

GRASSROOTSMOBILISE

Directions in Religious Pluralism in Europe:

Examining Grassroots Mobilisations

in the Shadow of European Court of Human Rights Religious Freedom Jurisprudence

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The Grassrootsmobilise Research Programme

Title: Directions in Religious Pluralism in Europe: Examining Grassroots Mobilisations in the Shadow of European Court of Human Rights Religious Freedom Jurisprudence

Project funding: European Research Council, European Union Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013), Grant Agreement ERC-2013-StG, 338463

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Principal Investigator: Effie Fokas

Host Institution: Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP)

Short description: The programme studies grassroots level mobilisations 'in the shadow' of European Court of Human Rights religious freedoms jurisprudence. It explores the mobilisation of local and national level actors in the wake of a number of high-profile ECtHR religious freedom cases in order to determine the nature and extent of European juridical influence on religious pluralism. The programme also examines how legal and political elites operating at the national and international levels may influence the Court's engagement with religion. The work is divided into five different research fields and will be carried out through fieldwork conducted in four country case studies: Greece, Italy, Romania, and Turkey.

Website: <http://grassrootsmobilise.eu/>

Research Team: 1 principal investigator, 3 team members/case study advisors, 5 doctoral and postdoctoral researchers

Advisory Board: 13 scholars



What is the Grassrootsmobilise Research Programme About?

The European public square has, in the last twenty years and increasingly so, been inundated with controversies and debates broadly conceived around the place of religion in the public sphere. In spite of (and, some would argue, because of) popular and scholarly expectations of religion's retreat, issues such as freedom of religious expression, freedom of speech v. blasphemy, and the public display of religious symbols loom large in the workplace, in schools, in media coverage etc., at the local, national, and supranational level. The presence of Islam has been a catalyst for many debates on religion in Europe, but these debates have now grown to encompass much broader assumptions about the nature of religious communities, their relationship to state institutions, and the place of minority religious communities in society. Against this backdrop the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR, or the Court) jurisprudence on religious issues has emerged to add its own voice. In so doing it significantly influences the terms of the debates.

This research programme examines the *domestic* impact of the ECtHR religion case law: it explores the mobilisation of local and national level actors in the wake of a number of high-profile ECtHR religious freedom cases in order to determine the nature and extent of European juridical influence on religious pluralism. In light of scholarly debates questioning the direct effects of courts, the programme probes developments that take place 'in the shadow' of the Court. It engages especially with the extent to which court decisions define the 'political opportunity structures' and the discursive frameworks within which citizens act. What is the aftermath of the Court's religion jurisprudence in terms of its applications at the grassroots level? The question is important because ECtHR case law will shape, to a large extent, both local and national level case law and – less conspicuously but no less importantly – grassroots developments in the promotion of or resistance to religious pluralism. Both the latter will, in turn, influence the *future* of the Court's caseload. The research will thus impart rare insight into directions being taken in religious pluralism in Europe.

The programme is divided into five different research stages (see below) and will be carried out through in-depth fieldwork at the grassroots level in four country case studies where religion has a dynamic role in the public sphere. **Italy**, in the aftermath of the *Lautsi v. Italy* case, offers a very interesting context for examination of the components of strategic litigation behind the case, the manifestations of the case in the public discourse as well as the church-state relationship in its western European and Roman Catholic version. **Greece** and **Romania**, two countries of Christian Orthodox majority, and with a number of very noteworthy cases before the ECtHR, are fruitful ground for a study of the Court's influence on religious pluralism, given the disproportionately high number of Article 9 (religious freedom) convictions against majority Orthodox states. **Turkey** represents an important case, given the highly controversial nature of two Islam-related religious freedoms judgements (*Sahin v. Turkey* and *Refah v. Turkey*), the salience of the Alevi-related cases before the Court, and the country's secular-based model of religion-state relations.



The GRASSROOTSMOBILISE Team

The GRASSROOTSMOBILISE team is comprised of the **Principal Investigator** and three further core **team members**, each of whom will oversee one of the country case studies; five **doctoral and postdoctoral researchers**; thirteen distinguished **advisory board members**; and a **programme manager**.

Team Members

- Dr. Dia Anagnostou**, Assistant Professor of Politics at Panteion University, Athens, and Senior Research Fellow, ELIAMEP
Dr. Liviu Andreescu, Associate Professor of Public Policy at the Faculty of Administration and Business, University of Bucharest
Dr. Effie Fokas, Principal Investigator, Research Fellow, ELIAMEP and Research Associate, Hellenic Observatory, LSE
Prof. Haldun Güllalp, Professor of Political Science (Ret.) and Director of the Center for Global Studies, Yıldız Technical University, Istanbul
Dr. Pasquale Annicchino, Postdoctoral researcher for the Italian Case Study
Dr. Alberta Giorgi, Postdoctoral researcher for the Italian Case Study
Dr. Margarita Markoviti, Postdoctoral Researcher for the Greek Case Study
Dr. Ceren Ozgul, Postdoctoral Researcher for the Turkish Case Study
Mr. Mihai Popa, Researcher for the Romanian Case Study

Advisory Board Members

- Professor Eva Brems**, Professor of Human Rights Law, University of Ghent
Professor Louis-Léon Christians, Chair of the Law of Religions, Université Catholique de Louvain
Professor Grace Davie, Professor Emeritus, Exeter University
Professor Malcolm Evans, Professor of Public International Law, University of Bristol
Professor Marie-Claire Foblets, Director, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle, Germany
Professor Matthias Koenig, Professor of Sociology of Religion, University of Göttingen, and Fellow, Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity in Göttingen, Germany
Professor Nikos Kokosalakis, Professor Emeritus, Liverpool University
Dr. Dilek Kurban, Marie Curie Fellow, Hertie School of Governance, Berlin
Professor David Martin, Professor Emeritus, London School of Economics
Professor Javier Martínez-Torrón, Professor of Law at Complutense University, Madrid
Professor Pål Repstad, Professor of Sociology of Religion, University of Agder, Norway
Dr. Julie Ringelheim, teaches International Human Rights Law and Sociology of Law at the Université Catholique de Louvain
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