

will have increasingly limited relevance to English jurists as the UK's departure from the European Union is finalised in the coming months and years. Taken in the round it is an eclectic mix of essays from which to pick and choose interesting tidbits. The second part has a broader focus and will undoubtedly be of more interest to non-Swedish readers. Ronan McCrea's contribution is particularly perceptive in its treatment of the limits of law and picks up on one of the most ominous ambiguities of all: can the law fill the gaps left by the departure of culture, or is Europe destined to litigate every uncertainty over religion down to the last minutiae? Emma Ahlm's essay is also important and generally applicable, concerned as it is with the understudied collective aspects of the right to religious freedom. In all, this book is another solid resource on a topical and difficult theme.

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## El régimen jurídico catalán de los centros de culto

JOSÉ LUIS LLAQUET DE ENTRAMBASAGUAS

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*The Catalan Legal Regime for Worship Centres* is an important contribution to the study of the political processes and institutional mechanisms through which the state produces the normative frameworks that regulate public religious manifestations in contemporary democracies. The profound social, economic and political transformation experienced by Catalonia since the promulgation of the Spanish Constitution of 1978 has made of this autonomous community a vivid example of cultural, ethnic and religious pluralism. As a result of this historical transfiguration, Catalonia faces the enormous challenge of integrating its expanding immigrant population (in particular, that coming from Islamic societies) into its democratic fabric through a wide variety of public institutions and legal frameworks, among which those related to the peaceful and harmonious exercise of religious freedom in public spaces are of particular importance.

The book's main object of study is the emergence of the contemporary legal framework through which the autonomous government of Catalonia (the *Generalitat*) regulates the constitution and operation of worship centres. Based on the political and ethical imperative of avoiding religious discrimination that emerges from the text of the Spanish Constitution of 1978, this legal framework deals, among other important things, with the exercise of urban

planning faculties by municipal governments and with the legitimate exercise of administrative authority in relation to worship centres.

Above all, Professor Llaquet's study constitutes an insightful historical exploration of the way in which different political actors (including representatives of the most important religious communities and confessions of Catalonia—Christians, Muslims and Jews), positioned themselves in relation to the scope and contents of the various legal projects whose evolution led to the configuration of the current state of affairs. In this sense, the book explores the way in which the legislative process operates in a democratic society such as Catalonia. The well-documented description of the different parliamentary debates, technical discussions and legislative rules that were produced, carried out and followed in order to prepare the terrain for the generation of a politically legitimate and legally valid normative output is very interesting in terms of legal and institutional analysis.

As the author clearly states in the introduction, the study of normative antecedents is of fundamental importance in documenting the genealogy of a given piece of legislation and, even more, in understanding its *animus*, that is to say, its 'spirit', which can be understood as that complex array of values that must be observed, social needs that must be satisfied, governmental development strategies that must be realised, political interests that must be reconciled, and institutional processes that must be complied with. It is only through such an analysis that the underlying intentionality of the law, its *ratio legis*, can be deciphered, and hence its social and political implications can be recognised in a more precise and comprehensive manner. If the structures of democratic governance are to work properly, the law must be clear not only in its letter but also in its intention.

Last but not least, this book constitutes a very useful source of documentary information for researchers, given its ample revision of the many legal documents, debate acts, memoirs, projects, decrees and experts' analyses, that were discussed, generated, promulgated and published at specific moments within this complex and long-lasting process of legislative evolution. This is particularly relevant in the case of the connection between the edification and regulation of worship centres in urban spaces, and the attributions that, in exercise of their constitutional autonomy, the municipal governments of Spain have in the field of urban administration and planning.

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