



THE RELIGION AND DIVERSITY PROJECT/RELIGION ET DIVERSITÉ



**Pascale Fournier**

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**Biography**

Pascale Fournier is Full Professor and Research Chair in Legal Pluralism and Comparative Law at the Faculty of Law, Civil Law Section, University of Ottawa. She teaches Rights and Freedoms, Comparative Family Law and Critical Approaches to Law. In 2010—2012, she served as Associate Dean Research.

Professor Fournier received her LL.B from Laval University (1997), her master's degree from the University of Toronto (LL.M.; 2000) and her doctorate degree from Harvard Law School (S.J.D.; 2007). A Fulbright and Trudeau scholar, Pascale served as Law Clerk to the Honourable Justice Claire L'Heureux-Dubé at the Supreme Court of Canada in 2000-2001. Professor Fournier's research focuses on human rights, religion and secularism, children's rights, criminal law and cultural diversity, as well as family law. Pascale has lectured at the State University of Haiti, McGill



## THE RELIGION AND DIVERSITY PROJECT/RELIGION ET DIVERSITÉ

University, the University for Peace in Costa Rica and the Institute for Women's Studies and Research in Iran. In 2008, she served as an expert consultant for the United Nations Development Programme on issues of gender and Islamic law in Tunisia, Egypt, Malaysia and Nigeria. Professor Fournier regularly intervenes before Canadian and American courts as an expert witness and counsel, organises training sessions for judges and policy makers and is frequently invited by the media to comment on the legal and social issues of the day.

Her publications appear in leading law and social sciences journals in English, French and German and were selected by the Harvard-Stanford Junior Faculty Forum (2008), the Québec Bar Foundation prize for “best law review article” (2009), and the Canadian Association of Law Teachers Scholarly Paper Award (Honorable Mention/2010). Her book **Muslim Marriage in Western Courts: Lost in Transplantation** was published by Ashgate Publishing in 2010. A new edition of her book was published under its French version entitled **Mariages musulmans, tribunaux d'Occident : les transplantations juridiques et le regard du droit**, published in 2013 by Les Presses de Sciences Po.

She was awarded the Laval University Raymond-Blais Medal (2008), the Québec Bar Association's Advocatus Emeritus distinction (2009), the University of Ottawa President's Award for Excellence in Media Relations (2011) and the **Fulbrighter of the Month distinction** (November 2011). In 2014, Professor Fournier was selected by the prestigious International Women's Forum and was awarded the Canada-Arab Chamber of Commerce « Special Achievement Award » in the « Academic Excellence and Contribution to Humanity » category. In 2015, she was invited to join the Governor General's Canadian Leadership Conference (Study Group : Northwest Territories) and was unanimously appointed by the National Assembly of Quebec as Commissioner to the Quebec Human Rights and Youth Rights Commission (Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse : CDPDJ). She was named « one of the Top 25 Most Influential Lawyers in Canada » by the Canadian Lawyers Magazine (August 2015), in the « Worldstage » category.

### **Research Interests**

Pascale's current research projects investigate the migration of religious divorce laws in Canada, France, Britain, Germany, Israel, Lebanon and Palestine, and explore through field interviews the effects of such migration on religious women. The choice of a qualitative interview-based methodology reflects her deeper commitment to giving voice to religious women through a contextual understanding of their daily struggles. In addition to numerous publications and several conferences in North America and Europe, Pascale has found unique venues for the



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dissemination of her fieldwork results. For instance, in the summer of 2013, she was invited by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to give a conference in Beirut, Lebanon on the impact of informal family law mediation on the condition of Arab women in the Near East. In the summer of 2013, Pascale has received funding from Religion and Diversity to begin a new phase of this project and conduct interviews with religious women in Lebanon, this time including women from Christian as well as Muslim backgrounds.