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**Secular Challenge to Power: An intercultural-analytical
insight into two prominent member organizations of the
European Humanist Federation: La Ligue de L'enseignement and
the National Secular Society**

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MA Programme Euroculture Declaration

I, Ziya Mert Karakas hereby declare that this thesis, entitled "Secular Challenge to Power: An intercultural-analytical insight into two prominent member organizations of the European Humanist Federation: La Ligue de L'enseignement and the National Secular Society", submitted as partial requirement for the MA Programme Euroculture, is my own original work and expressed in my own words. Any use made within this text of works of other authors in any form (e.g. ideas, figures, texts, tables, etc.) are properly acknowledged in the text as well as in the bibliography.

I declare that the written (printed and bound) and the electronic copy of the submitted MA thesis are identical.

I hereby also acknowledge that I was informed about the regulations pertaining to the assessment of the MA thesis Euroculture and about the general completion rules for the Master of Arts Programme Euroculture.

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List Of Abbreviations:

EU- European Union

EP- European Parliament

TFEU- Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

TEU- Treaty on European Union

EHF- European Humanist Federation

IHEU- The International Humanist and Ethical Union

NSS- The National Secular Society

LLE- La Ligue de L'enseignement

OSCE- Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

EPPSP- European Parliament Platform for Secularism in Politics

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION, EPISTEMOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK, THE RESEARCH QUESTION AND ITS IMPORTANCE

1.1 Presentation of the topic of research

As many in the Western Europe are further delving into the question of reliability and legitimacy of religion and religious institutions (be it Christianity or other theistic religions), the difficulties arise in determining what will take its place as a phenomena, as such an important concept in the history and culture of Europe. There are many voices, philosophers and scholars as well as average citizens, who argue for and organize around thought-systems such as Atheism, Agnosticism, or Humanism¹. In the context of what some scholars call secularization of modernization or of the consumer society, these theoreticians of secularization argue that Christianity is increasingly being seen as a thing of the past and becoming a subject of literature and history (both as in theological and anthropological), subsequently losing some of its determinative power and factual reality that it carried during the times when it was reflected as “sacred” (I mean especially the medieval setting of Europe). For this reason, as well as to provide introspection into the organized Humanism of Europe, I think that it is high time to understand these voices better, as they are growing at a fast pace in Europe.²

1.2 Aim, Purpose, Delimitation and Research Questions

The aim of the study is to compare the discourses of two non-profit, secular Humanist organizations located in two different countries in Western Europe, one with a Catholic majority and the other Protestant. By comparing them while taking their contexts into account, I think I could achieve further introspection about not only the organizations themselves, but also how the Humanist engagement in each country shows itself differently³. As these organizations are advocating for a secular state, I assume that they

¹ Although, it is related to the falling belief in theistic religions, I do not touch the topic of new religious movements such as Neo-paganism, in this study.

² Steve Bruce remarks about these voices, scholars as: "Explaining the decline in power, prestige and popularity of religion has exercised such a large number of scholars that we can represent their work as a 'secularization paradigm'." For a further exploration of this paradigm, see Steve Bruce, "Secularization and Its Consequences," in *The Oxford Handbook of Secularism*, eds., Phil Zuckerman and John R. Shook (New York: Oxford Uni Press, 2017), 55 ; There are also some scholars who dispute the claims of secularization, for example Peter L. Berger discusses "desecularization".

³ Some contexts are shared, such as the European community legislation, of which both of the UK and France are a part. What I mean by context here is where they differ, in their local, national setting.

are interacting at some level with religion and its integration (into the state and legal structure), and that this analysis could yield further insights of secularism(s) of each country. The study, however, does not aim to criticize the organizations themselves, or advocate for social change. With a focused approach on only two organizations in Europe, I set out to answer these questions in my study: How do the National Secular Society (hereafter the NSS) of the UK and La Ligue de L'enseignement (hereafter the LLE) of France compare to each other in their visions and strive for a secular state and Europe? Why and how does the discourse of the organizations differ in their effort to reach to the public and what does this have to say about secularisms in each country?

The study sets out to review and compare the chosen material of these two organizations, therefore the remaining material (the other print publications of the groups) is to be left out of study. Apart from that, I make references to the websites of the organizations under study, and international organizations which are helpful in introducing the context and the debate. The online references that I have taken from the websites are only supportive in nature, meaning that I use these references either to supply evidence about the structure of an organization, or introducing their argumentation. The other delimitation, aside from the material, is that I look only from a textual analysis point of view to reach certain conclusions; I do not, for example, include the reception of the public to the material.

Scholars are debating the shifting role of religion in Europe⁴. Mark Lilla argues in his article that; “[t]hough Christian belief remains strong in some European countries, like Poland, and Islam is a potent force among Muslims across the Continent, contemporary Europe is the closest thing to a godless civilization the world has ever known.”⁵ John McCormick, in his book *Europeanism*, while discussing the possibility of “European values” argues that “few values so clearly define Europe as secularism”.⁶ Humanist organizations, in their own words, offer the secularism principle to suit the evolution of

⁴ Supra note 2.

⁵ "Europe and the legend of secularization," by Mark Lilla, The New York Times, published March 31, 2006, accessed June 10, 2017.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/03/31/arts/europe-and-the-legend-of-secularization.html>

⁶ However, he defines secularism as if "secularization", he refers to increasing valuation of science and reason, and marginalizing role of religion in Europeanist attitudes, a trend which is not followed in the rest of the world. in John McCormick, *Europeanism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 174.

the European peoples (less religious etc.) and the principles of the EU. Starting from today, this increased interest can be visualized in the Europe, for example the *Human-Etisk Forbund* of Norway has membership that comprise the 2% of the whole population⁷. On the other side, the organizations are advocating change in their societies (e.g. of a separation of religion and state, or disestablishment of churches), Denmark has very recently abolished its historical blasphemy law⁸, and for several years, Humanists in Scotland have been organizing humanist weddings, with 50,000 people wed so far and counting⁹. I think a connection between the rising success of secular alternatives such as Humanist organizations and the rising non-belief in Europe is, at least, possible (assuming that is not pure coincidence)¹⁰. A Euro-barometer study dating from 2010 states that only “one European in two” has faith in God, while one fifth is Atheist¹¹. The study states that there is little change from the polls of 2005. Nonetheless, if irreligion in Europe is growing, why and how is the process is happening is a part of a debate¹². Furthermore, the increase of Muslim immigration in Europe may raise questions on how to contain this diversification, and sustain unification on the national level¹³. In the light of this on-going diversification of Europe, I have also included discussion of how the organizations under study propose the integration of the minority religions, and that they regard this as a concern.

⁷ 87,000 members in a country of approximately 5 million people. See their website "The Norwegian Humanist Association," accessed June 12, 2017. <https://human.no/om-oss/english/>

⁸ As seen here: "Denmark scraps 334-year-old blasphemy law," The Guardian, published June 2, 2017, accessed 12 June 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jun/02/denmark-scraps-334-year-old-blasphemy-law>

⁹ As seen here, confirmed by the organization itself: "Humanists celebrate 50,000th person married in Scotland," by Craig Paton, The Scotsman, published 10 June 2017, accessed 14 June 2017. <http://www.scotsman.com/news/humanists-celebrate-50-000th-person-married-in-scotland-1-4471678>

¹⁰ As per the examples given above, the success of Humanist organizations are high in Northern Europe, coincidentally, it also has the highest level of unbelief in Europe, so I do not think it is pure coincidence. Moreover, as I will discuss later, Humanists can also be believers, but the success is still high among the non-believer majority. By success I mean membership and activity, but also reputation.

¹¹ European Commission (EC), Special Eurobarometer 341, "Eurobarometer Biotechnology Report," October 2010 ; Knippenberg gives 2008 EVS figures; for example, percentage of people who claim to believe in God is for France 52.4%, and 64.6% for Great Britain. Taken from: Hans Knippenberg, "Secularization and Transformation of Religion in Post-War Europe," in *The Changing World Religion Map*, ed. Stanley D. Brunn (Springer, 2015), 2113.

¹² According to Markus Dressler, post-secular discourses or thoughts can be described as agreeing to the proposition; "religion and secularity are co-emergent and codependent" and they argue "that these processes haunt each other, such that religion, as it has developed in the West, has always been present in all secular phenomena." and the reverse. Dressler discusses the discursive stand-off around secularization in Markus Dressler, *Secularism & Religion-Making*, eds. Markus Dressler and Arvind-Pal S. Mandair (Oxford: Oxford Uni Press, 2011), 6.

¹³ See, for example, Zay in *Is the Decline of European Multiculturalism* on how increasing Islam could be met and managed by a secular framework.

