

**Laïcité in Contemporary France: Analyzing the Implementation and Retention of
Religious Programming on Publically Supported Television**

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Abstract

This research seeks to understand the rationale behind the implementation and retention of religious programming on publicly supported television in France. Centering on questions of laïcité in the post-Vatican II era of the early 1950s, this thesis will attempt to delineate the ways in which the separation between church and state is understood and enacted within the context of a secular nation. A consideration of the substantial influence imposed upon the State by the historical dominance of the Catholic Church in France will further provide the background for understanding the environment and political influences that led to the establishment of religious programming. Looking specifically at the program *Le Jour du Seigneur*, broadcasted on the public service station France 2, this research will examine the decisions made towards the program's conception and further follow its trajectory into the contemporary era. The particular content of the program, as well as understanding the demographics of its viewership and its reception over time, offers insight into the specific climate that fostered the establishment of *Le Jour du Seigneur*. Further, a comparison with other similar religious broadcasts, on both public and privatized stations, will illustrate the motives behind continued retention, particularly amidst the backdrop of increasing secularization and declining religious worship. The ultimate objective of this research is to put the question of religious programming on public service stations in conversation with the governing principles of laïcité to determine how pluralism and republican values continue to incite conflict in the secular nation of France.

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Introduction

Laïcité in France

Laïcité is an ideological principle enshrined within French society and remains an integral part in political and social discussions pertaining to religion. The purpose of laïcité serves to provide citizens with freedom of conscious and civil equality through political religious neutrality. These values are maintained as a result of the French State's distinction between what comprises the public and private domains, as well as through the emphasis on the abstract notion of a collective French identity. This prioritization of republican ideals over an individual identification based on culture, religion, race, etc., diminishes the citizen's identity independent of the State in favor of fostering a society built on social cohesion. Thus, in many ways the State is responsible for the construction of France's unique version of citizenship, with secularism prevailing as a defining characteristic.

Historically, the roots of laïcité can be traced back well into the 16th Century. While the word itself did not exist until much later, the notion of separating religious and state powers, however, was often retained. The shifting nature of this relationship can be identified over the course of French history leading to the official separation of church and state which was established by law in 1905. It is important to note, however, that the word 'laïcité' was not utilized legally until the French Constitution of 1946, and prior to that, laïcité was understood more so as a general concept as opposed to a concrete aspect of French law. Therefore, in discussions prior to 1946, the expression, 'gallicanism' was the term used to express this concept. It represented the historical notion that national customs and civil power possess the ability to suppress the authority of the Catholic Church. In essence, 'gallicanism' was used to underscore the difference between the mere notion of a separation of church and state powers and the more modern and tangible practice of 'laïcité.'

Evidently, in the discussion of the dominant principles held within the French Republic, the terminology utilized often lacks clear and consistent definitions. The ambiguous nature surrounding such terms as 'laïcité,' 'secularism,' 'pluralism,' and 'republican universalism,' ultimately produces a wide array of inconsistent interpretations leading to greater confusion. It is therefore necessary to distinguish the varying

characteristics of these principles to further determine the way in which religion is not only constructed within the public sphere, but also to understand the extent in which religiously based endeavors (particularly the establishment of religious broadcasting on public service stations) are allowed to operate within the law, rather than in direct opposition to the governing republican principles.

The French Constitution of 1946, in which the word ‘laïcité’ was officially incorporated, reads “La France est une République indivisible, laïque, démocratique et sociale.”¹ Prior to this description, discourses were focused more on the notion of ‘religious freedom.’ This distinction is necessary in order to appreciate how laïcité continues to be interpreted through a variety of political, societal, and legal means. ‘Religious freedom’ is less depictive of the ability of the individual to practice faith, and is more focused on a general notion of the freedom of belief. Therefore, religion is accepted insofar as it is contained within an individual’s private conscious, but as soon as it becomes ‘visible’ within the public domain, it is immediately subjected to the imposition of limitations.²

Despite its frequent use within the modern era, the term, ‘pluralism,’ possesses a complex conceptual history, which adds to its problematic contemporary characterization. In fact, in the 18th and 19th Centuries

...The term was used, in both English and French, to denote an ecclesiastical (and, by extension, sometimes a political) abuse. It also, less commonly, came to denote a philosophical doctrine, the antithesis of monism. Only in the twentieth century did it come to acquire a political sense, denoting doctrines and practices which contested unitary conceptions of sovereignty and instead affirmed that the moral personality of groups within the state was real, and not a mere legal fiction.³

This evolution of ‘pluralism’ from a broadly used concept to its acquisition of legitimate legal and political basis is significant as it underscores the historical relevance associated

¹ Constitution de 1946, IVe République, Article 1.

² Barras, Amélie. “Sacred Laïcité and the Politics of Religious Resurgence in France: Whither Religious Pluralism?” *Mediterranean Politics* 18.2 (2013): 276–293.

³ Wright, N. J. G., and H. S. Jones, eds. *Pluralism and the Idea of the Republic in France*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

with the terminology. The progressive use of the term, in both its official and colloquial usage, indicates its inability to be interpreted separately from its historical framework. As with *laïcité*, ‘pluralism’ retains a semblance of mythic pertinence based upon the term’s association to Republican ideology. Therefore, it is critical to integrate the meaning of such terminologies, as it heavily influences both modern perspectives and usage.

Under the overarching term, ‘pluralism,’ additional sub-terminologies exist that are often employed in the attempt to provide a greater level of specificity. One of these important distinctions subsists in the concept of ‘religious plurality,’ or the acknowledgement of diverse belief systems and policy based on the acceptance of all religious paths as equally valid systems co-existing within a given society. Thus, ‘religious pluralism’ is exemplified through the practice of egalitarian tolerance, or the “institutional arrangements and public policies that fight negative stereotyping, promote positive inclusive identities, and reorganize the public space in ways that accommodate diversity.”⁴ This is also related to the French concept of ‘republican universalism,’ or the philosophy focused on “a rejection of ethnic and religious particularism, and, correspondingly, as precluding differentiated or group-specific rights, especially cultural or religious rights.”⁵ In a more simplistic explanation, republican universalism is centered on the State’s establishment of a collective French identity where all citizens are subject to the same laws by “precluding the use of religious beliefs as a criterion through which to gain exemption from rules governing the relationship between private individuals and public entities.”⁶

As previously noted, a correlation is clearly established between the State’s evocation of republican ideals and the creation of a uniquely French definition of citizenship and national identity. Within this conception lies the necessity to promote pluralism within French society as the means for maintaining a peaceful coexistence rooted in the appreciation of diversity. In addition, this celebration of religious plurality forms the basis from which public service television stations provide the justification

⁴ Europäische Kommission, ed. *Pluralism and Religious Diversity, Social Cohesion and Integration in Europe: Insights from EU Research*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2011.

⁵ Daly, Eoin. “Reframing the Universalist Republic: Legal Pluralism in the French Periphery.” *Social & Legal Studies* 24.4 (2015): 531–553.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 536.

behind broadcasting religious programs. Claiming not only the legal right to operate, but also the responsibility to provide such programs on the basis of the pluralistic character of current expression and thought stipulated within Loi n° 86-1067 du 30 septembre 1986, Article 3 ensures, “that the diversity of French society is represented in the programs of audiovisual communication services and that this representation is free from prejudice.”⁷ Consequently, religion is considered a part of the public service obligation to provide access to programming that provides citizens a cultural approach to worship.

Understanding the various terminologies used when discussing the concept of laïcité is essential in order to appreciate the irregularity of interpretations present in the contemporary era. Despite deriving from a strong historical context, the notion of laïcité, or more generally a separation between religious and state authorities, continues to evoke questions of identity within French culture. Though its initial intention was to uphold the pillars of republicanism, many critics accuse the modern depiction of State laïcité as extremist, serving only to limit, stigmatize, and suppress minority religions and cultures. This is increasingly concerning due to the increase of diverse identities constituting a new demographic of French society. How is one able to identify within French society? Is religious identification incompatible with the civil State? A historical approach that includes a look at the trajectory of laïcité, beginning with the 1905 law separating Church and State into the modern perspective, offers a greater appreciation for the prominent role of the Catholic Church within France and how its historical influence has continuously challenged French secularism by remaining a highly influential entity.

In addition to understanding laïcité and its close relation to identification within the French culture, the role of religious programming in France will be brought into the discussion in order to determine how religion is portrayed at a national level. In regards to publicly sponsored television, given that a government funded entity supports this programming, it can be inferred that the content is deemed to be valuable to the community. This raises the question of what benefit does the broadcasting of a religious service provide to the citizens of a secular nation? Historically, the media in France has maintained close governmental ties over the course of its existence. Consequently, the government has remained highly involved in the regulation of public service station

⁷ Loi n° 86-1067 du 30 septembre 1986 relative à la liberté de communication, Article 3-1.

airings, and in particular of the station France 2, and its broadcasts of religious content within the program, *Les Chemins de la foi*. With the secularization of France fully enforced prior to the 1950 establishment of the original program *Le Jour du Seigneur*, the objective behind the implementation and the further retention of such religious programming on publicly supported television continues to incite ambiguity.

However, despite the presence of such programming appearing to contradict many of the engrained principles of French society, the production and continuation of these religious programs remains possible due to the many factions of laïcité itself. Though seemingly an oddity, it is due to the ongoing challenge of interpretation that the history of laïcité is a history of exceptions. Hence, programs, such as *Le Jour du Seigneur*, are sustained through the claim to provide citizens with content that is focused on the promotion of French pluralism. It is this practice that situates the existence of these productions fully within the outlining legal regulations that presently determine the way in which the principles of laïcité are enforced within French society.

Chapter I: The Historical Context of Laïcité in France

The Rise of Secularism

The concept of gallicanism is generally considered as originating in the antimonarchical and later anticlerical initiatives that defined the imperatives behind the French Revolution of 1789. Originally representative of the denouncement of the Roman Catholic Church as an oppressive institution entrenched in ignorance, corruption, and superstition, the notion of secularism transformed into its modern definition based upon a highly specific series of historical events.

Influenced by Enlightenment discourse and wary of religion's historically close ties to the State, participants in the French Revolution were fueled by a resolute desire to achieve freedom from religion within the public domain. Much of this growing disillusionment of the Catholic Church resulted from its participation in a wide range of financial abuses and a tradition of inequality based on privilege. To combat what was perceived as a vast injustice, revolutionaries sought to regulate the activities of the Church by placing it at the hands of the State. By 1794, anti-ecclesiastical sentiment had been cultivated and spread across France as revolutionaries continued to 'de-Christianize' France by "closing down churches, forcing priests to resign or emigrate, and inventing new republican cults to replace Christianity."⁸ This revolutionary campaign was responsible for awakening a cultural movement towards secularism that not only resulted in the demise of Catholic worshiping in the public domain, but also the simultaneous endorsement of a new French republican ideology as well. Ultimately, this gradual progression towards a secular State situated France in a period of great uncertainty as the arduous challenge to redefine religion's relationship with the State materialized as a necessary priority.

