

Europe and the Challenge of Religious Revival

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Tuesday 11:00 – 13:00

Seminar Room 3, Badia Fiesolana

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The seminar aims at studying how the European states are redefining their relationship to religions, under the challenge of an increasing religious activism in the public sphere, associated with new religious movements (evangelicalism) and with Islam. Although each country starts from very different and specific contexts of the relationship between state, religion and public sphere, this move seems to lead to a more uniform perception of what the relationship should be. More importantly, it seems to lead to the use of a common paradigm of what a religion is, with the consequence of pushing religions, through a complex array of constraints (public order) and incentives (freedom of religion), to format themselves according to this common paradigm. But, due to the de jure or de facto separation of church and state, governments have little leverage on this process. It is made under a mix of social and political pressure (banning or not the visible signs of Islam for instance) and the promotion of a concept of freedom of religion more linked to the US common law tradition than to the European tradition of dominant or even established religions with close relations (even conflicting) with the state. One of the paradoxes is that what is seen as an external challenge (Islam and new religious movements), contributes to push the Europeans to find a common way to deal with this challenge, and thus contributes to European integration.

1. The problem of studying religions in social sciences.
2. The modernization theory and secularization. Are secularization and Enlightenment a European specificity?
3. The so-called “return of the sacred”: which religious movements are spreading and why?
4. The different European national models of the “church/ state relations” and their history.
5. Immigration, conversions and the European construction: the denationalization and deculturation of faith communities. Could the national models deal with the changes?
6. Religious freedom: from minority rights to individual choice. The role of the international conventions in defining a new paradigm of religious freedom.
7. The debates on the European identity, multi-culturalism and interfaith dialogue. The political impact of the debate on Islam.
8. The role of the courts: survey of samples of various European courts on religious issues.
9. The role of institutions, administrative decisions and business in redefining the religious paradigms in Europe.
10. Perspectives.



Bibliography:

Roy Olivier “Holy Ignorance”, Hurst 2010

Berger Peter “The Sacred Canopy” Anchor 1990

Hervieu Léger « Le Pèlerin et le converti » Flammarion 2004

Hervieu Léger “Religion as a chain of memory” Ruthers, 2001

Casanova José “Public Religions in the Modern World” University of Chicago press 2001

Durkheim Emile “The Elementary Forms of Religious Life”, Oxford UP USA 2008

(French: « Les Formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse », nombreuses éditions)

Chapters :

In “Transnational Religion and Fading States” (ed. by Susanne Hoeber Rudolph and James Piscatori, Westview 1997

Chap 4 : Hervieu Léger Danièle: Catholic transnationalism

Chap 5 : Casanova José : « Gloablizing Catholicism »

Talal Asad, “Formations of the Secular”, 2003, Stanford UP, first chapter.