the elimination or deformation of the sacred. Lastly, the personalisation of religion refers to the perception of institutions through the prism of individuals, most often institutional leaders (Radde-Antweiler, 2018; Oswald & Kroeger, 1998; Jinkins, 2012).

Mediatization is a process of social change that, to a certain extent, subordinates other social or cultural fields to the logic of the media. In the case of religion, the media – as channels, languages and environments – facilitate changes in the quantity, content and direction of religious communication in the society, and at the same time transform religious representations and question or replace the authority of institutionalised religions (Hjarvard, 2008, pp.14–16). Mediatization results in the growing subordination of religion to the logic of the media. As channels of communication, the media have become a primary source of religious ideas, especially in the form of "banal religion". As languages, the media shape the religious imagination according to the genres of popular culture. As cultural environments, they have taken over many social functions of institutionalised religions, providing both moral and spiritual guidance and a sense of community (Hjarvard, 2008, p. 9).

Very few works deal with the celebritization of religion and its leaders. For example, Peter Mikuláš and Ol'ga Chalányová, in their paper titled *Celebritization of Religious Leaders in Contemporary Culture*, proffer the "concept of celebrity religious leader, demonstrate mechanisms of celebritization process in this area and present examples of gaining celebrity status by religious figures. Particular emphasis is placed by the authors on the use of digital media by religious leaders" (Mikuláš & Chalányová, 2017, pp. 43–52). They propose three research approaches to the issue of celebritization processes in the field of religion. Firstly, the religious attitudes expressed by celebrities constitute an important element of accounts presented in the media, which may influence the general public, in particular fans. Secondly, celebrities become new symbols of worship and, in this

sense, become immortal. It is a form of "hidden religion" that comes about in the online environment and leads to the fulfilment of spiritual needs, while rejecting the institutional form of worship. Thirdly, the personalisation of religious leaders (similar to political personalisation) drives an increase in their popularity, while the processes of attribution of celebrity characteristics to religious leaders do not imply an increase in the popularity of churches and other religious associations (Mikuláš & Chalányová, 2017, pp. 46–48).

The article titled *American Muslim Televangelists as Religious Celebrities: The Changing 'Face' of Religious Discourse* also contributes an important cognitive value to the field of research on religious celebrities. In his publication, Adel A. Al-Wugayan argues that religious celebrities are much more effective than pop culture celebrities when it comes to raising funds for charitable organisations. However, to ensure that the message aligns with the audience expectations, charity organisers should feature in their advertising campaigns the religious celebrities who enjoy trust and have a positive image (Al-Wugayan, 2023).

Religious media celebrities

Religious media celebrities are individuals who are typically affiliated with a religious denomination through formal institutional ties. They are present in the public sphere, and their personality and activity in the domain of religion generate media visibility and interest. The activities of celebrities are subjected to the logic of the media, which is not a suitable logic for describing the defining characteristics of a given religious denomination. Religious celebrities are not actual religious authority figures, but they do shape religious attitudes and the understanding of the sacred (Klimczak, 2019; Rojek, 2006).

The processes of mediatization and celebritization, when applied in research on religious media celebrities, need to be examined within their specific contextual framework (Fornäs, 2014). For instance, the religious context in Scandinavia differs from that in the Czech Republic or Poland. As a result, both the degree of and the driving forces behind secularisation are described differently across these European countries. Concepts and theories developed on the basis of analyses of a single country or geographical region (e.g. Germany, Scandinavia) have limited applicability when used to interpret the religious situation of communities in other geographical areas. For example, Hjarvard's mediatization metaphors, which are useful for interpreting the religious situation in long-secularised countries, have limited relevance in the context of Central and Eastern European countries. However, this does not render them entirely inapplicable – such frameworks may still offer valuable insights in studies on religious celebrities within the Catholic Church in Poland. André Jansson highlights a recurring trend in the mediatization research – the tendency to insufficiently situate theoretical arguments within the empirical context, and providing unsatisfactory evidence to demonstrate how specific cases and sub-processes are related to the broader framework of media-

tization. On the one hand, there is a risk of developing grand theoretical constructs that incorporate diverse studies as examples of mediatization in a more or less superficial way. On the other hand, general conclusions about the long-term dynamics of mediatization are sometimes drawn from limited empirical data evidence (Jansson, 2017, p. 4). When applying Jansson's remarks to the study of religion, it is therefore important to consider both the scope of applicability of theoretical concepts and the representativeness of the research samples used in analyses of the relationship between the media and religion.