Between 1795 and 1815, France experienced a wide array of political oscillations as the Revolution incited the construction of empires, the collapse of the military, and later monarchical restoration. When Napoleon came to power in 1799, he reestablished the historical dominance of French Catholicism by declaring it the religion of the majority of the French. Despite its new status, the Catholic Church continued to maintain its position

⁸ Troper, Michel. "French Secularism, or Laïcité." *Cardozo Law Review* 21.1267 (1999): 1267–1284.

as subordinate to the State, and therefore what actually emerged was just the continuation of the gallican tradition.⁹ What encouraged Napoleon's decree was unrelated to an interest in the spiritual elements of religion, but instead was driven by political intent. With the impression of France's destructive religious wars still existent, Napoleon perceived religion as the means through which he could establish social cohesion and stability under his rule. The result was the 1802 Concordat, which provided Catholics the freedom to worship and further organized the Church based upon the principles of the state.¹⁰

The Concordat of 1802 was exemplary of the complicated relationship that emerged between the newly secular French State and the Catholic Church. Influenced by the religious politics of the revolutionary and Napoleonic eras, France had experienced a growth of secularization that was coupled with a sustained presence of religious devotion. The eventual move to a secularized state was initially set as law with the State schooling system in the 1880s, and later with the 1905 law on the Separation of Church and State.

As a secular initiative, the 1882-1886 Jules Ferry legislations were based on the principle of '*liberté d'enseignement*' and ended the practice of providing financial grants to Catholic schools, which had been established as a part of the 1850 *Loi Falloux*.¹¹ Founded on principles that vividly reflect those of laïcité, *liberté d'enseignement* removed religious teachings from all State sponsored schools in France. The legislation was intended to transform the curriculum in public schools to reflect an education model based on "impartiality, tolerance, and mutual comprehension."¹² In 1905, the Loi du 9 décembre 1905 concernant la séparation des Eglises et de l'Etat was enacted and immediately proved to be a pivotal point in the State's achievement of its secular agenda. As a result, religious worship became severely limited as the law fostered the advancement of secularized principles by declaring all religious teaching orders

⁹ Desan, Suzanne. "The French Revolution and Religion, 1795–1815." *The Cambridge History of Christianity*. Ed. Stewart J. Brown and Timothy Tackett. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006. 556-74.

¹⁰ Doyle, William. *The Oxford History of the French Revolution*. 2nd ed. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

¹¹ Wykes, Olive. "The Decline of Secularism in France." *Journal of Religious History* 4.3 (1967): 218–232.

¹² *Ibid.*, 220.

unauthorized, a decision that led to the immediate closure of roughly 13,500 schools.¹³ Through its declaration of freedom of conscience and equality, the 1905 law proved to be a critical decree that drastically changed the cultural environment of early 20th Century France.

The Turn to Republicanism

The establishment of a secularized French state was the product of a gradual resolution between the Catholic Church and the increasing dominance of a newfound Republican ideology. Established on the heels of the Revolution, Republicanism was a political philosophy based on the subjection of individual interests in support of common societal values. This complex relationship involving the individual, the state, and society transformed the conception of French citizenship to be directly linked with notions of freedom. Within this context, “there is no duality of state and citizen; the citizen does not have an identity independent of the state. The state...also has the right and the duty to create and reinforce social cohesion and, thus, contribute to the forging of citizenship.”¹⁴ Therefore, this unique stipulation of secularization not only defined the characteristics of a distinctly French identity, but also adopted the idea that the state should be responsible for providing common values based on principles of the Republic as a way to preserve this republican construction of citizenship.

What followed the enactment of the 1905 law of separation was a period of ambiguity that was accentuated by the State’s challenge to designate the boundaries of secularization and political neutrality. It is from this position that contemporary concerns centered on the modern function of laïcité in society evolved. Due to the particular conditions surrounding the development of French secularism, it is unsurprising that laïcité’s status within modern society is often disputed. The problem lies in how laïcité is interpreted in the contemporary era. Should it be left as a constant, unchanging principle? Or should it be regarded instead as a flexible historical agreement that necessitates frequent changes and amendments based upon culturally specific context?

¹³ Ibid., 219.

¹⁴ Troper, 1268.

The answer remains uncertain and subsequently, concerns over how to interpret laïcité within modern society are the frequent source of debate. Among historians, it is generally acknowledged that the enactment of the 1905 law was intended to act as a nonnegotiable principle reflective of the newly reestablished Republican ideals. Seeking to celebrate these essential French values, the 1905 law indicated not only the rejection of a state religion, but also the non-financing of religious institutions altogether. Yet, even with this clear objective in mind, substantial exceptions were noted, complicating the subject and its modern interpretation to an even higher degree.

Contrary to the prevailing definition of absolute secularism, French laïcité was implemented with particular concessions that emerged from the State's desire to prioritize the protection of religious freedom.¹⁵ The first of these exceptions is outlined within the 1905 law of separation, which reads, "La République ne reconnaît, ne salarie ni ne subventionne aucun culte. En conséquence, à partir du 1er janvier qui suivra la promulgation de la présente loi, seront supprimées des budgets de l'Etat, des départements et des communes, toutes dépenses relatives à l'exercice des cultes." Article 2 continues to state,

Pourront toutefois être inscrites auxdits budgets les dépenses relatives à des services d'aumônerie et destinées à assurer le libre exercice des cultes dans les établissements publics tels que lycées, collèges, écoles, hospices, asiles et prisons. Les établissements publics du culte sont supprimés, sous réserve des dispositions énoncées à l'article 3.¹⁶

However, this is not the only notable allowance, and yet another exception is seen with the Alsace-Moselle region's continued operation under Napoleon's Concordat allowing for State funded religious education.¹⁷

The Alsace-Moselle region's exemption is unique due to its reliance upon specific historic events. After the French defeat of 1871, the region remained a German territory until shortly after World War I, when the Concordat system was applied anew. From

¹⁵ Salton, Herman T. "France's Other Enlightenment: Laïcité, Politics and the Role of Religion in French Law." *Journal of Politics and Law* 5.4 (2012): n. pag.

¹⁶ Loi du 9 décembre 1905 concernant la séparation des Eglises et de l'Etat, Article 2.

¹⁷ Erlanger, Steven, and Kimiko De Freytas-Tamura. "Old Tradition of Secularism Clashes With France's New Reality." *The New York Times*, 6 Feb. 2015, p. A5.

1918 onwards, despite returning to French control, the clergy of the three principal religions within the region received State salaries. In addition, the president of the Republic maintained the power to appoint bishops. It is because of these particular details that the legal effect of the 1905 law is not fully recognized within this area.

Placing emphasis on such exceptions is critical for analysis as these policies are intrinsically linked to the historic situation that nurtured the move toward a French secularized State. Devised with the memories of France's detrimental past full of religious strife, these initial exemptions underscore the societal shift that prioritized the diminishing of any potential for future warring between the Church and State. It is this 1905 law, therefore, that is considered the main legal basis for the principles of laïcité, even though the word was not explicitly stated, and did not have the same sense of separation between the religious and public sphere that is conjured in the more modern conception.

Chapter II: Catholicism After 1905

The Role of the Catholic Church

In order to fully understand the evolution that led to laïcité's firm imprint on French society, it is imperative to consider how religion, and most importantly, Catholicism, has historically challenged French secularism. As an institution, the Catholic Church has remained an integral element inextricably linked with the evolution of defining elements of French culture. Even with the State's promotion of impartiality in regards to the religious practices of its citizens, many features of the Catholic Church remain engraved upon society and impact the entire population. For instance, the national adherence to the Catholic calendar directly contradicts the idea of state and religious separation. In addition, the concerns that arose over the public sponsorship of private schools, many of which were Catholic, further validates the complex position that Catholicism holds within the secular nation.

Initially, the separation that resulted from the 1905 loi de separation des Églises et de l'État generated a climate of hostility by the Catholic Church, as it considered itself to be the primary target of such regulations. To some degree, this resentment was indeed a mutual feeling as the State was determined to complete the secular program that had originated with Third Republic.¹⁸ However, as the 20th Century progressed, so did the relationship between the Catholic Church and State of France. To a certain extent, "separation and laïcité are, historically speaking, very much a secular achievement against Catholic resistance. They are certainly not a Catholic accomplishment, even though the Catholic Church later came to terms with them."¹⁹

After the initial resentment ceased, the Church was able to identify certain benefits that accompanied its newfound independence, most notably its ability to voice concerns on a variety of areas of interest, including education, human rights, and the increase of immigration into France. In realizing how significant this fresh platform of freedom could be, the Church was eventually able to reestablish relations with the State, albeit due to a lengthy period of wavering interactions. It is critical to note that the historical implications behind the 1905 law separating the church and state were highly

¹⁸ Chadwick, Kay, ed. *Catholicism, Politics, and Society in Twentieth-Century France*. Liverpool, U.K: Liverpool University Press, 2000.

¹⁹ Salton, 30.

specific and differ vastly from the concerns raised within the modern era. Instead of a reaction against religious dominance, the contemporary issues at hand are concerned far more with how the State should acknowledge religion and the necessity to redefine and modernize the relationship between the state, society, and religion.

France's Catholic Revival

The spirit of secularity that arose from the implementation of the 1905 law was far more extreme than later interpretations developed over the course of the 20th Century. Despite the exceptions found within the 1905 decree itself, the resulting split was both effective and clear. Consequently, what defined secularism at the time of the 1905 law was entirely based upon France's combative history between the anticlerical, antimonarchical, and lay factions of society. The outcome was a traumatic division that diminished the widespread influence of Catholicism in France. As the 20th Century progressed, a series of both positive and negative interactions between the Church and State followed, causing the once definitive definition of secularism to become increasingly ambiguous.

Though the 1905 law resulted in a brutal separation between Church and State, by the 1920s, France had begun to shift towards reconciliation with the Catholic Church. What prompted this movement was the State's realization that religion was a necessary component of society and needed to be recognized as such. This sentiment, along with an overall appreciation for religion within French culture, increased significantly due to the onset of war and the substantial participation by France's populace. In this way, World War I proved to be a critical period by establishing an environment that permitted a positive rapport between the Church and State to grow so that by 1920, the Catholic Church witnessed its presence increase to a substantial degree.

