

Preface

The research behind this book was undertaken within a programme on ‘The Cultural Conditions Underlying Social Change’ at the Research Council of Norway.¹ This ‘SAMKUL’ programme understands culture as being ‘the sphere within which various groups and individuals think, communicate and act’. Culture, then, is to be analysed ‘as a way of thinking and patterns of communication’ in *‘the interaction between people and their surroundings’*, as expressed in the programme description. This book digs into the interaction over contested public religion in settings where the cultural conflicts are partly shaped by media dynamics. The book is an outcome of the SAMKUL project ‘Engaging with Conflicts in Mediatized Religious Environments. A Comparative Scandinavian Study’, which has been abbreviated as CoMRel – Co for Conflict, M for Media and Rel for Religion.²

Most of the chapters in this book are written by CoMRel researchers, coming from the University of Copenhagen in Denmark, Uppsala University in Sweden and, in Norway, from the University of Agder³, the MF Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society, as well as the University of Oslo, which coordinated the project. In the section on local civic settings, we include contributions from another Research Council of Norway-funded project, namely, ‘Cultural Conflict 2.0: The Dynamics of Religion, Media and Locality in North European Cities’ (CC2).

The book took shape as a collaborative enterprise during a productive week in a former monastery at Metochi on the island of Lesbos, Greece, now a study centre for the University of Agder. We formulated the outline together, and later reworked it in a collective collaboration, and this is reflected in the Introduction and realized in the chapters that follow.

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Oslo, 9th March, 2018

¹ www.forskningsradet.no/samkul

² <http://www.hf.uio.no/imk/english/research/projects/comrel/>

³ David Herbert is also working at Kingston University, London.