If the interest into secular Humanism (or at least, in the Northern Europe, as shown by the statistics above) on the societal level is increasing, the current literature and research barely cover the subject¹⁴. There is ample literature written on Humanism itself, however, there are virtually no more than a handful of sources written specifically on organizations in general, or in local setup, or on the international partnerships such as the European Humanist Federation (EHF) or the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU).

1.3 Data

The empirical data mainly consists of two separate documents by the NSS and the LLE. I start my analysis and comparison with the French organization's document *La laïcité, une émancipation en actes*. After going through with publications related to secularism from the organization, I have decided that it is the most suitable document due to its brevity, recency and the purpose. The document focuses solely on the topic of secularism (though it deviates from the topic occasionally), and to inform the activists and the readers of the league's position. The document is the most representative of the organization's position, because, it is written solely on the topic of secularism (or as related, Humanism), and it is a recent publication. The 20 page long document is visually enriched, and is comprised of three sections except the introduction and conclusion; the first section is named "Reconciling diversity and unity", the second "A struggle for equality", and the third "Dialogue to convince".¹⁵

The prime text I analyze from the NSS is a 72-pages long manifesto published for the 2017 General Election of Britain, to recommend and propose secular measures and reforms to the political parties. The manifesto, as a booklet, was sent to all ministers of Parliament before the election for persuasion, in their words: "to help policy-makers deal with the inequalities that our archaic constitutional settlement creates."¹⁶ However, it does not have characteristics of a document solely designed for politicians, and it can be well read by anyone from the public, and for that, it is published on their website and

¹⁴ I haven't been able to find more studies done specifically on European Humanist organizations other than Danielle Zay's *Is the Decline of European Multiculturalism*.

¹⁵ "Concilier diversité et unité", "Un combat pour l'égalité", "Dialoguer pour convaincre". La Ligue de L'enseignement, *La laïcité, une émancipation en actes*, published 19 April 2017, 3.
http://www.laligue.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Laicite_WEB.pdf

¹⁶ The National Secular Society, "Rethinking religion and belief," 6

promoted to the public in booklets. The manifesto is named *Rethinking religion and belief in public life: a manifesto for change*.

I have chosen this material because it is the most solid and encompassing out of all published material of the organization of recent years, with a practical and a less theorizing language. The manifesto's scope includes all lands of the mainland UK, including Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and includes all perspectives that the organization holds on different matters related to secularism or Humanism. It is, therefore, a sufficient window into the organization's discourse, as well as great for use in comparison. While the manifesto never criticizes religion (of Britain) openly, the criticism is left to state policies on including religion into what the organization thinks as "secular". The document has a friendly and neutral tone, and does not use demonizing language or point out any particular person or group as target, which is usually seen in political discourse¹⁷. The manifesto ends with a list of recommendations after the end of discussion of each subject matter, as well as an annexed full list of all recommendations. Educational issues are prime importance to the organization, the manifesto reflects this as well, education makes the largest accrued part in the manifesto; with 14 pages devoted to the subject, whereas *Religion and the law* and *Institutions and public ceremonies* both have 10 pages.

1.4 Epistemological Framework

Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's discourse theory is social constructionist. Social Constructionism is a theory that posits the reality as we know is not objective as such, but is constructed by individuals own categorizing of the world, in other words, treats knowledge as by-products of constructed understandings. Thus the knowledge that we claim to, is "historically and culturally specific and *contingent*", as such it is not based on a solid ground that could provide an essential non-relative stand-point, because all meanings are subjective, relative to different contexts¹⁸. There is no objective truth as a positivist method would imply, but multiple explanations that compete for being "the truth". Social interaction cannot neutrally reflect the world, but actively creates and transforms it. The assertion of this puts discourse and the study of it in an important

¹⁷ One example can be seen in how a right-wing politician sometimes refers to refugees as a whole

¹⁸ Supra note 16, p. 5.

position in social science, because discourse plays a large part in producing the social patterns and processes¹⁹. In this way, “knowledge is created through social interaction in which we construct common truths and compete about what is true and false.” and this creation has consequences that change the dynamics of what takes place as social²⁰. These consequences place restrictions on the individual (or the collective), and the randomness of contingency is reduced, because the possibilities of what can be accepted as knowledge or identity is reduced as well (after these restrictions). Therefore, social constructionist theory should not be seen as proposing an infinite ways of knowledge and its interpretation as well as of interaction in general, but it cannot, in any way, deliver absolute truths or normative ideas. In this framework, material facts and physical reality only gains meaning through being defined by a discourse (I elaborate more on discourse in Chapter 3).

The implication of the epistemological framework for the study is that, the assertion of the multiplicity and the existence of competition for holding authority on a meaning or concept, is vital for a critical insight into the competing actors, for example in how they approach and define “secularism”.

1.5 Previous Research

In my overview of the previous research on Humanist organizations in Europe I have identified the following key studies: Danielle Zay's work on Humanist organizations in Europe as promoting a secular vision of the European framework in her article *Is the Decline of European Multiculturalism the Beginning of a More Secular Europe?* Danielle Zay is a scholar in Education who has researched effects of secularity on the French educational system, particularly among the minorities. Zay argues for a European secular framework, which can better accommodate the diversity, in the place of what she perceives as failing multiculturalism, it is related to my thesis not only because of the topic of European Humanism, but also its coverage of the secularism as an integrative framework in the place of multiculturalism in Europe. *Christianity and the Anthropology of Secular Humanism* by Matthew Engelke is an ethnographic analysis of a British secular Humanist group. Engelke pursues questions of the remnants

¹⁹ For example, the nationalist discourses that gave way to the World Wars of the previous century.

²⁰ Marianne Jørgensen and Louise Philips, *Discourse Analysis: As Theory and Method*, 1st Ed. (London: Sage, 2002), 5.

of religion and Christianity in the structure and discourse of the Humanists that he has researched.

On the French side of the study, Baubérot's *Les sept laïcités françaises: Le modèle français de laïcité n'existe pas* was also useful in the analysis of the LLE, due to his conceptualization of seven secularisms of France. Joan Wallach Scott's *the Politics of the Veil* is a focused research done on the debate of the Veil ban, with a broad discussion into the historical background of the topic. Per-Erik Nilsson's *Secular Retaliation': A Case Study* is a qualitative discourse analysis of French right-wing secularist group *Riposte Laique* through their online journal. The study is highly related to my research, because *Riposte Laique* is one of the opposing discourses of the French group under my study and the study offers perspective on secularism as an identity category in France. Michael Kelly's article *Laïcité and atheism in France* offers further elaboration of French way of secularism, with discussions of several secularist organizations of France. There are also edited volumes and articles written on the broad topics of the study; that of secularism in the legal a theoretical aspects of secularization as well as ample sources that exist on general Humanism and secularism. These include *The Wiley Blackwell Handbook of Humanism* and *The Oxford Handbook of Secularism*. There is more research that offer critical perspectives: *The Evolution of Atheism* by Stephen LeDrew, and *Rethinking Secularism* by Calhoun et al. For yet, other perspectives focusing on democracy and secularism, there is are bountiful edited volumes, *Law, State and Religion in the New Europe* by Lorenzo et al. And *Religion, Secularism & Constitutional Democracy* by Jean L. Cohen and Cecile Laborde.

1.6 Chapter Disposition

Chapter I introduces the topic, purpose, aim and as well as its epistemological framework. Data to be analysed and related previous research, though shortly, is stated here as well as the relevance and the target questions of the study. **Chapter II** gives more details on the background of secular Humanism, its European context and legal/political framework, as well as a more detailed background on organizations that are the main target of this study; The National Secular Society (NSS) and La Ligue de L'enseignement (LLE). I also make reasoning for the choice of these organizations and

why they are to be seen as Humanist organizations. Paragraphs are also devoted to their context (namely the states themselves, e.g. the status of religion in the Parliament). Their main campaign areas are outlined. **Chapter III** moves the focus to practical matters, and elaborates the methodology and related terminology. A further elaboration is also done on discourse, discourse analysis, the suitability of the method and how the study is carried out in general. **Chapter IV** is the main chapter of the empirical study; here I try to compare and analyse the material that I have chosen from the organizations in accordance with the methodology that I have set out in the third chapter. Later, I provide comparative discussion of the analysis. In **Chapter V**, I provide a more extensive discussion in relation to the previous research and in relation to the broader socio-political context. Furthermore, I postulate where the study takes its place in the current research done, and what I think as my contribution. Later, with **Conclusion**, I try to give final remarks and the answers to my research questions, and what it holds for the general discipline of (Comparative) European Studies, and of the emerging field of Secular Studies.

CHAPTER II: BACKGROUND

2.1 Presentation of the Chapter

I argue that secularism and Humanism are closely linked, in that secularist and Humanist agendas co-exist²¹. For a better comprehension of the study, I have supplied more information about these concepts as social phenomena, using a wide variety of secondary sources, and perspectives. In this background chapter, first I give a general glimpse of modern secular Humanism, secularism, and its related terminology; as well as the Humanists in the European level, and the general European context. Then I delve further into the organizations' history and structure, for a complete understanding of the analysis to follow later. At the end of each section regarding organizations, I also provided a paragraph about their context, such as the state and the law of each country in the sense of its interaction with religion and its separation, and specified the “Humanistic” properties of these organizations.