Over the course of the war, 32,699 priests were mobilized and fought in combat amongst lay soldiers.²⁰ The camaraderie that flourished in the trenches challenged enduring anti-Catholic and anticlerical stigmas, and offered a revitalized appreciation for Catholicism. Rather than associate the religion with the overbearing and oppressive

²⁰ Latourette, Kenneth Scott. *Christianity in a Revolutionary Age; a History of Christianity in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1973.

institution of the past, French soldiers began to see Catholicism as an admirable organization that inspired hope and provided emotional support. Seizing the opportunity, the Church began to drift away from involvement with political issues, and instead direct its attention to focusing on religious matters and “permitting the emergence of a more ‘genuine’ Christianity.”²¹ In 1921, diplomatic relations with the Vatican were renewed after Pius X had denied them in response to France’s 1905 legislation separating Church and State.

This surge of Catholic support continued in 1924 when Prime Minister Herriot attempted to “break off relations with the Vatican, expel the religious orders, and revise the special education statute of Alsace and Lorraine.”²² Confronted with a united Catholic resistance, *Fédération Nationale Catholique* (FNC), the proposed legislation failed. The FNC was the first nationwide organization formed with the intent to defend Catholic schools against the growingly secular French government. Though its presence ultimately declined, its existence remains noteworthy as it underscores the rampant rise of Catholicism that occurred during the interwar period in France. This shift is further reflected in the presence of additional Catholic movements within the Catholic Action, the all-encompassing name for the various groups that emerged and gained popularity within this period based on the intent to increase the Catholic influence on French society.

The French populations’ increased acceptance of Catholicism not only persisted, but also flourished during the outbreak and aftermath of the Second World War. Toward the end of World War II, Catholicism was experiencing a full-on revival within the French state, which was epitomized by the emergence of the first Christian-democratic Party, *Mouvement Républicain Populaire* (MRP). A critical step for the historically tenuous relationship between the State and religion, the MRP was founded in 1944 with the goal of establishing common ground between Catholicism and the French Republic’s emphasis on democracy, liberty, and, social progress. This Catholic alignment with democratic principles was a pivotal move, demonstrating the shift to an increasingly progressive relationship between Church and State during the 20th Century.

²¹ Chadwick, 1.

²² Wykes, 222.

With the spirit of resistance profoundly present, a sentiment emerged shortly after World War II that prompted the construction of a new constitution, the Constitution of 1946. The newly adopted constitution was proposed by the MRP, a first time majority, illustrating the ongoing shift in relations between the Church and State.²³ Declaring secularism as an attribute of the Republican state, the Constitution of 1946 stated that, “La France est une République indivisible, laïque, démocratique et sociale.”²⁴ The 1946 Constitution’s enactment provided a new spirit of secularity that greatly differed from that which was expressed in 1905, as evidenced by the Christian-Democrats majority within the French Assembly. This new conception of secularity was no longer defined by separation, but instead understood as the merging of the religious with the nonreligious, exemplified by the fact that Catholics were evidently in agreement with the notion of secularism as held by the French Republic.

The Catholic Church’s blooming period was fully expressed in its vocalization of a new perspective concerning the way in which the State enacted its secularist objectives. This shift further prompted the Catholic Church to adopt a dialogue of understanding where,

...Secularism is neither an enemy to be fought...nor a principle, which has to be tolerated in the name of survival. It creates a proper, open environment for religious faith to flourish, and the Church must therefore further engage seriously and positively both with secularism and with the complex, pluralist society in which Christians live and work, since it has much to learn from both.²⁵

By reestablishing itself as a modern institution willing to compromise with the ideologies of French secularism, the Catholic Church was able to enter the modern era and change the way in which religion related to the secular state.

The statute concerning the redefinition of secularism found within the 1946 Constitution was officially validated in the 1958 Constitution which writes, “La France est une République indivisible, laïque, démocratique et sociale. Elle assure l’égalité devant la loi de tous les citoyens sans distinction d’origine, de race ou de religion. Elle

²³ Langlois, Claude. “Depuis soixante ans la République est laïque: Réflexions sur une « vocation » tardive.” *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d’histoire* 87.3 (2005): 11. *CrossRef*.

²⁴ Constitution de 1946, IVe République, Article 1.

²⁵ Chadwick, 6.

respecte toutes les croyances. Son organisation est décentralisée.”²⁶ In its emphasis on the equality of all citizens, regardless of religion, origin, or race, the principles of laïcité and secularism have undergone a shift that can be fully understood in the context of diversity and growing pluralism within the French state.

²⁶ Constitution du 4 octobre 1958, Article 1.

Chapter III: Modern Concerns Facing Secular France

Religion and Education in France

Far from a stable trajectory, the relationship between religion and the State has undergone a history of oscillating interactions which continues to challenge the way in which laïcité is both understood and incorporated within the contemporary era. One significant domain where the Church and State have repeatedly confronted each other is concerning the role of education. Catholicism has been heavily intertwined with French education, going as far back to what is referred to as ‘the war of the two Frances.’ This conflict revolved around the growing division between the clerical and anticlerical and resulted in widespread implications in a number of societal domains, most notably that of education.

Until the 19th Century, France’s public education was not only entirely religious-based, but also the Education Minister was the Minister of Religious Affairs, as well as a bishop.²⁷ Thus, religion and education were inherently connected. In France’s gradual move towards secularity, the statutes established throughout this period focused primarily on removing religious content from the state school’s curriculum. The Jules Ferry legislation of 1882-1886 resulted in an adoption of secular neutrality within the State school system so that:

...No religious teaching was given in the state-supported schools, no religious emblems, or pictures adorned the walls, no access was given to the present in the primary, and later, the technical schools. In the lycées chaplains might use allotted rooms for individual advice and instruction if requested, but they received no state salary and could teach only outside school hours.²⁸

Though these measures evolved from the Republic’s desire to remove the Church’s pervasive influence from State institutions, the State was compelled to ascertain a compromise rather than retain hostility. Therefore, amendments were included, such as the establishment of Thursday as a holiday so that parents would have the ability to have their children participate in religious tutoring, as a way to cooperate with the Church rather than outright dismiss its teachings.

²⁷ Salton, 33.

²⁸ Wykes, 219.

Despite the public schools' intent to exist as secular spaces defined by an appreciation of tolerance and impartiality, the challenge to integrate moral education inevitably arose. What emerged in the public schools was the identification with 'the republican régime' or the "belief in the sovereignty of reason and science a love of humanity, and an optimistic confidence in human progress towards an ideal society."²⁹ Initially, Catholics perceived this 'republican religion' as an offensive attack on the Church. In response, Catholics argued that, "the school without God was the school against God, that it was based on false principles and had disastrous consequences," for students.³⁰ Though these tensions persisted well into the 20th Century, they were gradually lessened as a result of the Catholic Church's slow reconciliation with the State that emerged during the early years of World War I.

Although minor strides were made, educational conflicts between the Catholic Church and State continued to arise throughout the 20th Century, often in relation to questions concerned with the interpretation of laïcité. This ambiguity encompassing the definition of laïcité was far from new, and between the years of 1946 and 1980, it was frequently associated as being, "a byword not for constitutional consensus but for a still smoldering conflict over public subsidies for private schools in which more than 90 percent of them [were] Catholic."³¹

It is because of the widespread and contradictory interpretations regarding the implementation of laïcité-based principles, particularly in regards to its function within public institutions, that the topic has become increasingly discussed in the modern era. After the initial 1905 separation, it was uncertain to what extent the State would provide citizens with effective means for individual religious practice within the realm of education. Therefore, to ensure that religiously minded citizens would not be stigmatized, chaplains were introduced into various State institutions including the military, prisons, hospitals, and schools.³² Additionally, parents who firmly believed that it was within their rights to provide their children with a religious education challenged the lack of religious

²⁹ Ibid., 220.

³⁰ Ibid., 221.

³¹ Baubérot, Jean. "Laïcité and the Challenge of 'Republicanism.'" *Modern & Contemporary France* 17.2 (2009): 189–198. *CrossRef*.

³² Troper, 1277.

instruction within the French public school system. This was addressed and later remedied by the inclusion of a law that provided, “school schedules must be changed in a way as to allow children to receive a religious education outside the public schools.”³³ But in regards to funding, both perspectives presented strong arguments as to how involved the state needs to be. Concerning the notion of neutrality, two interpretations emerged where,

...One may believe that the neutrality of the state prohibits providing any material assistance, and in particular financial assistance, to private religious schools; or, on the other hand, one may argue that if the state provides no support, parents who send their children to such schools suffer discrimination on the basis of their religion because they do not reap the benefit of free education as do the parents of students in public schools.³⁴

Legally, both perspectives have been incorporated into laws in an effort to appease concerned citizens. Prior to 1959, the idea of “public funds for public schools, private funds for private schools” reigned. In 1959, this shifted when a law was introduced that allowed private schools to enter into contracts with the state where the salaries of teachers and other specific costs were to be paid by the State, “provided that those teachers had earned certain degrees and that the content of the programs were analogous to that of the programs in public schools.”³⁵

Even before the 1959 law, there had been legislation in 1951 that had emerged as a way to aid private schools in France, complicating the question of education further. Known as ‘Marie Law,’ this legislation allowed students at private secondary schools the ability to gain government scholarships. Though indirect, the Marie Law offered aid to Catholic schools by way of the parents and students, as opposed to directly funding the institution. This momentum was furthered in 1952, when government scholarships were offered to students in Catholic faculties, and later when the Barangé subsidies stemming from the 1951 law were expanded to include children between the ages of three and sixteen.³⁶ By 1959, it could be argued that Catholic schools performed an indispensable

³³ Ibid., 1277.

³⁴ Ibid., 1277.

³⁵ Ibid., 1278.

³⁶ Wykes, 226.

public service; this argument subsequently influenced the Debré government to enact the Debré law of 1959, giving direct aid to private schools.³⁷ Four options existed for private schools as a part of this law:

They could remain entirely independent of the state and receive no subsidy; they could choose to be fully integrated into the public system; they could enter into a ‘simple contract’ with the state, whereby they underwent state supervision in return for the payment of their teachers’ salaries and for the local authorities contribution to their running costs; they could enter into a ‘contract of association’ with the state, whereby they received remuneration for all running costs. The Marie and Barangé concessions were to continue...³⁸

By 1964, out of the 14,700 Catholic schools, 11,126 had a ‘simple contract’ and 583 had a ‘contract of association’ illustrating the significant impact of Debré law, as well as the significant strides the Catholic community made as a result of the post-World War II religious revival.³⁹

In addition to subsidized funding, the education question often incited debates concerning the practice of religious neutrality within the French public school system’s curriculum. The overwhelming concern centered on whether it is possible for educators to remain fully neutral when discussing religious content, especially as Catholicism remains a vital component of French history. Should teachers promote logical thinking and reason instead? Or in doing so are they promoting antireligious sentiment or even atheism? Further, to what extent should the public school system provide students with moral education? Or, should secular morality remain only as a part of the private domain?