The typology of mediatization outlined above provides a useful framework for interpreting the presence of religious celebrities in the public sphere and on the media agenda. From an institutional perspective, this involves addressing questions such as:

- How do celebrities construct media narratives around religion? Is the narrative primarily shaped by the dramatisation of events, sensationalism or the negative portrayal of churches and other religious associations?
- To what extent are the core principles of journalistic ethics upheld? Do the media promote quality journalism based on truth and objectivity?
- What influences the publisher's decision to include content relating to the lives and activities of religious celebrities within the media agenda?

Conversely, the constructionist perspective prompts inspires questions concerning, among others, the following aspects:

- How much time do individual media outlets dedicate to the topic of religious celebritization, and what trends can be observed in this regard?
- To what extent are media institutions involved in cultivating relationships with religious celebrities? This may be reflected in the shaping of interpretations of religious and universal human values, their promotion within the media, and the redefinition of culture and politics – factors which can significantly influence social change.
- What is the relative visibility of religious celebrities versus religious authority figures within the media agenda, and how are their opinions on doctrinal, moral or ideological matters treated by the media?

Institutional mediatization processes highlight the logic of the media as a key organising principle to which institutions and individuals who are present in the public sphere and concerned about their public image become increasingly subjected. It is important to emphasise, however, that institutional representatives of religious denominations follow a different set of principles. Their primary concern is the preservation and respect of doctrinal tenets, even when these are in conflict with the prevailing media principles. Nevertheless, the pervasive presence of digital media is a factor that transforms the way churches and other religious

associations function, reflecting the broader trend of deep mediatization. In practice, religious denominations make use of social media platforms, websites and video-sharing services in their activities. This shift raises numerous questions – for instance, how traditional structures of authority or the integrity of faith can be protected in the age of deep mediatization. Adopting a socio-constructivist approach to mediatization appears to offer a more comprehensive perspective of the relationship between the media and religion. It also fosters respect and understanding for the identity of the religious denomination expressed through the media (Kołodziejska et al., 2023, pp. 200–202). The logic underpinning the commercial media are fundamentally profit-driven and oriented towards particular benefits. In contrast, the logic of the public media should support the recognition and understanding of the religious denomination identity. This distinction implies a responsibility on the part of the public media to uphold the standards of quality journalism, including the provision of content that enables audiences to properly interpret the identity of the religious denomination (Leśniczak, 2019, pp. 240–242). In the case of the commercial media, which primarily pursue market-oriented goals, it is more likely that religious celebrities will be promoted insofar as they contribute to expanding audience ratings.

Religious authority constitutes a distinct form of an asymmetrical relationship within the sphere of religion. It is based on the recognition of the "superiority" of a given individual (or institution) due to their institutional position or personal qualities (Magier, 2015, pp. 168–169). Piotr Magier identifies two dimensions of religious authority: epistemic and deontic. As he explains, "A person recognised as a religious authority can fulfil this function either owing to specific personal characteristics falling within the scope of their religiosity (e.g. mystical experiences, moral values, religious knowledge), or by virtue of the position they hold in religious institutions or communities, or both" (Magier, 2015, p. 169). In the case of religious celebrities, these characteristics are considered optional, meaning they may be present but are not required for someone to be classified as a religious celebrity. Consequently, a religious celebrity may also function as a religious authority figure, but this is not a necessary condition. Frank Furedi observes that today all kinds of institutional authority figures – whether these are politicians, parents, teachers, clergy, doctors or childcare providers – are widely distrusted and often portrayed negatively. This deterioration in public perception stems largely from the abuse of institutional authority. The "exposure" of authority figures has become a trend which is concomitant of popular culture (Furedi, 2010, p. 494). The current crisis of authority, including within the domain of religion, contributes to the increasing presence of media celebrities – religious celebrities among them –who, so to speak, often fill the void caused by the lack of other authority figures. The universal societal need for authority, including in matters of denomination and religion, remains significant (Tuziak, 2010, p. 55). As Peter Horsfield points out, during periods of profound social change, uncertainty or crisis, people seek meaning and guidance not only from those in formal positions of power. They are drawn to any-

one who offers relevant insights and resources in accessible, timely and engaging ways – often through media channels embedded in everyday life (Horsfield, 2016, pp. 37–38). At this point, it is worth noting the characteristics of the postmodern era, which promotes a culture of relativism (Fazio, 1993, pp. 135–139) and prioritises intuitive cognition based on emotions, inspiration, illumination and aesthetic experiences at the expense of the scientific approach (Sztompka, 2012, p. 25). As a result, postmodern conditions favour the prominence of celebrities in the public sphere over traditional figures of authority. Furthermore, the processes of mediatization have deepened the crisis of religious authority, one already exacerbated by internal struggles within churches and religious associations (these include the dissonance between the personal conduct of religious leaders and the doctrines they preach, moral and financial scandals involving clergy, and their engagement in politics, which contradicts the principle of separation between religion and state) (Root, 2022; Faggioli, 2019).