2.2 What is Humanism and its European Context?

2.2.1 Humanism

According to Andrew Copson, the definition of Humanism historically was quite broad, it was only in the early and mid-twentieth century that categorization and definition of Humanism became narrower and systematized in “books, journals, speeches, and in the publications and agendas of what became humanist organizations”²². The modern sense of Humanism is a belief or life stance, quite different from its historical roots²³. The meaning that stands in today's “secular” Humanism as a life stance, an orientation or world-view, has roots in Renaissance humanism and indirectly in ancient philosophy. This meaning came to fore with frequent usage and referral, instead of a systematic

²¹ Stephen Law says that Humanists are secularists in the sense that they "believe the State should take a neutral stance on religion." Stephen Law, "Humanism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Atheism*, eds. Stephen Bullivant and Michael Ruse (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2013).

²² Andrew Copson and A. C. Grayling, *The Wiley Blackwell Handbook of Humanism*, published May 2015, Adobe Digital Editions Electronic Book, 2

²³ The Humanism with a capital H, and without any adjective such as "secular" as used in encyclopedias defining the term, is suggested by International and Humanist and Ethical Union, therefore when I am referring to the modern sense of Humanism, I will always capitalize. See their declaration here: The International Humanist and Ethical Union, “Humanism is Eight Letters, No More,” accessed 16 June 2017. <http://iheu.org/humanism/humanism-is-eight-letters-no-more/>

creation, such as being outlined in a manifesto by an actor or actors. But attestation of beliefs or related practices that have as a critical world-view as “Humanism” is relatively a new phenomenon, that came about, according to Zay, in the twentieth century²⁴. Thus, it may be natural to see so many definitions of the secular Humanism to exist. Joachim Duyndam defines the Renaissance Humanists' contributions as having “included a correction to the dominant theocentric worldview toward a more anthropocentric worldview”, an important characteristic that is sustained in today's life stance as well; its essential opposition to the dogmatism, which takes answers for granted without calibrating the question²⁵. In this formulation of Humanism, criticism is not specifically against religion, but the dogmatic constituents of it²⁶. Humanism, today, portrays a diverse range of appearances; “from radical atheism at one edge of the spectrum” to “inclusive humanism”, which keeps an open window to religion²⁷.

According to *The Oxford Dictionary*, Humanism is “a rationalist outlook or system of thought attaching prime importance to human rather than divine or supernatural matters.”. In this definition, the secular constituent of the modern Humanism is evident, that is the opposition to human potential being inhibited and suppressed by the religious orders and appraisal of the autonomous decision ability of the human faculty. But this should not mean, according to Duyndam, that Humanism is exclusively non-theistic.

The hypothesis of Stephen Law, that being a Humanist is to be preliminary an Atheist or Agnostic is unfounded according to Duyndam in the sense that Humanism does not a priori argue for a non-religious thinking²⁸. Although many Humanists are Atheists or Agnostics, this does not mean that believers who think that religious institutionalization and politicization should be reversed because religion is after all, a private matter, as long as they retain the critical essence, they are Humanists, Duyndam finds²⁹. Frequent attestations of Humanists as Atheists did not hinder some Humanists from being Deists or even “privately” religious (although maintaining the critical hermeneutical approach

²⁴ Danielle Zay, 18.

²⁵ Joachim Duyndam, "Humanism as a Positive Outcome of Secularism," in *the Oxford Handbook of Secularism*, eds., Phil Zuckerman and John R. Shook (New York: Oxford Uni Press, 2017), 710.

²⁶ This criticism includes offering an alternative moral system, that praises the individual's reasoning and less dependent on the punishment/reward mechanism of the theistic religions. This (secular) ethics are today a large part of Humanism, and is present in many education systems worldwide.

²⁷ Duyndam, "Humanism as a Positive Outcome," 706.

²⁸ Stephen Law makes the claim that "Humanists do not sign up to a belief in a God or gods". Taken from Stephen Law, "Humanism," 263.

²⁹ He gives an example of a prominent Humanist Muslim scholar in the Netherlands.

to religious and other teachings). Modern Secular Humanism in its most common form, individualist, morally concerned and active setting of philosophy, can be visualized in this definition by John C. Luik:

A commitment to the perspective, interests and centrality of human persons; a belief in reason and autonomy as foundational aspects of human existence; a belief that reason, scepticism and the scientific method are the only appropriate instruments for discovering truth and structuring the human community; a belief that the foundations for ethics and society are to be found in autonomy and moral equality.³⁰

2.2.2 The European Context of Humanism

Humanism as various beliefs, doctrines and thought systems is distinguished and is studied extensively in the history of European culture, and today it is represented or present in many European texts and organizations. According to Britannica, “[humanism] is one of the chief reasons why the Renaissance is viewed as a distinct historical period.”³¹ As the humanists of the early modern took interest in the Greek and Roman classics, the scientific mindedness which could be described as the “academic approach” had flourished. What is, perhaps, more related to the form of Humanism with a capital H that this study captures is Cicero's *humanitas*, which came to be the basis of the modern Humanist outlook of life and everything human³². Humanism was intrinsically a fulfilment of human potential and will, from the deviantly creative and understanding world of Shakespeare to undeterred criticism of institutions by Erasmus, humanism was one of the most significant tenets of European idea³³. Although, Cicero's share is certainly evident, Epicureanism and later Lucretius should not be forgotten as an influence in increased emanation of humanism in how they have opposed divine intervention and the pursuit of the happiness just for the sake of the individual, their scepticism and their pacifism³⁴.

³⁰ Edward Craig, *Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward Craig, (Routledge, 1999), 365.

³¹ Robert Grudin, "Humanism," Britannica Online, accessed 17 June 2017.
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/humanism>

³² I use the Humanism with capital H to distinguish secular Humanist philosophy from the historical occupation of scholars of, for example, Renaissance.

³³ Supra Note 31.

³⁴ Epitomised by Greenblatt as "The Swerve", Greenblatt argues that the discovery of the work of Lucretius led to a deviation which had a large impact to modernize the world. The ancients as such had a great role in the rise of humanism and provided material to discuss a world without sanctity.

In almost every country in Europe, including Russia, there is at least one organization which claims its basis on secular Humanism, though there may be large differences between them. This differentiation depends on at least two factors such as their context and opposition they face, such as it being in a Protestant- or Catholic majority country, or simply because they follow a variant form of Humanism (for example Rationalist or Trans-Humanist)³⁵. They are grouped under the European Humanist Federation, which has a membership consisting of fifty (secular) Humanist organizations in Europe. These organizations, and the umbrella organization itself fill a space in the European partnerships; they pose counter power to the hand of religion in the EU, in that they are opposing the arguments of religious partnerships under the dialogues. The partnership of religious organizations, recognized under Article 17 of the TFEU, that took effect in December 2009 is as follows:

Article 17

1. The Union respects and does not prejudice the status under national law of churches and religious associations or communities in the Member States.
2. The Union equally respects the status under national law of philosophical and non-confessional organisations.
3. Recognising their identity and their specific contribution, the Union shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with these churches and organisations.³⁶

The EHF states that its work is justified by two things: “the persistence of religious conservatism in European countries and the existence of a strong lobbying of extremist religious organisations towards European institutions”, using the article above to their advantage³⁷. The EHF also has routine interventions at the European level; at the EP, EU Council Presidencies, Council of Europe and OSCE³⁸. Humanist organizations claim

However, Greenblatt also faced criticism for idolizing Lucretius. Still, most out of all, I think it would not be a wrong statement to say that the root of the "secular" flank of the modern Humanism lies mostly in the Epicurean tradition and Lucretius, taking into account that Cicero himself was heavily influenced by Lucretius' work *On the Nature of Things*. The pursuit of happiness takes a large space in modern Humanism, just as in the philosophy of the Epicureans, but not as a reckless pursuit. Taken from: Stephen Greenblatt, *The swerve: how the world became modern* 1st Ed. (W.W. Norton & Company, 2011)

³⁵ All members can be seen in the list here on EHF's website: European Humanist Federation, "Members," accessed 9 June 2017. <http://humanistfederation.eu/membres.php>

³⁶ Consolidated Version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union art. 17, 2008 O.J. C 115/47

³⁷ European Humanist Federation, "Why a humanist federation?," accessed 12 June 2017, <http://humanistfederation.eu/about.php?page=why-a-humanist-federation>