Once again opposing propositions arise. Some believe the schools should follow a curriculum of total abstention in regards to moral education. Others feel “that such a solution is dangerous for the maintenance of social cohesion, because in different social groups diverse value systems are produced that may be mutually incompatible.”⁴⁰ If the

³⁷ Bosworth, William. *Catholicism and Crisis in Modern France ; French Catholic Groups at the Threshold of the Fifth Republic*. N.p., 1962. *Open WorldCat*.

³⁸ Wykes, 227.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Troper, 1278.

State were to impose secular morality into education (i.e. by encouraging principles of tolerance, patriotism, the republic, civil rights, democracy, etc.) then the schools would no longer stand as politically neutral institutions. Based on its status as a public domain, schools face a variety of challenges in regard to religion, as it is not only required to respect *laïcité*, but also account for the diversity of the French population. From the modern perspective, this ‘diversity’ is directly related to religion and the rising concerns over the problematic ‘visibility’ of Islam within the public sphere.

The 2003 Stassi Report exemplifies the French Republic’s challenge to establish a clear definition of *laïcité* amidst the widespread opposition regarding both its meaning and practice. In 2004, a law was passed based on the recommendation of the Stassi Commission in favor of legislation that would regulate the donning of religious symbols in public schools. On March 3, 2004, a law amending the education code was applied which included an article that declared, “In public elementary schools, middle schools and high schools, the donning of signs or dresses by which the students ostensibly manifest a religious adherence are banned.”⁴¹ The debate that followed was centered on the question of whether this interpretation of *laïcité* could be considered inclusionary or exclusionary. Proponents of the law defended its enactment by upholding the French tradition of secularism by redefining *laïcité* to reflect the modern and diverse culture of France. In contrast, opponents “emphasized that the law was in contradiction with *laïcité*, or that it was raising and fighting manufactured problems and evading the real problems of gender inequality, racism, and unemployment.”⁴² To what extent did this law originate from prejudice is uncertain, but the result is evident: integral aspects that define the Muslim religion are incompatible with the French definition of a citizen. In its defense of social secularism as a means to fight discrimination, the Stasi Commission declared that,

...Communitarian extremism develops against a background of social unease; secularism has no meaning or legitimacy unless equal opportunity is guaranteed throughout the country, the diverse histories on which our national community is based are recognized, and multiple identities are respected.⁴³

⁴¹ Akan, Murat. “*Laïcité* and Multiculturalism: The Stasi Report in Context.” *The British Journal of Sociology* 60.2 (2009): 237–256.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 238.

⁴³ Baubérot, Jean. “La *laïcité* française : républicaine, indivisible, démocratique et sociale.”

Despite such remarks, as France has become increasingly diverse, the concern has grown from a focus on education reform to questioning the myth of French identity and further examining how religion plays into the conception of cultural identity and French citizenship.

Religion and Citizenship

The construction of citizenship within the French Republic rests upon the subdual of individual beliefs, backgrounds and cultures in favor of the promotion of a collective ‘French’ identity. Imposed as a way to cultivate a sense of unity under common values, problems arise when citizens strongly identify with religion and feel that the State is unfairly restricting individual’s ability to express their religious beliefs. In the modern era, the rise of Islam in France is primarily cited as the example of this challenge to redefine identity to be compatible with religion. This increase of practicing Muslims has reawakened an array of anxieties concerning the visibility of religion within the public domain. At its core, this matter involves more than religious affiliation, and instead prompts the question of the possibility of assimilation into French society that continues to be defined by conflicting constructions of republicanism, identity, citizenship and religion. In France, “naturalization is perceived as involving not only a change in legal status, but a change in nature, a change in political and cultural identity, a social transubstantiation that immigrants have difficulty imagining, let alone desiring.”⁴⁴ Therefore, the critical problem is the result of Islam’s cultural component that is considered as being divergent from the French approach to citizenship.

There are a variety of reasons for the increasing opposition to the rise of the Islamic faith within the French Republic, especially as it relates to issues of laïcité. One only needs to briefly consult the wide array of literature documenting France’s 2004 headscarf ban in public schools to realize how fervent reactions were, and still remain, on this issue over the ‘visibility’ of religious beliefs. As a part of the public domain, public schools are required to follow a policy of neutrality. Therefore, apparel (such as Islamic headscarves) seemingly challenges not only the neutrality of the school but also the

Cités 52.4 (2012): 11. *CrossRef*.

⁴⁴ Brubaker, Rogers. *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1992.

conception of French identity above individual interests. It is from the interpretation of secularity in the public domain as necessarily neutral and separate that the conflict develops and adds to the complexities that outline the nature of the relationship between religion, citizenship and identity.

Demonstrated through the enactment of regulations, including the headscarf ban in 2004 and the burqa ban in 2010, religion continues to be cited as the primary source of societal instability.⁴⁵ Proponents of these bans interpreted the headscarf as a tangible rejection of the national identity as it possesses an observable connection to both a religion and culture other than French. In addition, overly simplistic representations of the headscarf, as a ‘yoke,’ and ‘instrument of oppression,’ and a ‘symbol’ of Islamic fundamentalism only added fuel to the rapidly growing fire.⁴⁶ In many ways this stereotypic reaction is the result of the colonization/decolonization process which “has played a major role in the representation of an alien form of religiosity, incompatible—first and foremost incompatible because inferior, subsequently because dangerous—with republican values.”⁴⁷ The basis of these republican values emerged from the Enlightenment’s conception of citizenship as freedom found through individual submission to the law. At the time, this was encouraged to continue the move away from the dominance of religion to encourage more logical and rational forms of government that would not be subject to the indeterminable inclinations of despotism. This notion of French citizenship evolved to eliminate a citizens’ recognition of any identity beyond the state so that:

The state, in effect, does not content itself with defining the legal conditions of citizenship, which are otherwise socially constituted: it also has the right and the duty to create and reinforce social cohesion and, thus, to contribute to the forging of citizenship. It is not merely the gathering together of citizens that the state

⁴⁵ Berlinerblau, Jacques, ed. *Secularism on the Edge: Rethinking Church-State Relations in the United States, France, and Israel*. First edition. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

⁴⁶ Baubérot, 194.

⁴⁷ Liogier, Raphaël. “Laïcité on the Edge in France: Between the Theory of Church-State Separation and the Praxis of State-Church Confusion.” *Macquarie Law Journal* 9 (2009): 25–45.

makes possible; it is the state that creates citizenship itself.⁴⁸

This is the reason that Islam continues to be viewed as a threat to the sanctity of neutrality in the public sphere. As a religion, Islam incorporates cultural elements and stipulates rules that believers are required to follow, including regulations on appearance. Therefore, many Muslims elect to submit to these conventions, even though they overtly contradict what it means to be a French citizen.

The concern over Islam is amplified further by questions over the extent to which the State should intervene in religious or cultural matters visible in public domains. Despite the term *laïcité* evoking the notion of a clear separation between the civic and religious realms, in practice it respects a similar structure as the notion behind French citizenship. Therefore, the state exercises a degree of control over religious matters and arguably retains an activist role. In regard to Islam,

The default assumption was that the burqa and niqab could not be regarded as genuine expressions of private choice. Even if, ostensibly, these garments were worn voluntarily, without direct coercion, this was assumed to be the product of overwhelming social and communitarian pressure—of background domination if not always direct interference...thus the full veil was depicted as both an instrument and symptom of ‘alienation.’⁴⁹

Regardless if the above quotation is accurate or not in its observation, it underscores the issue over how involved the State ‘should’ be in matters that directly oppose the public domain’s adherence to social cohesion and stress on cultural integration. Based upon the 1905 law, the French State has the responsibility to enforce the condition of neutrality “that is not only negative (all religious beliefs are admitted yet no religion is officially recognized), but also positive (public authorities must intervene to guarantee religious freedom).”⁵⁰ This denotes the duty of the State to ensure the ability for all citizens to practice religion freely within their daily lives. Given this principle, should it be inferred that individual religious freedom is subordinate to citizenship? An answer remains ambiguous as the relationship between French citizenship and religion is intrinsically

⁴⁸ Troper, 1268.

⁴⁹ Daly, Eoin. “Reframing the Universalist Republic: Legal Pluralism in the French Periphery.” *Social & Legal Studies* 24.4 (2015): 531–553.

⁵⁰ Salton, 32.

complex. Ultimately what emerges is the sustained conflict over the varying definitions of laïcité where,

“The resistances are those of an older cognitive field, restricted in its views to a ‘neutralizing-ethicizing’ form of laïcité, while the claims of the Muslim pupils fit in with the lineaments of a still emerging, increasingly pluralistic cognitive field...this negotiation, however, still remains tributary to a fixed representation, both ideologically and organizationally centralized.”⁵¹

Although the concepts that were established in the law of 1905 are very much relevant today, it is critical to note that the cultural landscape differs drastically and legislation needs to be adapted and applied with the contemporary climate in mind.

Religion and Identity

Historically, religion has been closely linked to formations of identity and individual perceptions of religious identity continue to be challenged amidst the principles of laïcité. Although France became further secularized due to a gradual decline in religious practice, debates over how to incorporate religion in society remained. In many ways, this shift to a more atheistic society enhanced the perception that the suppression of individual beliefs was an essential element of the public domain, and thus necessary for the existence of communal unanimity. This resulted in a changing definition of Christianity within French culture, which led to the formation of modern Catholic identity amidst an increasingly secularized France.

Unlike Islam, Catholicism has a far-reaching historical context that has allowed its prolonged existence in France to remain relatively unopposed contemporarily. This is partially due to its integration into French culture, but also because it lacks the same concerns over ‘visibility’ that Islam provokes. However, it is critical to note that at one point, Catholicism endured much the same judgment that Islam faces presently. Even though the 1905 law offered more freedom for religious expressions than the Organic Articles of 1802 that had preceded it, legislation was still proposed to reactivate Article 43 of the Articles “requiring priests to dress in the French manner.”⁵² Although it was

⁵¹ Liogier, 36.

