

PREFACE

This book is the result of a 5 year research project “The role of religion in the public sphere. A comparative study of the five Nordic countries (NOREL) (2009–2014) (for more information on NOREL, see Appendix). From the beginning, it was clear that the project and this book would be a collaborative undertaking. The authors met at several seminars. The first two in Oslo and Skagen were used to plan the shape of the NOREL project, what to study and how. During the first meeting, thematic research groups were established, rather than national ones. This design came to affect the comparative structure of the book, not as an edited volume with separate chapters from each country, but five thematic, comparative cross-country chapters. We also had two workshops at University of Agder’s Metochi Study Centre at Lesvos, Greece. Each workshop lasted one week. In an old monastery in a beautiful, rural, Greek setting, we worked, talked, ate, went on excursions together, and discussed late into the night. In addition, we arranged several sessions at international conferences. We read and commented on draft chapters from all the thematic groups several times. Grace Davie, David Herbert, Stewart M. Hoover, Peter Kivisto, and Michael Minkenberg joined us at various seminars, where they gave lectures, and read and commented upon drafts in progress. Most of the chapters are the result of collaborative work. The authors have collected data in different languages, interpreted, written, read, commented upon, and rewritten to ensure that this volume has a coherent structure and argument. I want to thank all of you for inspiring and hard work that

crossed national borders and academic disciplines. I also want to give thanks to Craig Calhoun who read the entire manuscript and wrote the foreword.

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