³⁸ For more, see here: European Humanist Federation, "Dialogue with European institutions," accessed

that in essence they prioritize freedom of speech, choice and most importantly free-thought, in contrast to the world-view of the dogmatic belief systems which depend on constriction of freedoms, on allegiance and on obedience. In this sense, it is arguable that EU partnerships should not be open to historically powerful institutions such as churches, but to organizations that offer civil role. The EHF argues that the inclusion of the religions of majority and minority populations in Europe as official partners, strikes at the heart of the secular character of the EU, pointing out that the secularity and neutrality of the public sphere is affected. Although the European umbrella organization EHF states that the partnerships to the EU were wrong in the first place by confirming the role of religion in politics, and subsequently, for that reason the EHF (which was included under the tag “non-confessional organization”) had to assert its partnership to counter the force of religion in European level politics and they state that not accepting the partnership would be empowering the religious hand, which, in that case, would be left without opposition³⁹. They have stated on their website that they opposed to these partnerships from the beginning:

In a Europe where a large proportion of the total population has explicitly or implicitly rejected religion and where growing minorities follow non-Christian religions, it is wrong to revert to political arrangements that give a special position to the churches or to religion at large – or indeed even to religious and non-religious lifestyles, however inclusive that might seem: politics and religion should be kept apart. Yet in most countries one or more churches is ‘established’ or has a privileged financial and/or institutional position; and as power moved from states to the EU, the churches were plainly determined to ensure that they obtained a similar position of influence in the European Union.⁴⁰

This being said, Humanist organizations in Europe fulfil more functions, apart from being a rallying ground for people who share the same philosophy; from mobilization of activism for abortion rights (or reproductive rights in general) in Poland, providing legal secular weddings in Scotland to engaging the Parliament talks in England.

Apart from the criticism of the European Humanists that the EU is not taking a neutral

16 June 2017 <http://humanistfederation.eu/our-work.php?page=dialogue-with-european-institutions>

³⁹ "[t]he alternative was to leave the churches an unopposed channel of influence at the highest level in the EU." European Humanist Federation, "The Story of “Article 17”: Opposing special rights for churches in the EU," accessed 9 June 2017. <http://humanistfederation.eu/our-work.php?page=no-to-special-rights-for-churches-in-the-EU>

⁴⁰ Ibid.

stance, with the exception of the Article 17, the sections related to the topic of the EU foundational material seems to facilitate a “more” neutral stance between the actors. For instance, the Preamble of the TEU, which was also retained in The Lisbon Treaty reads: “Drawing inspiration from the cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe, from which have developed the universal values of the inviolable and inalienable rights of the human person, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law.”⁴¹. The Union, therefore, not only recognizes the influence of humanist tradition but also endorses it as an actor shaping the common European way of life. According to McCrea, this balancing approach between referring to religion and humanism in the same sentence “involves, in contrast to strictly secular public orders, the recognition of a religious element to the Union's constitutional values and public morality”⁴². It might be considered that, this kind of balancing may be seen as evasive, or as McCrea puts “intellectually unsatisfying”⁴³. In effect, the secularists (on the European level) and Christians both have a ground to criticize and embrace the Preamble, unlike Article 17 which apparently, prioritizes the religious institutions' stake (a form of *prima facie* discrimination, coupled with transparency issues)⁴⁴. In fact, on the one hand with the Article 17, the Union implies a willingness to co-operate with religions even in policy and law-making. On the other hand, the Union “refused to associate itself”, at least not explicitly, with certain religions or denominations or non-religious viewpoints, as with the Preamble above⁴⁵. Moreover, the EP is also engaging with secular and humanist organizations in European Parliament Platform for Secularism in Politics (EPPSP), which has a lesser complexity and power compared to the Article 17 dialogue⁴⁶. I have tried to give a small glimpse of the interaction of humanism and religion in the European texts, and the criticisms of European Humanists.

2.3 What is Secularism?

The history of the concept “the secular” goes farthest in the Western Christianity as a

⁴¹ Council of the European Union, Brussels, Consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union, 15 April 2008, 6655/08

⁴² Ronan McCrea, “The Recognition of Religion within the Constitutional and Political Order of the European Union,” *LSE ‘Europe in Question’ Discussion Paper Series*, no. 10 (September 2009): 6.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 8.

⁴⁴ See, Pasquale Annichino, "Religion and EU Institutions," *Ecclesiastical Law Society* 15 (2013): 328.

⁴⁵ Ronan McCrea, "The Recognition," 20

⁴⁶ EPPSP is a platform for members of the European Parliament, and related organizations who hold meetings regularly. It is chaired by Liberal politician, Sophie in 't Veld.

theological category or dualism. The religious/secular separation was a way to organize the temporal and the spatial; the worldly and the sacred inside the clergy (for instance, regular clergy versus the “secular” or lay clergy). This is the meaning that lies in “to secularize”, but also holds importance in that it constituted, (or at least structured its constitution) of the category of Western secularism, which was not independent from this dualist structuring of Christianity⁴⁷. Many books and volumes have written to explain the phenomenon; notably the work of Charles Taylor, with his work on the topic, *A Secular Age*. In Taylor's work, he defines three orders as “the cosmic, the social and the moral” that in this age comes to be understood as “immanent secular orders, devoid of transcendence and thus functioning *etsi Deus non daretur*, 'as if God would not exist'”.⁴⁸ This experience, or becoming, is irrespective of people living in the age, is actually pious, because the daily life and living itself had become secular in the first place. In this life, this “immanent frame”, secularity becomes increasingly the default option, the accepted, therefore may no longer need any justification⁴⁹. This, according to Jose Casanova (who is a scholar writing on forms of secularisms), comes to mean that secularism is not always a consciously held ideology or worldview, it could have been ingrained into the Western living. Casanova draws an analytical distinction between secularism as a statecraft doctrine and secularism as ideology. The former relates to the separation between the religious and the political, whether it is to protect the state neutrality, and credibility, towards all religion, or to protect the freedom of conscience, which is then tied to equal participation of citizens irrelevant of their beliefs. This doctrine, however must not hold any formulation or presupposition about religion. If it does, Casanova says, “the moment the state holds explicitly a particular conception of 'religion', one enters the realm of ideology”⁵⁰. Therefore, it is how the distinction between a state doctrine and ideology should be constructed, according to Casanova. Political secularism, as an ideology in this sense rather than a statecraft tool, legitimises the neutrality of the political, through a characterization of religion, for instance as “irrational”⁵¹.

⁴⁷ Jose Casanova, "The Secular, Secularizations, Secularisms," in *Rethinking Secularism*, eds. Mark Juergensmeyer, et al. (Oxford: Oxford Uni Press, 2011), 56.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 58.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 58.

⁵⁰ Ibid 66.

⁵¹ Ibid, 67 ; Casanova's conceptualization of ideology is highly dependent on the existence of a characterization.

Although the previous concept Humanism is not a binary opposition, in that it does not need an opposing concept to exist, the existence of secularism is tied to that of religion; in other words they are “mutually constituted through sociopolitical struggles and cultural politics”⁵². Moreover, Berlinerblau says that “all secularisms fancy themselves to be in some way apart from religion, but this needs to be strenuously rethought”, and in this sense implies that a clear border between each does not exist⁵³. As there are countless secularisms, they all define the border between the religious and the secular differently, but this is not to suggest a random scattered design of secularisms all over; Casanova formulates that just like the European secularity being Post-Christian (which means the boundaries are defined according to it), there exist many secularisms defined against their own backdrop of majority and minority religions. These secularisms are “contingent refashionings and transformations of existing civilizational patterns and social imaginaries mixed with secular ones”⁵⁴. So, it goes to say that the more variety we have in religions, the more variety we should have in secularisms too. According to Berlinerblau, “political secularisms can be liberal or conservative, beastly or benign, religion-friendly or antitheistic, tolerant or repressive [...] no two political secularisms are alike. No one political secularism remains unchanged across time”⁵⁵.

As long as secularism and integration is concerned, there are (at least on the highest level) two ideal methods of integration of religious variance in Europe; on the one hand, France has an assimilationist top-down integration system, where “the *laïc* state does not grant recognition to ethnic and cultural-religious minorities” and the religious penetration into the political area is controlled (the most visible example of which is the expulsion of all forms of religious symbolism, including the Islamic veil)^{56,57}. On the

⁵² Ibid, 63.

⁵³ Drury presents secularism as anti-religion, that goes well into the roots of the Catholic and Protestant European conflict. From its birth, and its true revelation under the French Revolution, secularism has not been “simply neutrality vis-à-vis different religious denominations” and, it is wary of all religious penetration into the public realm, thus it is past neutral grounds. Shadia B Drury, “The Liberal Betrayal of Secularism,” in *the Oxford Handbook of Secularism*, 290-293.

⁵⁴ Jose Casanova, “The Secular,” 64.

⁵⁵ Jacques Berlinerblau, “Political Secularism,” in *the Oxford Handbook of Secularism*, 93.