⁵² Baubérot, 15.

rejected, the suggestion of such an amendment exemplifies the significance of cultural climate and how critical of a factor it is in regard to religious identification. Though initially in opposition, over the course of centuries Catholicism has reemerged as an institution supportive of the secular initiatives of the State. This evolution is central to the changing religious landscape within France and the new way in which Catholics identify with their religious beliefs.

In 1930, as the Catholic revival was occurring in France, “the key determinant of belonging was attendance at liturgical worship, especially Mass.”⁵³ Though France became less religious overall, attending mass lost the significance it once held. For Catholics in contemporary French society, observance transitioned from the influence of social custom to being based entirely on personal commitment. What emerged was a secular modernity, which “has had the effect of creating a more metaphorical understanding of faith...doctrinal theology has given way to religious humanism.”⁵⁴ In France, this continues to be exhibited by the clear conception of secular values and morality that possess no authority by the Catholic Church but are incorporated into religious practices nonetheless.

The influence of Vatican II, which occurred in 1962, is also a significant factor in the shift towards greater acceptance of French secular society. The reforms issued provided the foundation for Christians to adopt a more desacralized worldview. This shifting perspective challenges the way in which a religious identification is contextually understood by making it more compatible with the secularity of French culture. Further,

The fact that Catholicism is not incompatible with pluralism implies new ways of belonging to the Church. The modern believer no longer looks to the Church ‘de la prendre en charge définitivement, mais lui demande seulement de l’inscrire dans une histoire, dans une mémoire.’ The Church no longer appears as a unified body, capable of integrating the totality of its members in a harmonious and hierarchically structured world...believers identify with the institution to varying degrees: some might embrace the whole of Catholic discipline and dogma, others might view Church membership as no more than an affirmation of belonging to a

⁵³ Chadwick, 1.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

Christian culture. For many contemporaries, traditional religious language has become pure folklore, signaling the end of ‘un christianisme objectif.’⁵⁵

This progression toward the secularization of faith is visible beyond a general sentiment amongst Catholics. Vatican II imposed the use of vernacular speech resulting in liturgies becoming increasingly reflective of everyday speech and losing the impersonality and lack of understanding that often accompanied the Latin versions of the past. Participation also was encouraged in new ways as a result, most noticeable in the priest’s turn towards the congregation.

Despite this modernization, there still existed a crisis of identity within the faith in relation to the priesthood and its diminishing numbers. In 2000, there were roughly 100 diocesan priests ordained each year compared to 1970, where there were more than 1000 ordinations per year.⁵⁶ These numbers continue to decline, resulting in a severe lack of priests to say Mass within the Parishes. With this ongoing regression, how Catholics identify to their religion is undoubtedly fluctuating, and as a result,

...There has been a decline in the vocations and religious practice generally, that doctrinal certainties have evaporated. In short, that the Church has become a pale reflection of its old self. Ignorance of the rudiments of Christianity among French pupils in schools is judged a symptom of the wider decline of the historical, literary and philosophical learning that underpinned French Catholic culture.⁵⁷

This decline is noticeable in all aspects of Catholicism, including ritualistic practices. In 1972, 100% of practicing Catholics said they intended to baptize their child, and ten years later, this percentage decreased to 87%.⁵⁸ Further, in 1966 roughly 80% of the French population defined itself as Catholic, and in 2013 only 51% did with 5% attending Sunday services regularly.⁵⁹

Ultimately what arises is the question of how one can identify with religion within a secular society. Whether that religion is Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism, etc., the heart of the question is the same: if a national French identity is positioned as the primary

⁵⁵ Ibid., 3.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 6.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 13.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 12.

⁵⁹ Berlinerblau, 87.

association, how does a religious citizen merge their faith with the secular principles of the State? Further, in respect to the gradual decline of religious practice, how will the religious community sustain the rise of secularity? In the case of Catholicism, is the trend of cultivating a more open, communal presence harming its ability to maintain tradition?

Chapter IV: The Establishment and Continuation of Religious Programming in France

The History of Media's Development in France

The media in France has a unique history based upon several factors including its delay in development, especially in regard to television, as well as its strong State influence that continues within the modern era. In comparison to other leading industrial nations, France's involvement with television was relatively minimalist. With experimenting beginning in the 1920s, it was only in 1935 that George Mandel, Minister of Posts and Telecommunications, had a new transmitter installed on top of the Eiffel tower, hoping to encourage a boost in engineering. Despite such attempts, by 1939, France was still developing while other countries, including the United Kingdom and Germany, had roughly 20,000 television sets, an average that France would not be able to reach until the 1950s.⁶⁰

World War II provided a critical backdrop for the development of French broadcasting. During this period, Germans in occupied territories of France set up a new station, Fernsehsender Paris. While the existence of the station itself disappeared with the Germans, the technological resources and equipment were left behind, and provided the foundation for the rapid growth of France's media presence. This led to the first broadcasted mass on December 24, 1948 at Notre Dame Cathedral, an initiative led by Father Richard Picard of the Dominican Order.

At the time of the initial broadcast of the Midnight Mass in 1948, only 3,794 television sets were of use in France.⁶¹ A great deal of this lack of interest was due not only in part to the novelty of television and the French perception that it was a nonessential, but also by the limited range provided by the Eiffel Tower. Although the technology was available, it was not until the 1960s that coverage spread throughout the entire country, and by 1958, France had reached 1 million television sets. The following decade demonstrated a rapid rise in interest as sales of television sets reached over 10 million by 1969.⁶²

⁶⁰ Rozat, Pascal. "Histoire de La Télévision : Une Exception Française ?" *InaGlobal*. N.p., 9 Dec. 2010. Web. 19 Mar. 2017.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁶² Kuhn, Raymond. *The Media in France*. London ; New York: Routledge, 1995.

In 1945, prior to this expansion of broadcasting, the State, under de Gaulle, held a monopoly of the airwaves. While it is argued that this monopoly was set in place to dissuade the rise of outside powers based upon financial contribution, it also provided the backdrop for the history of France's close connection between government and media. Driven by a desire to provide favorable coverage of his policies, de Gaulle sought to utilize television as a mode of garnering public support and did so through a strict control of the news broadcasted. The broadcasting monopoly continued to prevail, but with a more deliberate policy to support it.

Throughout the 1960s, the Office de Radiodiffusion-Télévision Française (ORTF) broadcasting was an instrument of government policy that led to wide array of dissatisfaction amongst State employees and constituents alike. In 1959, the Radiodiffusion-télévision française (RTF), which had previously been a government organization, was reorganized into a public industrial and commercial institution. Five years later, under the Act of June 27, 1964, the RTF was once again transformed into the ORTF. Despite this appearance of sovereignty, the government remained in control over all the information distributed through the network. By the end of the 1960s, the ORTF had reached new heights in its programming, production, and transmission as television had replaced the press and radio as the primary source for national and international news.

The ORTF's close ties to the State's political policies were maintained throughout the 1960s, despite the limiting benefits that accompanied such practice. President George Pompidou, who called the ORTF "the voice of France," encouraged political control, despite the revelation that during the student revolts of May 1968, the government had censored what news was shown to the public. Instead, new management was instituted and roughly 60 journalists were fired in pursuit of maintaining a strict command of produced content.

The 1970s saw a shift in governing practices with respect to the presence of ORTF. Under President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, the Act of August 7, 1974 was enacted and consequently split the ORTF into seven different public companies, resulting in three new channels in an attempt to renovate public television altogether. However, no reform was endorsed, and the key positions within broadcasting were directly appointed by

government officials. In fact, this close control fueled by the government's monopoly remained in effect until Socialists took power in the early 1980s and put the French broadcasting system through a substantial disruption and opened the doors to privatized interests.

Unlike comparative countries, which also saw the rise of privatized television throughout the 1980s, France was unique due to the substantial control continuing to be exerted by the government. Under Article 1 of the Act of July 29, 1982, it was proclaimed, "audiovisual communication is free," and resulted in the emergence of new private networks. Under François Mitterrand, the launch of these new channels continued, but the control of these privatized stations was assigned to investors who held close connections to the government. As a result of this sustained connection, the government issued regulations on privatization.

In 1981, President Mitterrand responded to the fears of Socialists continuing in the tradition of appointing political sympathizers to the top positions in broadcasting companies stating,

We do not want a purge, but nonetheless a certain number of command controls have to be held by men and women whose views correspond with those of the majority of the country. We must ensure that the policies desired by the majority, which we are putting into practice, are really implemented.⁶³

The 1982 statute was a critical component in the changing organization of French broadcasts. Under its terms, the Act of 1982 dissolved the state's monopoly and created Haute Autorité de la communication audiovisuelle, a new independent regulatory body, whose existence was meant to establish a nonpartisan buffer between the State and public service broadcasting companies.

In addition, under the decree, licenses for private broadcasters were accompanied by strict stipulations that covered numerous obligations including advertisement, financing, and even issues as "youth protection."⁶⁴ Additionally, though it retained its presence as a public service, state television was required to "ensure honesty,

⁶³ Ibid., 170.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 6.

independence, and pluralism in news coverage,” as well as to “give access to cultural, social, professional, spiritual, and philosophical groups” in an effort to spread French culture and increase knowledge regarding its diverse population.⁶⁵

The objective behind the Act of 1982 was not only to break up the legal monopoly, but also the political monopoly as well. Broadcasting control had become an essential political component and this practice was thought to end with the implementation of the Haute Autorité. Despite its high expectations, many of the important features of French television remained outside of its control, resulting in the Haute Autorité’s inability to implement true change.

Due to its strong history of governmental control, whether television operates within the public or private domain remains unclear. As an instrument of state propaganda, the opinions voiced would appear to fall within the public sphere. However, this question becomes more complex when considering the existence of religious programming on public service stations. As all religious worship remains universally restricted to the private domain, the presence of these programs would seem to be incompatible with secularist principles. However, this apparent discordancy is warranted based upon French societies’ history of variable opinions on the nature of the relationship between Church and State, and further how to integrate religion within a secularized nation.

The Historical Presence of Religious Programming on Radio and Televisions

The history of the Catholic Church’s relationship with the French Republic is evidently a complicated situation grounded in the historical vacillation of events, opinions, and interpretations. This is a critical factor in regard to the early establishment of religious programming as public sentiment had shifted to view the Church in a more positive light as a result of the Catholic revival that occurred Postwar in France throughout the late 1940s and into the early 1960s. It was during this time that France saw the progression of society as distinctly shaped by this period of flourishing Catholicism.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 173.

