

5th December 2021



Protect and Secure Worship

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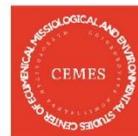
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PROSECUW

Religious Fundamentalism and the PROSECUW Project

2nd International Conference on Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts

5th December 2021

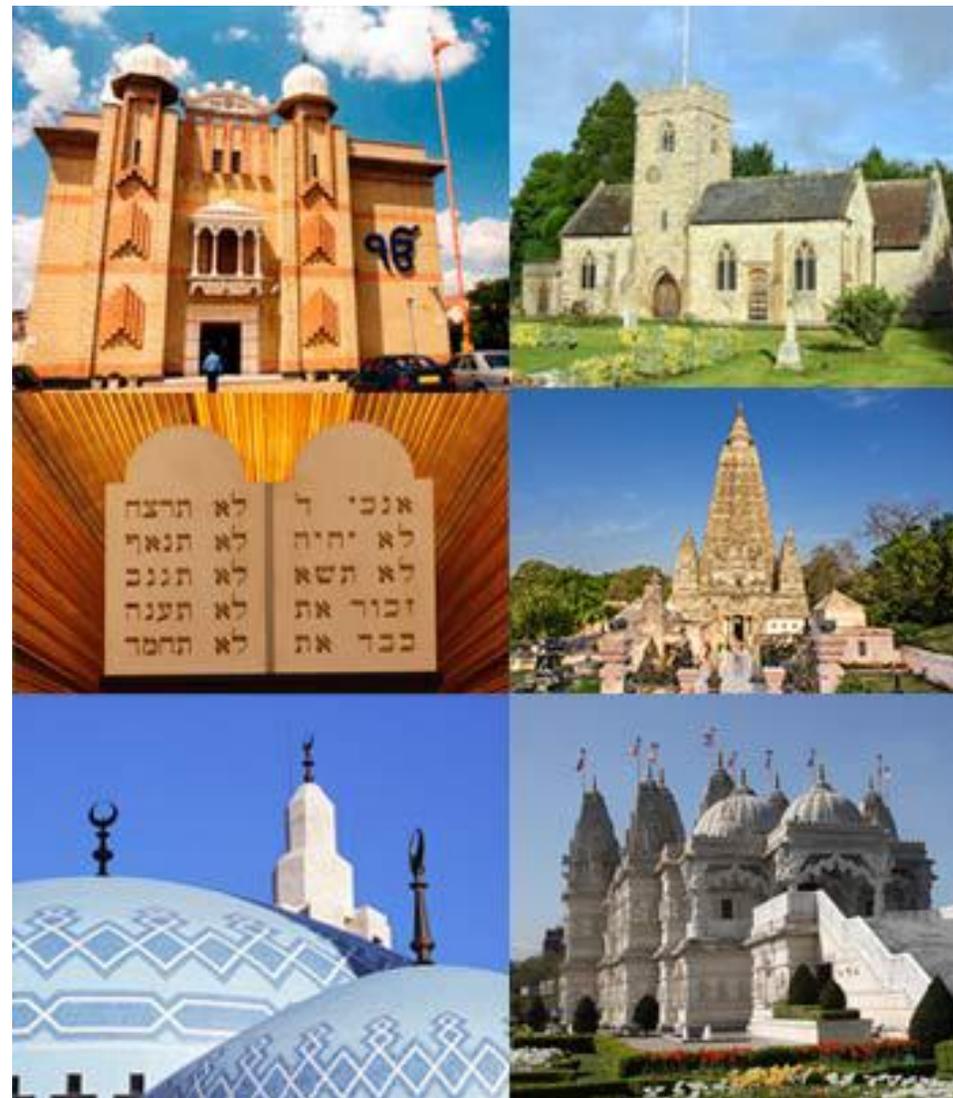
Dr Eliza Patouris

RESEARCH AND EDUCATION IN SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT AND TRANSFORMATION - RESET

- **Religious Fundamentalism and the PROSECUW Project**
- **Dr Nikolaos Dimitriadis,^{1*} Catia Cruz², Ioanara Silva², José Paulo Oliveira ², and Dr Eliza Patouris³**
- ¹ Kentro Oikoumenikon Ierapostolikon kai Perivallontikon Meleton Mitropolos, Greece
- ²Lusofona University, Portugal
- ³Research and Education in Social Empowerment and Transformation, Cyprus
-
- *Corresponding author: Dr Nikolaos Dimitriadis

“When people are attacked because of their religion or beliefs, all of society is diminished. Together, we can help prevent attacks against religious sites and contribute to guaranteeing the safety of the faithful to worship in peace.”