⁵⁶ This distinction can also be observed in the work of Charles Taylor. One could talk about hundreds of secularisms, but on large-scale picture in Europe, as according to Charles Taylor, two major models of secularisms emerge; the “Rigid Control Model”, which aims to control and contain the role of religion in public life, and is apparently found in France and Turkey, whereas the “Diversity Model” is like the Anglo-American toleration based on multiplicity and non-intervention to the public realm. Drury sees the latter as the liberal betrayal of secularism, where the vengeful religions take advantage of the lax system of toleration. I comment on this distinction further in the discussion chapter.

⁵⁷ Camil Ungureanu, “Introduction,” in *Law, State and Religion in the New Europe*, eds. Lorenzo Zucca and Camil Ungureanu (Cambridge: Cambridge Uni Press, 2012), 4.

other hand is the multicultural bottom-up approach of the UK (or can be said to be Anglo-American), which “attempts to keep conflicts at bay and bring reconciliation by supporting [...] public spaces of cultural-religious difference”⁵⁸. The EHF states their position on secularism as:

A secular or laïque society is not an anti-religious one. Rather, it is one where fundamental beliefs that we disagree about – beliefs that provide strong motivation to some but mean little or nothing to those who do not hold them – are left aside in public debate about communal decisions.⁵⁹

Taking EHF as an authority in this case, European Humanists are traditionally against religious presence in the public sphere, due to their argument that only in a neutral (not only from religion but any discourse with a hegemonic status) public sphere can the human beings find the way that suits them the most, and is the most fulfilling without an outside influence⁶⁰. Therefore, in a way Humanists are secularists, and activism for secularism takes a large part in their political views⁶¹. I use the terms secularism and the French version of *Laïcité* interchangeably throughout the work⁶². However, the French term is defined as having more complications, according to Caron, defined as:

Laïcité refers to an institutional system informed by a secular worldview that determines a civic and moral ideal, unifies the community, and legitimates sovereignty” and that Laïcité, being a result of a historical process “is both an organizational frame establishing the neutrality of the state in religious matters, and an attitude about the proper relationship between the political and religious spheres and, more broadly, religion and society.⁶³

Secularization is yet another debated concept. Whereas secularism is a socio-political ideation or ideology, secularization refers to an analytical conceptualization of processes and patterns of transformation in the decline of religious authority overall, not only of

⁵⁸ Camil Ungureanu, "Introduction," 5.

⁵⁹ European Humanist Federation, "Secularism," accessed 16 June 2017
<http://humanistfederation.eu/humanism-secularism.php?page=secularism>

⁶⁰ Later, this will be more meaningful with the discussion of the French organization LLE.

⁶¹ Supra note 21.

⁶² According to Scott, *Laïcité* is very well translatable as "secularism". "It is part of the mythology of the specialness and superiority of French Republicanism [...] to insist that laïcité can only be used in its original tongue" but later Scott makes a distinction between each, *Laïcité* as a form of modified secularism which also emphasizes "the role of the state in protecting individuals from the claims of religion". Joan Wallach Scott, *The Politics of the Veil* (Princeton: Princeton Uni Press 2007), 15, 98.

⁶³ Nathalie Caron, "Laïcité and Secular attitudes in France," in *Secularism & Secularity: Contemporary International Perspectives*, eds. Barry A. Kosmin and Ariela Keysar (ISSC 2007), 114-115.

persons, or communities but also larger institutions⁶⁴. The dynamics of transformation is too detailed to be explained here, however Tschannen refers to processes of differentiation, rationalization and worldliness⁶⁵. It is multi-faceted; on societal level, on institutional level and on the individual level⁶⁶. It has become usual to hear that Europe is increasingly being secularized, in that the effects of religion to certain sectors of the population is reduced. Casanova, takes a discourse-conscious approach, in that he ties this secularization of Western Europe, to triumph of “knowledge regime[s] of secularism”, rather than the usual culprit of structural processes or modernization⁶⁷. A good example of varieties of secularization is found in Eastern Europe, where after decades of imposed strict atheism and secularism, some states have continued to be relatively less pious (such as the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Slovenia⁶⁸), whereas it is also home to the Europe's most religious, primarily Poland and Romania⁶⁹. Secularization interacts with Humanism in many ways: the Humanist organizations' strategies differ according to how secularized their societies are, and it also affects how well they are received in that society.

2.4 Presentation of the Organizations

2.4.1 La Ligue de L'enseignement

La ligue de L'enseignement is a French organization headquartered in Paris, with many smaller office-like “federations” and larger offices called “regional unions” spread over France, with more than 1,5 million members and 500,000 volunteers⁷⁰. The organization

⁶⁴ Jose Casanova, "The Secular," 54.

⁶⁵ Olivier Tschannen, "The Secularization Paradigm: A Systematization," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 30, no. 4 (1991)

⁶⁶ Dobbelaere changes "institutional" to "organizational" secularization. Societal secularization "is the increasing emancipation of social sectors (like politics, the economy, law) from religious guidelines and norms as a result of differentiation of different societal subsystems". On the "organizational level concerns the secularization of religion in view of, for example, the change in the social form of churches or the objectives". He characterizes individual level secularization as "the growing distance of people from the church and religion on the whole". From Detlef Pollack et al, "Church and Religion in the Enlarged Europe: Analyses of the Social Significance of Religion in East and West," in *The social significance of religion in the enlarged Europe : secularization, individualization and pluralization*, eds. Detlef Pollack et al. (Ashgate, 2012), 5.

⁶⁷ Jose Casanova, "Immigration and the New Religious Pluralism," *Democracy and the New Religious Pluralism*, ed. Thomas Banchoff (Oxford Uni Press, 2007): 62-63.

⁶⁸ These countries usually top the lists of the least religious of Europe

⁶⁹ Hans Knippenberg compares the secularization of Eastern Europe to Western Europe in "Secularization and Transformation of Religion in Post-War Europe,"

⁷⁰ On their website, "Fédérations", "Unions régionales" : La Ligue de L'enseignement, accessed 20 June 2017. <http://www.laligue.org>

has historical roots as a “republican society” in France, and is a member of both the EHF and the IHEU. It was founded on 1866 by Jean Mace and had significant role in the dissemination of secularism in France, and subsequently the identity shift, from Catholic to the *Laïc* France⁷¹. According to Kelly, “much of the initial momentum for laïcité came from the campaigning organisation for secular education, the Ligue de l’Enseignement”, and she puts freemasons at the roots of the organization and of the 1905 law, as “more than half of the ministers in the government that secured the law of separation were lodge members”⁷². The group was cherished by François Hollande, former president of France:

The League of Education, an institution not of the Republic but which is for the Republic, bears, tirelessly, two essential values for 150 years: education, education for all, and secularism everywhere.⁷³

Aside from campaigning for the preservation of secularism in France, and in Europe, the organization is also active in education and equality (in fact, the name translated to English is the League of Education). The LLE engages the questions of secularism and diversity in ways as close to schools as possible, for instance one activity of the group is as follows: “Let’s Play the Solidarity Card⁷⁴”, “which distributed postcards to schools in France with photos from different French artists denouncing racial and social discrimination [...] about 150 000 of these postcards were sent by pupils to random people throughout the country”⁷⁵. The group defends secularism as the ultimate framework in which different backgrounds and ethnicities can gather and connect. The LLE defines itself as a secular movement of popular education (*Mouvement laïque d’éducation populaire*), emphasizing the connections between education and secularism.

In this paragraph and the next, I give a brief state of the matter of about the broader

⁷¹ Michael Kelly, “Laïcité and atheism in France,” *French Cultural Studies* Vol. 28 (2017): 113.

⁷² Ibid, 113.

⁷³ “La Ligue de l’enseignement, une institution qui n’est pas de la République mais qui est pour la République, qui porte deux valeurs essentielles, inlassablement, depuis 150 ans : l’éducation, l’éducation pour tous, et la laïcité partout.” [My translation] Taken from: La Ligue de L’enseignement, “Se Souvenir de l’avenir,” accessed 19 June 2017, 52. http://www.laligue.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Ligue_seSouvenir_WEB.pdf

⁷⁴ i.e. Jouons la carte de la fraternité

⁷⁵ European Humanist Federation, “Annual report 2016-2017 - Humanists in Action,” accessed 19 June 2017. available: <http://humanistfederation.eu/ckfinder/userfiles/files/EHF-Annual%20report%202016%20-%202017%20V9.pdf>

context of France. Since the secular tradition is ingrained into the law and consciousness of the French people, the law is on the side of La Ligue, which has a comfortable space in the public sphere for its campaigning. More or less, one could say, that they have become “mainstream” (based on the number of their members). Since most of what could be defined as their objectives such as demanding a secular constitution and a Parliament⁷⁶, have already been established (at least in comparison to rest of Europe), the league has channelled its focus on different sectors related to Humanist thought. Such sectors like equality and diversity as well as free speech and human rights might seem like an ordinary agenda of an NGO, but the group formulates these into their conception of “inclusive” secularism. Similar to their secularist counterparts from the right-wing⁷⁷, the LLE is politically active, for example, the organization had called to members to vote against the *Front National* candidate Marine Le Pen in the 2017 Presidential election⁷⁸.