The implementation of religious programs on public service stations stems from the rise of public radio in the late 1920s.⁶⁶ Due to its novelty as a mode of consumption, the radio and later televised broadcasts of religious programs began outside any legal framework.⁶⁷ Interest was therefore generated because of the low financial cost of production combined with a growing curiosity to explore the range of techniques available within the audiovisual realm. Further, the political public broadcasting monopoly held by the State established a situation that minimized potential for any societal contest.

The presence of later religious broadcasts was provided for under the 1986 Statute of Communication, which sought to ensure public television reflected the diversity of French society, by stipulating the quality and diversity of programs to ensure equality, transparency, and nondiscrimination by all television services offered by service distributors. Through the promotion of pluralism, it underscores the republican objective to encourage social cohesion and combat discrimination in the field of audiovisual communication.⁶⁸ Three main objectives were behind the 1986 Statute on Freedom of Communication, more commonly referred to as “Loi L  otard.” These objectives included: to reduce the level of state ownership within the French media, to make the system more competitive and less regulated, and to replace the Socialist regularity authority with a new body that would be more considerate to the concerns of the Right. It is under this law that the program, *Le Jour du Seigneur* explicitly cites its validation to operate within the realm of public broadcasting.

Despite its claim to uphold a Pluralist agenda, France 2, and more generally, Comit   Fran  ais de Radio-T  l  vision (CFRT), lacks full inclusion in regards to the religious cultures and practices depicted within the French community. Only specific religions are depicted and the content provided deals exclusively with Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism, Orthodox Church, Oriental Christian, Buddhist and Islam.

⁶⁶ Malherbe, Cl  ment. “Comment Les Religions Ont Trouv   Leur Place    La Radio et La T  l  vision.” *INA global* (2017): n. pag.

⁶⁷ Oliva, Anne-Marie. “Emissions Religieuses et Service Public Audiovisuel.” *Droit et Cultures* 1.51 (2006): 103–112.

⁶⁸ Loi n   86-1067 du 30 septembre 1986 relative    la libert   de communication (Loi L  otard).

Therefore, while in many ways religious plurality is embraced, it is not without an array of limitations and restrictions.

Le Jour du Seigneur

As the oldest program still on air in France, *Le Jour du Seigneur* was critical in the development of religious broadcasting due to the legacy it established by opening the pathway for other religions to enter into the public domain. The initial broadcast consisted of a live airing of midnight mass on December 24, 1948 held at The Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. As the initiative of Father Richard Pichard, a Dominican priest, the live broadcast of the mass was an extraordinary feat as it was the first time in the world a mass had ever been televised. The program itself was started two years later, in 1950, under the name, *Le Jour du Seigneur*, or ‘The day of the Lord,’ as a part of simultaneously established Comité français de radio-télévision.

Witnessing television’s development, Father Pichard was convinced of its importance not only as a source of news and information for citizens but also as a means by which to celebrate and share the Christian faith. As a result, he was compelled to find a place for the Church, leading to the broadcast of the mass. The first televised mass was strategically designed down to the first image that was to be aired. Father Pichard was influential in this decision stating, “I really want the first broadcast live, the statue of the Virgin and the infant placed in front of the right pillar, which was used in the conversion of Paul Claudel on Christmas 1886...”⁶⁹ Cardinal Suhard agreed, declaring, “The Virgin will be the first image that the camera broadcasts from Notre Dame.” The choice was made because Suhard believed that, “It is with these tangible things that we are driven to love the intangible things.”⁷⁰ Thus, by opening the premier broadcast with the image of the Virgin Mary and her child, both Pichard and Suhard sought to envelope viewers with an unmistakable symbolic representation of the Catholic faith. As the entirety of the content for this first airing consisted solely of the mass itself, imagery played a crucial role as it allowed broadcasters the ability to evoke various sentiments without vocal interruptions.

⁶⁹ Bernier, Aliette, and Pierre Tchernia. *L’Évangile à la télévision: le jour du Seigneur*. Paris : Paris: Cerf, CFRT/Voir et dire., 1999.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 14.

After the initial broadcast of the mass aired, reactions were immediate and captured by the press who continued to emphasize the technological significance that this event represented. In France Soir it was reported that,

Deux fois plus nombreux que les années précédentes, les croyants se bousculaient et faisaient la queue devant les grilles de la cathédrale illuminée. C'est que pour la première fois de l'histoire de l'Église, une messe était télévisée. Plus de quarante projecteurs, trois caméras de télévision, trois caméras de secours, des kilomètres de câbles avaient été installées dans la nef. Une voiture spéciale de retransmission utilisait en outre une antenne dressée jusqu'à plus de 150 mètres au-dessus du niveau de la Seine pour contacter le poste spécial de la tour Eiffel.⁷¹

Due to the newness of television, an explanation of the technical equipment utilized was frequently discussed within these primary accounts. What is critical, however, is just how extensive the technical setup was for this first broadcast, a clear example of the challenges of working with television in its early years. This general amazement towards the entirety of the event was also reflected in the 26-27 December issue of 1948 *Le Monde*, which stated,

Après les microphones de la radiodiffusion sonore...les caméras de télévision ont pénétré dans un sanctuaire. L'idée d'associer des fidèles lointains à une cérémonie religieuse a été approuvée par le cardinal Suhard... «On a rapporté, a dit le cardinal-archevêque de paris dans son sermon, les conversions opérées grâce à la télévision. Les miracles de l'Évangile à travers des maisons. »⁷²

This account emphasizes how the technical magnitude of the event was not to be overshadowed by its moral content and goal behind the program's conception, to share the faith. It is this continued desire, to provide access to worship for practicing Catholics that has remained the central purpose of *Le Jour du Seigneur* over the course of its existence and offers an explanation as to why the mass continues to be an essential component of the overall program despite changes made to the structure of the show.

The legal justification for the existence of religious programming did not exist prior to the law of August 7, 1974, concerning the dissolution of the ORTF. The

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Bernier, 18.

reasoning for their continued existence is echoed in the law of 30 September 1986 (commonly referred to as Loi Leotard) on the freedom of communication that reads,

Il assure l'égalité de traitement ; il garantit l'indépendance et l'impartialité du secteur public de la communication audiovisuelle ; il veille à favoriser la libre concurrence et l'établissement de relations non discriminatoires entre éditeurs et distributeurs de services, quel que soit le réseau de communications électroniques utilisé par ces derniers, conformément au principe de neutralité technologique ; il veille à la qualité et à la diversité des programmes, au développement de la production et de la création audiovisuelles nationales ainsi qu'à la défense et à l'illustration de la langue et de la culture françaises. Il peut formuler des propositions sur l'amélioration de la qualité des programmes. Il veille au caractère équitable, transparent, homogène et non discriminatoire de la numérotation des services de télévision dans les offres de programmes des distributeurs de services.⁷³

Loi Leotard underscores the republican objective to encourage social cohesion and combat discrimination in the field of audiovisual communication through the promotion of pluralism. As religious beliefs are considered as being an element of French diversity, television networks that choose to air religiously based content frequently cite Loi Leotard as legal justification.

Over the course of its existence, the program itself has evolved from a focus on the Catholic mass alone to the incorporation of other religions and faith-based discussions. According to Father Phillippe Jaillot, Dominican priest and present producer of *Le Jour du Seigneur*, televised worship must always “réfléter la joie de croire,” a statement that echoes the ongoing mission of the program and network, CFRT.⁷⁴ The CFRT aims to broadcast content meant to demonstrate the Catholic culture, by showing its diversity of followers and spreading the Catholic message. In line with these goals, the full length Catholic mass on *Le Jour du Seigneur* is also way for people who do not have an opportunity to attend mass the ability to practice their faith and to foster a sense of

⁷³ Loi n° 86-1067 du 30 septembre 1986 relative à la liberté de communication (Loi Léotard-Version consolidée au 29 août 2016).

⁷⁴ Kessous, Mustapha. “Messe télévisée : les religions fidèles au poste.” *Le Monde.fr* 23 Dec. 2013. *Le Monde*. Web. 19 Mar. 2017.

religious community. This includes the infirmed, prisoners, and retirement home residents, amongst others. Presently, *Le Jour du Seigneur* exists as just one of the segments of “*Les Chemins de la foi*,” or “The Paths of Faith.” The entirety of the program, *Les Chemins de la foi*, airs regularly on Sundays on France 2 from 8:30AM until noon. Included within the program is content for Protestant, Judaism, Orthodox Church, Oriental Christian, Buddhist and Islam religions in addition to the Catholicism provided through *Le Jour du Seigneur*.

When the first mass aired it reached roughly 3,000 families in possession of a black and white television in France.⁷⁵ As the show began to develop and establish itself as a regular fixture on public service television, it cultivated a niche audience attracted to its content. Overall the demographics of this viewership remain fairly narrow, with an average viewer age of 69 years old. Of this population, 78% are older than 65, and approximately 67% are women.⁷⁶ Despite bringing in the largest percentage of viewers of all the programs within *Les Chemins de la foi*, *Le Jour du Seigneur* has continued to experience a steady decline in viewership over the course of its existence. In the 1970s, there was on average 3 million viewers; in 1995, this number decreased to roughly 2 million; by 2006 it was around 867,000; and in 2003 viewers were down to 560,000.⁷⁷ Presently, *Le Jour du Seigneur* boasts roughly 518,000 viewers on a weekly basis, the largest of all featured religions.

The way in which the entire program, *Les Chemins de la Foi*, is broken down accounts for the varying levels of viewers over the course of its airtime. The time allotted to each specified religion is determined by a variety of factors, including public service directorates, agreement with the Ministry of the Interior, and a consideration for the societal prominence of the various religious communities within France. As Catholics are the most numerous in France, they are therefore granted the greatest time slot at 90 minutes total, 45 of which are dedicated to the broadcast of mass, representing 43% of the total airtime available. The time allocated to Catholics has remained 90 minutes from its inception when Father Raymond Pichard negotiated having one and a half hours weekly on the public channel in 1948 with François Mitterrand, who held the position as

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Malherbe, “Comment Les Religions Ont Trouvé Leur Place À La Radio et La Télévision.”

Secretary of State for Information at the time. Though Pichard had asked for the time to ensure that the entirety of the hour-long mass would be aired, the extra time proved highly beneficial as it enabled *Le Jour du Seigneur* to expand its content to produce assorted magazines and documentaries before and after the live Mass.⁷⁸

Since its creation, *Le Jour du Seigneur* has undergone a number of content and editorial changes as a part of the ongoing effort to adjust the show's material for a modern audience and increase youth interest. While the mass component has persisted, the program has introduced faith-based documentaries, animation programs, and even short films and fictions within the remaining time allotment. Additionally, the shift to air *Le Jour du Seigneur* at 10:45AM instead of its initial 11AM time slot was a strategic move made to ensure that the greatest number of viewers would be engaged.⁷⁹ By introducing a greater variety of religious content beyond services and discussions, France 2 continues its mission to increase religious awareness and education.