- António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General



What is religious fundamentalism?

- Religious fundamentalism is a phenomenon that threatens the exercise to religious freedom.
- Almost in every major faith tradition, usually in monotheistic environments, there are groups identified as fundamentalists
- Islamic fundamentalism is perhaps the most insidious and intolerant today as Christian fundamentalism from time to time has been in the past
- Humanity cannot ignore the threat that comes from fundamentalism
- Not every Muslim or believer of Islam is an Islamic fundamentalist.
- Fundamentalism should not be equated with traditionalism. But when traditionalistic groups try to impose their beliefs by confusing religious practices with political ones, then they can be considered fundamentalist groups.



- **Religious fundamentalism**

- Phenomenon that seeks to return to the foundations of the faith
- Usually arises in societies where traditional values and beliefs are threatened
- Also seeks to influence political policy
- Dogmatic interpretation of the sacred texts that is based on fundamental precepts (typically religious, but not limited to) and rejecting any contrasting ideology

- **Religious violent extremism**

- Fundamentalism taken to violent “extremes”
- Linked to hostility, armed conflict, prejudice and terrorism



Typological elements of religious fundamentalism



- The projection of fundamentalist groups is political with a religious "cloak".
- Religious fundamentalism is exclusivist
- Religious fundamentalists are political activists and they consider themselves "warriors of God".
- The fundamentalists are following literally sacred texts, but they use them selectively.
- Fundamentalist groups are predominantly male oriented. Female leaders in fundamentalist religious groups are an exception. In any case, the key- position is always taken by a "gifted" leader.
- In reality they are half entered into modernity. They reject the philosophical rationalism and individualism that accompany modernity, but they take full advantage of certain technological advances that also characterize the modern age.
- Fundamentalism finds a creative space in the unfulfilled project of the promises of cultural modernity and the difficulties of secularization.
- Fundamentalism manifests itself in the politicization of world religions in local cultures and regional civilizations.

The importance of protecting places of worship



- This right cannot be guaranteed in all countries, as shown by recent events, such as violent acts and terrorist attacks that seek their main motivations in religion.
- Intensifying the dialogue between different religions and beliefs, promoting social participation at all levels, is fundamental to promoting tolerance and mutual respect. Since places of worship are the physical spaces where all multiculturalism and diversity meet, protecting these places and the individual manifestation of each person is an important step to mitigate religious fundamentalism.

THE PROSECUW PROJECT

A European initiative on the protection and security for places of worship



‘PROSECUW – Protection and Security for Places of Worship’ is a project funded by the Internal Security Fund Police (ISFP) of the European Commission

May 2021 to April 2023

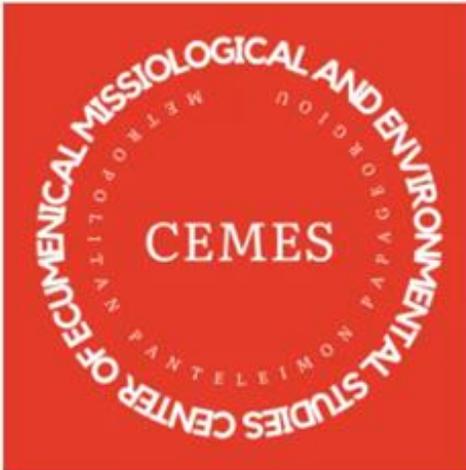
Project Number: 101034232)

The general objective of PROSECUW is to enhance protection at places of worship in European countries by setting up cooperation between public authorities (especially law enforcement agents), religious leaders and congregants aiming at a better understanding of, security threats, promotion of awareness raising activities and the creation of manuals for sharing best practices and relevant tools among EU stakeholders.



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THE PROSECUW PROJECT

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PROJECT RESULTS

- Transnational PROSECUW Mapping and Research Report
- Awareness Raising Social Media Campaign
- Documentary with digital storytelling from victims of religious hate crime and commentary from religious leaders
- Creation of a best practices manual and policy recommendations based on the project's training activities will be ready to be shared EU-wide
- E-learning platform and pedagogical materials and tools
- Capacity Building for Beneficiaries and Stakeholders - for the cooperation of public authorities and faith leaders as well as for professionals who work in the security field.
- PROSECUW Hubs for Communal and Educational Actors Empowerment and Collaboration

OVERALL SCOPE:

Increase security and protection in houses of worship of individuals, families, people in need of every single religion can pray, express their faith unafraid, EU-wide and also around the world

Thank you!

eliza.patouris@resetcy.com

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