The state is not completely neutral when it comes to religion, however. Troper talks about several instances where despite the French secularity principle, the state came to fund or support religions indirectly. For instance, one is *loi Debré* of 1959, which “authorized the state to enter into contracts with private schools” (even the ones with religious character), because they fulfilled a service in the public education⁷⁹. Therefore, the state indirectly funded religious schools. According to Troper, neutrality toward religion, “is construed as meaning not that the state should not interfere with religion but that, when it does, it should [...] treat all religions equally” and “only from the point of the general interest”⁸⁰. Although the 1905 law is recognized to be the stem, at least in the legal sense, of the secular principle in France (besides the Constitution, which

⁷⁶ Which, as will be seen on the section of the NSS, is not something that the UK has.

⁷⁷ The secularism finds at least two different faces in France, on the broader level (or even more, if we take Bauberot's seven secularisms of France), one adopted by the integrationists, or the liberals in general such as the LLE, who view secularism as a way to gather all, whereas the far-right groups such as Riposte laïque, see secularism as a defensive measure, a part of national white French identity, to which Islam poses the biggest threat (the *laïcité identitaire* of Bauberot). See Jean Baubérot, *Les sept laïcités françaises: Le modèle français de laïcité n'existe pas* (2013).

⁷⁸ For Le Pen's secularism: Basit Mahmood, "Marine Le Pen has failed to understand what French secularism really means," <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/french-elections-marine-le-pen-national-front-what-secularism-really-means-a7692671.html> ; for French media view: by Bernard Gorce, "Emmanuel Macron et Marine Le Pen, deux conceptions de la laïcité," published May 2017, <http://www.la-croix.com/France/Politique/Signes-religieux-Emmanuel-Macron-Marine-Le-Pen-deux-conceptions-laicite-2017-05-03-1200844228>

⁷⁹ Michel Troper, "Republicanism and Freedom of Religion in France," in *Religion, Secularism & Constitutional Democracy*, eds. Jean L. Cohen and Cecile Laborde (Columbia University Press 2016), 320.

⁸⁰ Ibid 327

claims that France is “secular”), the law does not apply to the Alsace-Moselle region, and other French territories outside the Continent⁸¹. Bauberot refers to this as *laïcité concordataire*, where religions are recognized and religious education takes place differently than the rest of France⁸².

2.4.2 The National Secular Society

Charles Bradlaugh in 1866 founded the NSS, which is one of the oldest secularist organizations in the world, with deep historical connections to the secular movement in the UK⁸³. Although the organization does not define itself openly as “Humanist”, it has the common working ground with them, and has membership to the European Humanist Federation and the IHEU⁸⁴. The organization has the prestigious special consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council, permitting it to intervene at the Human Rights Council in Geneva⁸⁵. The NSS prides itself on successful abolishing of blasphemy laws in the UK. It has ties to Conway Hall Ethical Society, which hosts a library on free-thought and stores the archives of the NSS and a number of other groups. The organization defines its role as:

The National Secular Society works for the separation of religion and state and equal respect for everyone's human rights so that no one is either advantaged or disadvantaged because of their beliefs. We work in the UK and Europe to challenge the disproportionate influence of religion on governments and in public life. We provide a secular voice in the media, defending freedom and equality as a counterbalance to the powerful religious lobby and some of the more destructive religious impulses that can

⁸¹ Secularity in France, is tied to French Revolution, and in the opposition of the "two Frances", a Catholic versus a Republican France. Troper explains: "the beginning of the Third Republic saw a deep divide between Catholics and republicans. The latter developed a new ideology, claiming the legacy of the Revolution, a strong anticlericalism, and a belief that the state should [...] not be subjected to religious influence or fund religions that could turn against it. They favoured a secular state that would not let the church exercise the function of shaping and teaching." Taken from: Michel Troper, 326.

⁸² Jean Bauberot, *Les sept laïcités françaises: Le modèle français de laïcité n'existe pas* (2013).

⁸³ For a broad conception of the history of the secular movement and the Holyoake-Bradlaugh schism, see Stephen LeDrew, "The Secular Movement," in *The Evolution of Atheism: The Politics of a Modern Movement*. (New York: Oxford Uni Press, 2016).

⁸⁴ The distinction of “Secularist” and “Humanist” organizations seems to apply only in the UK, where the early arguments about the character of the organizations, especially the political involvement has caused historical drifts among the secular movement, giving birth to different organizations such as the British Humanist Association and the Rationalist Association. The NSS is the oldest of them. Therefore, in this study I treated the NSS and the LLE as the same category of organizations, since the exact French counterpart of the NSS is non-existent.

⁸⁵ European Humanist Federation, "Annual report 2016-2017," 10.

threaten human rights worldwide.⁸⁶

As seen above, the organization is also engaging European institutions on its own; especially the EP (in the the Separation of Religion & Politics Working Group or EPPSP) and the European Council⁸⁷. Just like the LLE, the NSS is also heavily active in educational campaigning⁸⁸. They give a clue as to what can be the reason for this: “The most overt imposition of religion on British citizens is in education”⁸⁹. The organization aims to secularize education by lobbying to the UK government to phase out the public-funded faith schools, to end “compulsory worship in schools and for reform of Religious Education” and to end discrimination on religious grounds on admitting new pupils and employing teachers⁹⁰. On the state level, The NSS seeks for the removal of “all symbolic and institutional governmental ties with religion”, severing of all ties between the government and the Church of England and a “constitution that declares Britain to be a secular nation”⁹¹. Although the organization has started out as “atheistic” in Bradlaugh's times, the latest president of the NSS, Terry Sanderson, states that the organization is no longer as such, and retains a purely secularist viewpoint⁹². Now the organizations has open membership to all corners of the public, whether they be religious or not. They also support religious groups who are advocating for secularism such as Catholics for Choice⁹³. Apparently, the group has taken note of the criticism towards the secular movement as a whole, and has opened the doors to all, perhaps stemming from the need to open to the public more favourably, to strengthen the participation and campaigning. The NSS, with these attributes, stands as a Secular Humanist organization, though it does not provide humanist ceremonies. The NSS, however, does not provide such, and focus on campaigning for a secular UK. In other words, The NSS seeks to be exclusively an advocator organization, whereas the other

⁸⁶ The National Secular Society, "About the National Secular Society," accessed 20 June 2017. <http://www.secularism.org.uk/about.html>

⁸⁷ They have also intervened in ECtHR ;see Ibid, 10.

⁸⁸ In fact both seems to have educational secularization as their primary campaign agenda, for example the NSS annual report of 2016 devotes the first five pages to education reform.

⁸⁹ The National Secular Society, "Rethinking religion and belief," 16.

⁹⁰ The National Secular Society, "Education," accessed 17 June 2017.

<http://www.secularism.org.uk/religion-in-schools.html> ;See also all other relevant sections

⁹¹ The National Secular Society, "Disestablishment," accessed 17 June 2017.

<http://www.secularism.org.uk/disestablishment.html>

⁹² The National Secular Society, "Annual Report 2016," accessed 18 June 2017.

<http://www.secularism.org.uk/uploads/nss-annual-report-2016.pdf>

⁹³ Many Humanists in the UK appreciate Christianity as a cultural background and retain reference to Christianity in their establishment of discourse, for a more complete insight on the topic, see Matthew Engelke, "Christianity and the Anthropology of Secular Humanism," *Current Anthropology* Vol 55, No. 10 (2014).

Humanists have a belief-oriented approach.

Other campaign areas, more directly related to Humanist philosophy, include freedom of expression, the intersection of religion and law, or campaigns for abortion rights in Northern Ireland. Recent decades saw an abatement of freedom of expression being curtailed by religious “sensibilities”. The organization sees that these pressures should provide reasons for more vindication and protection of the right to speak, or to be creative, instead of self-censorship or evasion due to safety reasons. “Defend Free Speech” campaign organized by the NSS and partner institutions sought to protest new measures undertaken by the UK government to curtail any kinds of extremism⁹⁴. The measures which are called Extremism Disruptions Orders will ban a person from speaking in public or social media, if the person is accused of religious or non-religious extremism, such as a critique of religion, or even blasphemy. The organization thinks that objectionable ideas, such as critique of religion, better be open to challenge, discussion, and humane treatment.