Rising Controversy: Laïcité? Pluralism? Secularism?

While many Catholics were delighted about the public service based religious programming provided by *Le Jour du Seigneur*, even prior to the show's emergence in 1950, the program was widely contested and seen as controversial. A large part of the conflict surrounding the show was concerned with the notion of laïcité, as some viewers interpreted the show's presence as a clear violation of the principles enshrined within secularism. In response, various petitions were constructed, often deeming the program as an object of 'religious propaganda' and arguing for its removal from the public service station. One of these petitions remains active on change.org with over 7,000 signatures and quotes Article 2 of the law of December 9, 1905 that states, "The republic does not recognize, does not subsidize or pay stipends to any religion," as justification for terminating the program altogether.⁸⁰ Even though this claim has been addressed from a legal standpoint through the legislation outlined in Loi Léotard, this objection illustrates two critical concerns surrounding the existence of *Le Jour du Seigneur*: the variety of

⁷⁸ Guénois, Jean-Marie. "Le jour du Seigneur», la messe à domicile." *Le Figaro* 25 July 2009. *Le Figaro*. Web. 19 Mar. 2017.

⁷⁹ Malherbe, "Comment Les Religions Ont Trouvé Leur Place À La Radio et La Télévision."

⁸⁰ Loi du 9 décembre 1905 concernant la séparation des Eglises et de l'Etat.

ways the 1905 law is defined and incorporated within contemporary society, and the question of neutrality in relation to public service channels.

As previously discussed, what consistently appears in discussions on laïcité is the overwhelming inability to pinpoint one universally accepted definition. Instead, opposing positions, many of which derive from the statutes of the 1905 law, materialize with a focus on the legal interpretation of laïcité from a modern perspective. The problem with this line of thought, however, is its blatant dismissal of the lack of audiovisual representation present in 1905. In this way, these arguments, which base their validity on recalling facets of the 1905 law, fail to acknowledge the role of television as an entirely modern construction.

The role that television plays within society is not to be overlooked, especially as it relates to questions over laïcité. Just as the political and cultural situation was considerably different in 1905 than in 21st Century France, it is crucial to cite the vast changes that have also been through technological advances. As the source of news, information, and entertainment, television has emerged as a unique form of communication that has challenged the way in which individuals relate to the outside world. Public television provides an even more interesting perspective, as it goes beyond entertainment to advertise itself as representative of cultural interests. Due to its government sponsorship, the content provided is deemed to have a universally beneficial component, which theoretically appeals to all citizens, and is often expressed through educational based endeavors. Based upon how influential and ubiquitous television has become within the contemporary era, arguments that call for the removal of religious broadcasts and only reference the 1905 law, are unable to gain much traction. Although television is often considered an element of the public domain, the laws that dictate its activities are both independent of, and unrelated to, the laws concerning the presence of religion in the public sphere.

Considering this fact, the question of laïcité in regards to religious broadcasts becomes less about the implementation of secular principles and more about the role of pluralism in France. As the objective of public stations is driven by this necessity to provide informative content for all citizens, religious-based programs find ample provision in the assertion of encouraging education through exposure. Therefore, while

claims to its infringement of secular values appear valid, legally there is no evidence to support them as Loi n° 86-1067 clearly outlines the necessity of public channels to broadcast religious programs. The most recent amended version of Article 56 of Loi n° 86-1067 du 30 septembre 1986 relative à la liberté de communication, enforced on March 8, 2009, states:

France Télévisions programme le dimanche matin des émissions à caractère religieux consacrées aux principaux cultes pratiqués en France. Ces émissions sont réalisées sous la responsabilité des représentants de ces cultes et se présentent sous la forme de retransmissions de cérémonies cultuelles ou de commentaires religieux. Les frais de réalisation sont pris en charge par la société dans la limite d'un plafond fixé par les dispositions annuelles du cahier des charges.⁸¹

This legal framework not only compels public television to provide a diverse range of programming, including religiously based content on behalf of secularism, but also negates any concerns that arise over the question of exercising neutrality. Laure Baudouin, head of religious programming for France 2, reiterates this requirement stating, “Regarder ces émissions fait partie de l’éducation. Si elles sont diffusées sur le service public, c’est pour apprendre à se connaître les uns les autres. C’est l’une de nos missions que de promouvoir le vivre-ensemble.”⁸² Therefore, because religion is perceived as a cultural component, broadcasting is retained despite arguments that accuse religious programs of violating the State’s secular agenda.

Due to these religious programs’ standing as standard features on publicly sponsored networks, the financial support for religious broadcasting is procured through a variety of sources. France Télévisions stipulates,

Le coût financier de ces émissions est pris en charge par la société dans la limite d'un plafond fixé par le conseil d'administration de la société. Il est réparti entre les différents cultes en tenant compte, notamment, de leur représentativité respective. Les conditions de production sont fixées par un accord passé par la société avec quelques cultes, qualifié de protocole.⁸³

⁸¹ Loi n° 86-1067 du 30 septembre 1986 relative à la liberté de communication, Article 56.

⁸² Kessous, “Messe télévisée : les religions fidèles au poste.”

⁸³ Malherbe, “Comment Les Religions Ont Trouvé Leur Place À La Radio et La Télévision.”

On average, France Télévisions devotes roughly €10 million annually to its Sunday religious programming. However, Catholic programs are also funded through the CFRT, in which,

Le CFRT est une association actuellement présidée par Hugues de Chastellux et dirigée par Emmanuel Bonnet, Directeur Général. Un représentant de la Province Dominicaine de France siège à son conseil d'administration et son producteur, dominicain, est nommé par le président de la Conférence des Évêques de France pour un mandat de trois ans renouvelables. Aujourd'hui, c'est le frère Philippe Jaillot qui occupe cette fonction. Le CFRT vit principalement grâce à la générosité de ses 300 000 donateurs. Il emploie 60 salariés et fait en moyenne appel à 200 intermittents du spectacle par an pour assurer la fabrication de ses programmes.⁸⁴

Since *Le Jour du Seigneur* is co-produced by France Televisions, the program receives 50% of its financing from France TV, mainly through the provision of human and technical resources. The remaining budget is distributed through advertising, royalty, and funds donated by Catholic Associations.⁸⁵

The Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel (CSA) upholds this obligation to ensure that programs contain not only promote pluralism but also, “aucune incitation à la haine ou à la violence pour des raisons de race, de sexe, de mœurs, de religion ou de nationalité.”⁸⁶ Despite the CSA's attempt at regulation, complaints inevitably arise over the production of religious content. However, it is only when there are a large number of complaints that the CSA decides to get involved. Nicolas About, a member of the CSA since 2011, outlines the process stating, “On étudie à charge et à décharge. On entend les plaignants et les organismes mis en cause. S'il le faut, on consulte les autorités. Puis on rend une décision, mais jamais dans l'urgence. Il ne faut pas se laisser emporter par l'émotion et l'actualité.”⁸⁷ Therefore, although religious programming continues to be

⁸⁴ CFRT. “Organisation et Ressources.”

⁸⁵ Lecoeuvre, Sarah. “Quelle Place Pour La Religion À La Télévision?” *Le Figaro* (2015): n. pag.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

sensitive subject matter for a secular nation, its place has been clearly established through a number of legal means, thus cementing its ability to continue operating.

In Comparison to Other Religious Programs

The establishment of *Le Jour du Seigneur* as a weekly program in 1950 paved the way for a wide array of religiously based programming to follow in its footsteps. *Présence Protestante* was the first of these programs and was created in 1955 in response to the reaction of the Protestant community in France who wanted a separate program dedicated solely to their religion. Shortly thereafter, *La Source de vie*, a program centered on the Judaism and Israelite cult aired in 1962, initially for only 30 minutes once a month.⁸⁸ By 1963, *La Source de vie* was broadcast alternately with the bimonthly Orthodox show. Oriental Christianity was included in 1965 with the program *Chrêtiens orientaux*, a monthly 30-minute program. The first Muslim program was broadcast on July 18, 1982 was 15 minutes in length, and the second was broadcast on September 19, 1982 ran for 17 minutes.⁸⁹ Buddhism was the last religion added to *Les Chemins de foi* with the program *Sagesses bouddhistes* in 1997, following the official recognition of the Union Buddhiste de France (UBF) by the Ministry of the Interior.⁹⁰ Much like *Le Jour du Seigneur*, these programs have undergone a variety of changes in the attempt to maintain interest amongst a contemporary audience that is becoming increasingly less religious. In general, most changes have involved a shift to include greater amounts of reporting and documentaries as a way to emphasize the educational component. Presently, these programs remain focused on illustrating the importance of interreligious dialogue as a celebration of cultural diversity.

⁸⁸ Malherbe, "Comment Les Religions Ont Trouvé Leur Place À La Radio et La Télévision."

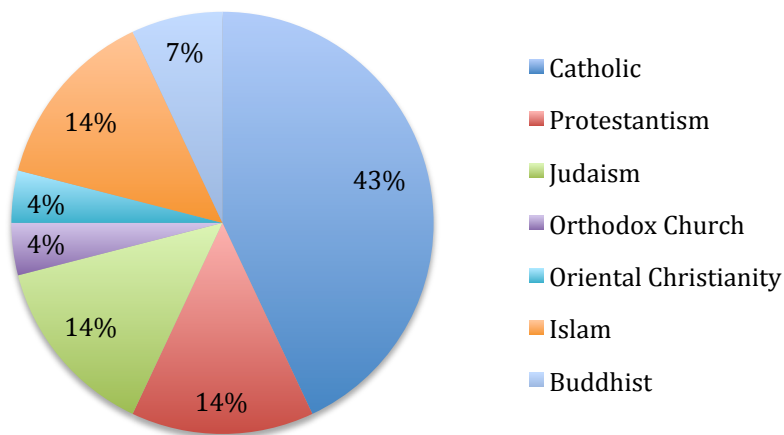
⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

Religious Programming on France 2:

Name of Program	Year Initiated	Religion Associated	Duration of Program
<u>Le Jour du Seigneur</u>	1949/1950	Catholicism	90 min
<u>Présence protestante</u>	1955	Protestantism	30 min
<u>La Source de vie</u>	1962	Judaism	45 min
<u>Judaïca</u>	1962	Judaism	15 min
<u>Orthodoxie</u>	1963	Orthodox Church	30 min
<u>Chrétiens orientaux</u>	1965	Oriental Christianity	30 min
<u>Islam</u>	1983	Islam	30 min
<u>À Bible Ouverte</u>	1985	Judaism	15 min
<u>Sagesses bouddhistes</u>	1997	Buddhist	15 min

**Distribution of Air Time
Granted to Each Religion on
Sunday Morning Broadcast**



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⁹¹ Malherbe, “Comment Les Religions Ont Trouvé Leur Place À La Radio et La Télévision.”