Religious attitudes are closely tied to the understanding of three core dimensions of religion: the doctrinal foundations; the institutional teachings of churches and religious associations concerning moral and behavioural norms, as well as their application in personal and social life; and the internal affairs of religious denominations, shaped by hierarchical structures and the principle of obedience (e.g. the election of the Pope or Patriarch).

In theory, religious celebrities are not expected to participate in discussions related to changes in doctrinal matters, religious practices, rules of worship or regulations related to the design of sacred spaces. These areas fall within the exclusive competence of individual religious denominations. Doctrinal foundations and internal affairs of churches and religious associations are not typically open to public debate or subject to input from media celebrities as decision makers in relation to possible changes. Such matters remain internal to the respective churches and religious associations. As such, the opinions of the public or celebrities on these issues are not binding and they are not treated as something that may lead to changes in the doctrine or institutional norms of a given religious denomination. It seems that when it comes to identifying the appropriate sphere in which celebrities should contribute meaningfully, it is the area of reflection on how moral and ethical principles are practically implemented by religious denominations (González Gaitano, 2016, pp. 183–189). This does not imply that religious celebrities refrain entirely from commenting on doctrinal or governance issues. On the contrary, some engage in controversial discourse, often framed in sensational or negative terms, which tends to enhance their popularity and media visibility.

When addressing the concept of the sacred, it is essential to consider the deontological dimension as well as the extent to which religious celebrities are aware of the influence of the media, which belong to the sphere of the profane, on the religious experience of an individual, and how such awareness shapes the presence of such celebrities within the media environment. In general, mediatization entails a gradual removal of the sacred from public life. One of its key con-

sequences is the individualisation and privatisation of religion, whereby a person perceives their relationship with the Absolute as a deeply personal matter, largely inaccessible to the wider community or deliberately shielded from it (Leśniczak, 2020, pp. 60–61). The role of religious celebrities in divulging the religious experience and in the treatment of religious values also warrants further consideration. It is possible that religious values may be treated in an instrumental, consumerist, manipulative or even scandalous manner – sometimes with the involvement of celebrities (Leśniczak, 2020). Within the context of mediatization, it is therefore pertinent to question the participation of religious celebrities in promoting religious advertising or engaging with forms of religious kitsch (Stępniak, 2018; Stępniak, 2024).

Conclusion

Religious celebrities constitute a distinct category of celebrity. They are typically individuals who represent a particular religious denomination in an institutional manner. Their activities are situated within the public sphere and pertain to the domain of religion, which implies media attention and visibility. To fully understand the phenomenon of religious celebrities, it is essential to consider the concept of mediatization both from the institutional and constructivist perspectives, as well as the concept of deep mediatization. This paper serves as an introduction to the discourse on the identity of contemporary religious celebrities and also provides a foundation for developing analytical tools to examine their image.

The specific issues identified in relation to this concept – such as the presence of religious celebrities in the public sphere and on the media agenda; the dominance of media logic and its implications for the issue of religious identity; religious celebrities versus genuine religious authority figures; and the impact of celebrities on religious attitudes and the perception of the sacred – offer a solid basis for developing a categorisation framework that would be useful for reconstructing the media image of those figures.

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Religious celebrities. Analysis of the term in the context of mediatization processes

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Abstrakt

Teza/cel pracy:

Celem artykułu jest analiza cech konstytuujących religijnych celebrytów, które postrzegane są jako ściśle związane z procesem mediatyzacji. W pierwszej części tekstu przedstawiono aktualny stan badań nad kulturą celebrytów oraz nakreślono podstawowe pojęcia związane z mediatyzacją jako siłą kształtującą procesy celebrytyzacji. W drugiej części omówiono cztery kluczowe zagadnienia związane z pojęciem celebrytów religijnych: obecność celebrytów religijnych w sferze publicznej i w agendzie medialnej; dominacja logiki mediów i jej wpływ na tożsamość religijną; rozróżnienie między religijnymi celebrytami a prawdziwymi

autorytetami religijnymi; oraz wpływ celebrytów na kształtowanie postaw religijnych i rozumienie sacrum. Artykuł zawiera wstępne rozważania analityczne na ten temat.