I will elaborate more on the local context of the organization. The organization claims that there are many facts and figures which depict how anachronistic the UK law and structure stands in its time; The Church of England is the official church of England, the Crown of England is bound to preserve Protestantism, the Parliament houses open with a religious ceremony and there are twenty-six unelected bishops in the House of Lords (known as Lords Spiritual) who can vote and influence the decisions taken on the whole of the UK⁹⁵. The NSS also notes that “the United Kingdom is the only Western democracy to legally impose worship in publicly funded schools” and “unique among Western democracies in giving religious representatives seats in its legislature as of right”⁹⁶. The organization's motto “challenging religious privilege” seems to echo not only these ambitions, but also the historical aim of the secularist movement, in opposition to a purely ethical and humanitarian ambition, however this does not mean, as mentioned above, that the organization is “atheistic”.

⁹⁴ The campaign has its own website, and opens with claims such as "Don't let Theresa May turn you into an extremist", see: Defend Free Speech, Campaign Website, accessed 18 June 2017. <http://defendfreespeech.org.uk>

⁹⁵ For details of the ceremony, see under "Prayers": Parliament of United Kingdom, "Rules and traditions of Parliament," accessed 18 June 2017. <http://www.parliament.uk/about/how/role/customs/>

⁹⁶ The National Secular Society, "Religious Representation in the House of Lords," accessed 18 June 2017. <http://www.secularism.org.uk/lords-reform.html>

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have tried to give further details on the background of Humanism, its European context and how it is structured in the legal and political framework, as well as how the mentioned organizations stand presently. It can be observed that both organizations have similar genealogies; they have old roots in history and comprise perspectives of a significant section of population. Both organizations are to be seen as Humanist organizations, not only because of their promotion of the individual as a reasoning person essentially independent of its “community” and who shall be seen in the light of universal values that make us all “human”, but also in its approach towards questions of the freedoms in general. In a way they emphasize the role of the agency of the person inside the structure, though they are certainly not direct counter-parts of each, at least, they have important similarities. Furthermore, these organizations are only advocatory, unlike many other Humanist organizations, as they do not provide secular ceremonies such as weddings. However, this should not mean that they are all about publications and discourse, speeches and talk, as seen above, they are practically active in their campaigning,

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Presentation of the Chapter

In this chapter, I discuss methodology and the methodological concepts. I delve more into what discourse means and the purpose and process of the qualitative discourse analysis under the discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe, and its properties. Discourse theory builds itself upon criticism of the Marxist theory, of structuralism and is one of the most abstract of discourse analysis, due to its interest in abstract, “depersonalized” discourses⁹⁷. I have also drawn upon Wodak and Fairclough's perspectives on organizational discourse and orders of discourse to strengthen the variety of perspectives of the discourse analytical approach, though I am not using vital concepts of their critical discourse analysis, such as intertextuality. One important feature of this discourse theoretical approach (as of all social constructionist discourse analysis) is that it is a whole package, the method and theory has to be integrated throughout.

3.2 Discourse Theory

In the study, I have used Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory as explained by Marianne Jørgensen and Louise Philips⁹⁸. The object of analysis in discourse theory, is the discourse itself, rather than what is the reality “behind” discourse, thus the constituents of discourse is of prime importance. I have chosen this framework and methodology in visualizing how the organizations create political discourses vis-a-vis their broader social and political context, and the actors involved, because of the suitability of discourse theory to “abstract” discourses, group formation and collective identity⁹⁹. For example, it can be visualized how they mobilize around Humanism and secularism or other concepts that have varying meanings, which they try to internalize and utilize to strengthen their discourse. The theory proposes that discourse in constitution of the world is fully constitutive, instead of being constituted, as in, for

⁹⁷ Marianne Jørgensen and Louise Philips, *Discourse Analysis: As Theory and Method*, 1st Ed. (London: Sage, 2002), 20. ; by "depersonalized", I mean the focus on discourses, where the group identification is on the fore, rather than individual's identity being constituted by these discourses. By abstract, I also mean the complete encapsulation of discourses of the reality, including the physical.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 24-59.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 146. ; Jørgensen and Philips state: "discourse theory is theoretically strong when it comes to analysis of group formation and collective identity."

instance, Historical Materialism. In this theory, signs are seen as positioned by discourses in relation to each but never definitely in continuity, because “discourses are always only temporary and partial fixations of meaning in a fundamentally undecidable terrain”¹⁰⁰. Jorgensen and Philips, thus propose:

Discourse theory suggests that we focus on the specific expressions in their capacity as articulations: what meanings do they establish by positioning elements in particular relationships with one other, and what meaning potentials do they exclude?¹⁰¹.

The discourse theory, unlike structuralism, is bent upon “how the structure, in the form of discourses, is constituted and changed” and targets the structuring process instead of the structure itself, with bearing in mind that all social practices are articulations.¹⁰² *Articulations*, as a central concept of the theory, are defined by Laclau and Mouffe as “any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice.” thus it conceptualizes reproduction and change.¹⁰³ The qualitative analysis, here, is centred on struggles between certain discourses, how they articulate as such, keeping in mind that essentially, they are “trying to promote different ways of organising society” with power recognized as critical in the functioning of everything, and not only as repression.¹⁰⁴

3.2.1 What is a Discourse?

Discourse is a particular manner of alluding to and understanding the social world, through representation. Discourses, amid competition, offer different ways of perceiving things. Discourse constitutes the object it is directed towards, and contribute to producing subjects (such as the people) through its interpretation of the social realities. It also has become an essential part of the study of language and communication, beginning with the theorization of the post-structuralism that language is structured in discourses, because it adds an element of relativism with meaning varying from discourse to discourse. Laclau and Mouffe defines discourse as “the structured totality

¹⁰⁰ Ibid 39

¹⁰¹ Ibid 29

¹⁰² Ibid 30

¹⁰³ Ibid 26, 140

¹⁰⁴ Ibid 36

resulting from the articulatory practice”, and a fixation of meaning¹⁰⁵. Discourses and orders of discourse are structured in what could be called “fractals”. For example, larger discourses, when analysed closely, will yield smaller discourses that may be in conflict with each other; right-wing (or any kind, for that matter) secularist discourse as a whole might seem to be stable in itself, but when analysed closely, one can easily detect these smaller discourses that are in conflict with, or in unison with each other. Same can be said for even such discourses perceived as “stable” like the philosophy of science. This makes analysis of discourse particularly difficult. As this study focuses on organizations, I assume that the organizations here both have a single discourse of their own, providing they are firm as a whole in their language.

3.2.2 Analyzing discourse

In this section, I focus on methodological concepts related to the Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory, and how they are used for the qualitative discourse analysis. Although the theory of Laclau and Mouffe acknowledge the post-structuralist critique of Saussurian linguistics (such as the fixed signifier/signified binary structure), the creation of meaning is based on this fixation at a given time and discourse, “as if a Saussurian system existed”¹⁰⁶. In discourse theory, these signs, which can be described as the smallest unit of meaning-making, make up the important cells that discourses strive to “capture” or form, “by placing them in particular relations to other signs” as a result of the articulatory process, so that “the meaning of each sign is locked into a specific relationship to the others”, though temporarily¹⁰⁷. Discourse theory, then, makes further distinctions of signs; “all signs in a discourse are *moments*”, which come to being after the fixation of meaning to *elements*. According to Jørgensen and Philips “a discourse attempts to transform elements into moments by reducing their polysemy to a fully fixed meaning.”¹⁰⁸ This fixation of meaning, as a result of articulation, is called *closure* in discourse theory. This serves to remove ambiguities in an environment where every discourse and meaning is contingent, flowing, and susceptible to change, by closing out the other competing meaning-makers or discourses. The discourse is an incomplete structure, a temporary closure, as the fixation cannot be permanent, unlike the

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 24,26.

¹⁰⁶ Jørgensen and Philips, *Discourse Analysis: As Theory and Method*, 25.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid 25

¹⁰⁸ Ibid 28

permanency found in the Saussurian tradition. According to Laclau and Mouffe, this is how discourses build upon each other: “Because of the perpetual potential polysemy, every verbal or written expression (even every social action [..]) is also, to some extent, an articulation or innovation; although the expression draws on earlier fixations of meaning [...] the expression is never merely a repetition of something already established”¹⁰⁹. Thus some of the core of meaning is retained.