In addition to the Catholic content provided by *Le Jour du Seigneur* on France 2, privatized Catholic programming also exists on *KTO* in France. Established by Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger, *KTO* was launched on December 13, 1999.⁹² At a time where confusion over the place of the Church in society lingered, Lustiger believed the answer existed in the formation of a new perspective, and decided to create new outlets for Catholic media. What resulted was the formation of Radio Notre-Dame in 1981, and *KTO* in 1999.⁹³

What separates *KTO* from *Le Jour du Seigneur* is primarily based upon the guiding mission behind each endeavor, stemming from two different projects. *Le Jour du Seigneur* is driven by its place on public service television, keeping in mind both Christians and non-Christians alike to establish a program that is open and accessible to all. In addition, *Le Jour du Seigneur* continues to be the product of the Dominican brotherhood. Conversely, *KTO* maintains close ties with the Catholic Church, and in particular with the Conference of Bishops of France.⁹⁴ The mission of *KTO* states,,

KTO a été fondée afin de donner à l'Église les moyens d'annoncer le message de l'Évangile par tous les médias modernes, c'est-à-dire la télévision, Internet, et aujourd'hui les téléphones mobiles, tablettes, TV connectée... La chaîne est complémentaire de l'émission du dimanche matin "Le Jour du Seigneur" sur le service public (un partenariat a été crée en 2007 entre le *CFRT* et *KTO*). *KTO* s'adresse non seulement aux catholiques, mais à tous les « chercheurs de sens croyants ou non. »⁹⁵

Although claiming to be a network for both believers and nonbelievers, *KTO*'s content differs dramatically from *Le Jour du Seigneur*. First, it lacks the presence of the Catholic Mass that has been a vital component of *Le Jour du Seigneur* since its launch. Instead, *KTO* is a more training oriented association that provides programs related to the Church's current affairs. It is due to *KTO*'s connection to the Church of Paris that it also incorporates evangelizing content in the attempt to convert viewers to the faith.

⁹² "Repères Historiques." *Kto*.

⁹³ Jaillot, Philippe. Personal interview. 2 June 2017.

⁹⁴ "Présentation de KTO." *Kto*.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

Currently *KTO* operates under a collaboration agreement with *Le Jour du Seigneur* that was implemented by Cardinal André Vingt-Trois. After realizing the deficit built by *KTO* reached 4.6 million euros in 2005, Cardinal André Vingt-Trois threatened to file for bankruptcy if *Le Jour du Seigneur* did not step in to help.⁹⁶ The resulting agreement was created with the support of the Bishops' Conference in the form of co-productions and a financial loan. This co-production is witnessed in the program, *L'Esprit des Lettres* on *KTO*. Despite their mutual goal of sharing the Christian faith, *Le Jour du Seigneur* and the content produced on *KTO* differs dramatically based upon the varying missions and specific audience targeted by the two stations.

⁹⁶ Guénois, "Le jour du Seigneur», la messe à domicile."

Chapter V: Religious Programming on Public Broadcasting in Relation to the Principles of Laïcité

Pluralism's Challenge to Secularization

Though often disputed, the relationship between religious programming on public television and laïcité has been clearly established in the incorporation of various legal statutes that allow for the continued broadcasting of such programs. However, it is critical to note that when considering television as an element of the public domain, it is not an issue of laïcité that is contested, but rather the role of pluralism. This distinction is key as both terms suggest a different perspective from which to consider the situation. Generally, laïcité is concerned with upholding the republican values stipulated in the 1905 law by utilizing political and judicial means in the preservation of freedom for all citizens. Therefore,

Laïcité must be a process of emancipation, a free examination of religious and nonreligious dogma, in the respect of freed of conscience. Often, there is a great confusion between news and social reality. The news is only the visible and conflict-ridden tip of the iceberg. Most of the reality is a peaceful nonevent. In France, every week, several million people practice their own religions, or refrain from any religious practice, in complete freedom. In general, this is not the case in non-secular states. Many countries that criticize secular states have had regular deadly political-religious conflicts.⁹⁷

Though pluralism also upholds notions of religious freedom and respect for diversity, it lacks the mythic quality that laïcité produces. Historically, the incorporation of a pluralist position has been met with an array of violence, demonstrating the challenge of applying denominational pluralism within French society. Although the modern landscape drastically differs from the religious wars of the 16th Century and later, many of the same concerns continue to combat the seamless incorporation of pluralist ideology, most notably in relation to the preservation of republican ideology.

It was the goal of the Third Republic to create 'republicans,' and instill the idea of a nation state that operated separately from the influence of religious doctrines. Over time, these principles have become synonymous with the modern conception of France as

⁹⁷ Berlinerblau, 93.

a secular, democratic nation. Separation between church and state, the practice of state neutrality, the upholding of freedom of conscience and equality for all citizens are the core concepts that define French identity, and furthermore, citizenship. The problem arises, however, when too much emphasis is placed upon these symbolic references and myths, and the modern situation is not considered in full.

Contemporary France is confronted with the ongoing issue of trying to maintain secular principles while undergoing a shift in demographics, notably in regards to ‘visible’ religion. It is inevitable that this religious diversity will continue to rise due to immigration, globalization, and technological advances. Therefore, with an increase in religious diversity, pluralistic approaches have been taken in order to maintain secularity and more specifically, the ‘common values’ of France and its citizens. It is here that once again the spirit of the 1905 law is commonly evoked and cited as the pinnacle of republican values. But is this stress on normalization of immigrants and the promotion of French identity above the individual actually causing more problems? Where does one draw the line and determine the extent to which individual characteristics should be concealed? Is there harm in this suppression?

As the world becomes increasingly secularized, the process of instilling republican values has been met with opposing movements encouraged by the increased diversity of the French population. Although sometimes considered a “return to religion,” what has been occurring instead is, “a re-composition of religiosity in unprecedented forms of identity-based affirmations in which it is difficult to unravel the religious, cultural and social dimensions.”⁹⁸ Thus, the problem that must be dealt with presently is the need for a social, cultural, religious and political balance, and unification under the imperatives of the Republic.,

To some degree, pluralism acts as a threat to secularism by challenging the rigidity and control that the State maintains over the public sphere. What makes this practice of secularism unique to France is the impact of the historical conflict of the ‘two Frances.’ As a result, “This conflict created strong ties between the secular Republic and scientific knowledge, the idea that knowledge favors freedom of thought and the critique

⁹⁸ Gaudin, Philippe. “‘République and Laïcité’: What Is at Stake in Contemporary France?” Ed. Alessandro Ferrara, Volker Kaul, and David M. Rasmussen. *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 42.4–5 (2016): 440–447.

of all dogmas, including the anticlerical ones.”⁹⁹ For contemporary France, secularism continues to be challenged due to

...The fact that neutrality has predominantly become hypertrophied as it is sometimes interpreted in a way that is contrary to the Law of 1905. Other principles have become atrophied: separation, freedom of conscience, and nondiscrimination. Some believe that the greatest peril to the public sphere lies in the manifestation of religious expressions. This belief can be explained by the fear and uncertainty caused by the ‘end of Western supremacy.’ The fear is understandable, but it must be overcome.¹⁰⁰

Secularism, and *laïcité*, require flexibility, and need to be reshaped and moderated based upon contemporary factors. Ultimately, a compromise is required between the political and social components of French society in order to contend with modern concerns.

The broadcast of religious programming on France 2 offers a specific example of the challenges that arise when *laïcité* is misconstrued with pluralism. As a publically funded channel, France 2 is centered on promoting diversity and acceptance for different cultures and religions. Therefore, it can be said that the institution of religious programming on publicly sponsored television is reflective of values established within French pluralism and the desire to promote egalitarian values based upon the principles of republicanism. These values are engrained within society due to the unique historical relationship existing between religion and the State that were revered in 1905, but continue to maintain considerable influence upon modern society.

⁹⁹ Baubérot, “La *laïcité* française : républicaine, indivisible, démocratique et sociale.”

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

Conclusion

Laïcité: A Principle of Exceptions

This specific case study of religious programming on France 2 underscores the old adage that, at its core, laïcité is a principle of exceptions. This can be considered both a positive and negative attribute. Despite the lack of regulated practices and procedures, considering laïcité as a principle of exceptions allows for a great deal of flexibility to adapt historical values to modern day concerns. Ultimately, there is no black and white outline for how to interpret and further implement the idea of laïcité, and questions on how to determine such a process dominate the public forum. But the concern that laïcité acts as a challenge to the increase of diversity fails in its evaluation. From its conception, laïcité has always been concerned with the response of the State to issues of diversity. In fact, there are “...numerous accounts that narrate the period from the headscarf affair in 1989 up to the 15 March 2004 law banning religious symbols in public schools as the reassertion of *laïcité* against the new challenges of diversity, and as further proof that French *laïcité* is a comprehensive doctrine.”¹⁰¹ Therefore, the principles of laïcité have the ability to mold to the onslaught of universalism as it fully encourages the individual practice of religion, as long as the public sphere remains a neutral space.

In considering the role of religion in contemporary France and its relationship to religious broadcasting, it is no surprise that concerns over laïcité arise. It is evidently unusual that a secular nation would provide for publically funded channels to air religious content. However, it is precisely because France 2 is a public service station that it is required to promote religious pluralism and diversity through the programs it includes. By requiring public service stations to uphold pluralistic values the French government, while imperfect in that only specific religions are included, it none-the-less attempts to provide its citizens with access to cultural and religious education that reflects the cultural diversity of the population. Thus, the entire program, *Les Chemins de la foi*, can be viewed as possessing beneficial elements that continue to support the principles of laïcité. Funding the implementation and further retention of religious programming on public service stations in France can be seen to promote pluralism and the republican

¹⁰¹ Akan, Murat. “Diversité: Challenging or Constituting Laïcité ?” *French Cultural Studies* 28.1 (2017): 123–137.

objective to combat discrimination in televised programming; thus it appropriately situates the existence of these programs within the principles of laïcité, despite the presence of certain exceptions.

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