Metoda badawcza:

Posłużono się metodą krytyki piśmiennictwa, metodą przeglądu literatury oraz metodą analizy i syntezy. Odwołano się do teoretycznych prac badawczych nad celebrytyzacją i mediatyzacją takich przedstawicieli nauk społecznych, jak m.in. Olivier Driessens, Wiesław Godzic, Chris Hackley, Stig Hjarvard.

Wyniki/wnioski:

Religijni celebryci medialni są osobami zazwyczaj przynależącymi do denominacji religijnej na sposób instytucjonalny, których działalność sytuuje się w sferze publicznej, i których osobowość oraz aktywność dotycząca obszaru religii, implikuje widoczność medialną oraz zainteresowanie mediów. Procesy mediatyzacji i celebrytyzacji, zastosowane w badaniach nad zagadnieniem religijnych celebrytów medialnych, wymagają uwzględnienia kontekstu, w których są prowadzone. W interpretacji obecności religijnych celebrytów w sferze publicznej i agendzie medialnej pomaga perspektywa instytucjonalna i konstrukcjonistyczna mediatyzacji. W badaniach empirycznych dotyczących religijnych celebrytów należy uwzględnić odmienne pryncypia instytucjonalnych przedstawicieli denominacji religijnych wobec pryncypiów logiki mediów. Wszechobecność mediów cyfrowych zmienia jednak funkcjonowanie Kościołów i innych związków wyznaniowych, które podążają za trendami głębokiej mediatyzacji. Istotnym punktem refleksji w analizie religious celebrities powinien być aspekt deontologiczny oraz pytanie, w jaki sposób celebryci religijni mają świadomość wpływu mediów, przynależących do sfery profanum, na doświadczenie religijne człowieka, i w jaki sposób ta świadomość implikuje działania celebrytów w mediach.

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Religious celebrities. Analysis of the term in the context of mediatization processes

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Schlüsselworte: Zelebritisierung; Logik der Medien; Medien; Mediatisierung; Religion; religiöse Prominente

Zusammenfassung

These/Ziel:
Das Ziel des Artikels ist die Analyse der grundlegenden Merkmale religiöser Prominenter, die als eng mit dem Prozess der Mediatisierung verbunden betrachtet werden. Der erste Teil des Textes stellt den aktuellen Stand der Forschung zum Thema Prominenz dar und verweist auf grundlegende Ideen zum Prozess der Mediatisierung als Kraft, die die Prozesse der Zelebri-

tisierung prägt. Im zweiten Teil werden vier spezifische Aspekte im Zusammenhang mit dem Begriff religiöser Prominenter erörtert: die Präsenz religiöser Prominenter in der Öffentlichkeit und auf der medialen Agenda; die Dominanz der Medienlogik und das Problem der religiösen Identität; religiöse Prominente versus tatsächliche religiöse Autoritäten; der Einfluss Prominenter auf die Gestaltung religiöser Haltungen und das Verständnis des Sakralen. Der Artikel hat einen analytischen und einführenden Charakter.

F orschungsmethode:

Es wurden die Methoden der Literaturkritik, des Literaturüberblicks sowie der Analyse und Synthese angewendet. Man nahm Bezug auf theoretische Forschungsarbeiten zur Zelebritisierung und Mediatisierung von Vertretern der Sozialwissenschaften wie u. a. Olivier Driessens, Wiesław Godzic, Chris Hackley, Stig Hjarvard.

F orschungsergebnisse:

Religiöse mediale Prominente sind Personen, die in der Regel institutionell einer religiösen Denomination angehören, deren Tätigkeit im öffentlichen Raum verortet ist und deren Persönlichkeit und Aktivitäten im Bereich der Religion mediale Sichtbarkeit sowie das Interesse der Medien implizieren. Die Prozesse der Mediatisierung und Zelebritisierung, angewandt in der Forschung über religiöse mediale Prominente, erfordern die Berücksichtigung des jeweiligen Kontextes, in dem sie durchgeführt werden. Bei der Interpretation der Präsenz religiöser Prominenter in der Öffentlichkeit und auf der medialen Agenda hilft die institutionelle und konstruktivistische Perspektive der Mediatisierung. In empirischen Studien über religiöse Prominente ist es notwendig, die unterschiedlichen Prinzipien institutioneller Vertreter religiöser Denominationen gegenüber den Prinzipien der Medienlogik zu berücksichtigen.