Some signs have particular features, such as the *floating signifier*; as distinguished from an ordinary signifier, whose signified is fixed (for example, when I say the sign “car” to a person, this person will not imagine something else other than a four-wheeled vehicle fixed on a chassis). Floating signifiers are particular, because they are more open to being ascribed differing meanings, in that their signified is not fixed, but highly variable. An example in this study is secularism, that I have discussed above, is conceptualized differently by each scholar and actor, and thus comes to have varying meanings, varying stipulations, in different discourses (for example, there is not a single, tangible signified, or denotation of secularism)¹¹⁰. Jorgensen and Philips states that “floating signifiers are the signs that different discourses struggle to invest with meaning in their own particular way”, hence their importance for the discourse analyst¹¹¹. Floating signifiers should be distinguished from *nodal points*, another important term in discourse theory, which are floating signifiers *per se*, but refers to a different place in the theory. In Jorgensen and Philips' words (with an example of medical discourse):

“whereas the term 'nodal point' refers to a point of crystallisation within a specific discourse, the term 'floating signifier' belongs to the ongoing struggle between different discourses to fix the meaning of important signs. Thus 'body' is a nodal point in medical discourse [in that many signs are defined in relation to the nodal point “the body”], and a floating signifier in the struggle between medical discourse and alternative treatment discourses”.¹¹²

In this case, an example of nodal point can be “constitution” and “state” in political theoretical discourse, but these also belong to the legal discourse, with different

¹⁰⁹ Ibid 29

¹¹⁰ Humanism might as well be another example of floating signifier, with many different definitions and uses existent all around the world.

¹¹¹ Ibid 28

¹¹² Ibid 28-29

affixations of meanings as moments. Finally, to organize social space, the concept of *myth* is used as to refer to totalities such as “the country”, “the Orient”, where the discourses are shaped in relation to the surrounding. According to Jorgensen and Philips, myths, although “a distorted representation of reality”, it is “something we imagine in order to make our acts meaningful”¹¹³.

In analysing the texts and journals of the organizations, there will also be a cross-language complication; The LLE has material written in French, whereas the NSS naturally writes in English. While some words are difficult to translate back and forth, I have taken large excerpts from the text, in my own translation, so that the reader can follow easily, in case the reader cannot read French. For the translation, I preferred to keep a pragmatic approach, rather than translating the words exactly. For extra information on the background, and to help with my research, I have also used Annual Reports of both organizations to gain a foothold into their discourses, or the “order of business”.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research, and to curtail the problem of anecdotalism as defined by Silverman¹¹⁴, I have went through the whole material critically (whether on-web or designed for print) including the texts that I do not directly incorporate into the study, of both organizations dating back to 2012 to see if it would be possible to come across any data that is conflictual to my research conclusions and answers¹¹⁵.

3.2.3 Making sense of the discourse in the broader context

According to Wodak, “there can in principle be no objective beginning and no clear” ending of a discourse unit to be analysed, because “every discourse is bound up with many others and can only be understood on the basis of others”¹¹⁶. Thus, location of discourse as text in context, and choice of the delimitation of a discourse unit is largely

¹¹³ Ibid 39

¹¹⁴ David Silverman, *Doing Qualitative Research*, 3rd Ed. (London: Sage, 2010): 276.

¹¹⁵ For example, there is a large document from the LLE solely on the topic of Laïcité dating from 2012. the organization peculiarly refers to its adherents as their “militants”, to participate actively against the instrumentalization of secularism in politics. See here: La Ligue de L'enseignement, "La laïcité pour « faire société », " accessed 22 June 2017. <http://laligue.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/laicite.pdf>

¹¹⁶ Stefan Titscher, et al, *Methods of Text and Discourse Analysis*, 26.

up to the preferences of the researcher. On the larger, broader level, the individual discourse corresponds to an encompassing discourse such as “the secularist discourse” or “the medical discourse”, with no designation according to its time or place. These make up the macro-contexts (for example, of the organizations of the study), on the lower level, micro-contexts make up smaller places, where there are different actors and issues on each. To give an example, the veil (or burqa) issue in France is a micro-context issue where the organization interacts in its discourse, with identified actors (such as the organization itself and the women who wear the veil) and a particular time frame and place (twentieth- and twenty-first century France) *et cetera*. Finally, these two dimensions must be brought together, in their full properties, for successful research.

To understand the discourses better in the macro-context, it is necessary to understand the concepts of *objectivity*, *hegemony* and social *antagonism*. Laclau and Mouffe use the term *objectivity* for those ascriptions of meanings or discourses that are taken as granted, as a whole system and deemed as natural. Although, as stated above, everything is contingent in discourse theory; thus, prone to change, but the clause objective refers to the currently accepted discourse(s): “there is always an objective field of sedimented discourse – a long series of social arrangements that we take for granted and therefore do not question or try to change”¹¹⁷. Jorgensen and Philips give the example of the treatment of children, present (as objective) as opposed to historical, when they were treated rather as “small adults” than (presently) as a distinctive sort of people that would entail separate institutionalization, accommodation or physical space (nurseries, libraries for children etc.)¹¹⁸. This is a clear illustration of discourse on children, and shows that discourse is ingrained into the *material*, an important feature of discourse theory. Objective is important for the analyst, because the realization of which would enhance the critical features of the study, because objectivity is equalized to ideological. The border between the objective and the political (or between what is accepted as natural and challenged) is not static, has a tendency to change over time and can be said to be related to the shift in culture and cultural apprehension¹¹⁹.

¹¹⁷ Ibid 30

¹¹⁸ Ibid 36

¹¹⁹ Just imagine the progression of what is "objective" in Germany, from the Nazi era, to the post-modern "liberal" Germany

The concept of *hegemony*, is rather more ambivalent. It stems from Gramsci's supplementation of a political element to the theory of historical materialism. In Gramsci, hegemony is used to refer to “social consensus”, or “organization of consent” whereby power relations are subdued through production or control of meaning, and which “masks people's real interests” (but, also this political element opens up the premise for a collective change in consciousness of people)¹²⁰. Jorgensen and Philips sums up the importance of hegemony as :

consciousness is determined instead by hegemonic processes in the superstructure; people's consciousness gains a degree of autonomy in relation to the economic conditions, so opening up the possibility for people to envisage alternative ways of organising society.¹²¹

Laclau and Mouffe builds upon this hegemony and creation of autonomy; they situate hegemony between what is objective and what is political. In the realm of consistent contingency, objective can transition into the realm of political (thus, can be questioned or disestablished, or the competing discourses can claim its moments as elements), or the opposite could happen. When a discourse ridiculed in the past becomes established (transitioning of political into objective), it happens through the “hegemonic interventions” which cancel out the alternative interpretations, and authorize the favoured discourse. Hegemony is seen in similarity to “discourse”, because both designate a fixation of elements into moments. However, hegemonic interventions designates these fixations “across discourses that collide antagonistically”¹²². *Antagonism* refers to those collisions that occur, when different discourses lay claim to the same territory of meaning; an example would make it more clear in the reader's mind, when wars occur, nationalist discourses come to the fore, and demand from the citizen to fight for its “nation”, at the same time conflict occurs because if this citizen identifies with the so-called working class (and, with the associated discourse), wouldn't it be at odds to kill other workers for the “nation”, in a clear trespass of Marxist discourse (which demands the alliance of all workers)? In these instances, hegemonic interventions would conclude the collision for one side or the other: “when people from different nations actually went to war against one another in the First World War, this

¹²⁰ Ibid 32

¹²¹ Ibid 32

¹²² Ibid 48

was a sign that the hegemonic articulation of people as 'Germans' and 'Frenchmen' had succeeded at the expense of the articulation of people as 'workers'"¹²³.

Discourse theory conceives of discourses as having an all-encompassing scope: "discourse itself is material and that entities such as the economy, the infrastructure and institutions are also parts of discourse"¹²⁴. In this way, it is in opposition to Althusser's conceptualization of the economy determining everything in final instance. However, this constitution of reality is not total, according to Jorgensen and Philips:

The overall idea of discourse theory is that social phenomena are never finished or total. Meaning can never be ultimately fixed and this opens up the way for constant social struggles about definitions of society and identity, with resulting social effects. The discourse analyst's task is to plot the course of these struggles to fix meaning at all levels of the social.¹²⁵

Analysis can map out the relationships behind these struggles to fix meaning as well as identify what discourses are being drawn upon, and what is excluded in the material studied. As Laclau and Mouffe are "Post-Marxists", their social is built upon criticism of Marxism. Whereas Marxism proposes an objective reality of the social (the capitalistic economy and the social classes), in discourse theory, objectivity is created by discourses instead. Discourse theory also shifts the importance of the politics; the historical materialism's deterministic power of the economy is abolished, and political articulations take its place. Politics, here, mean "the manner in which we constantly constitute the social in ways that exclude other ways", an act is political if it excludes an alternative way of thinking¹²⁶. The struggle or competition of discourses are, *inter alia*, attempts at differently organizing society, and their conflict is based on the fact that no two discourses can co-exist if they prescribe the same social terrain differently, and this could apply even to the physical realm. In discourse theory, "physical reality is totally superimposed by the social", and everything physical is affected by discourse¹²⁷. This

¹²³ Ibid 48

¹²⁴ Ibid ,19.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 24.

¹²⁶ Ibid, 36.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 35.

movability, and exclusion of discourse, is the condition of existence of power, and thus of competition.

3.2.4 The Significance of the Method for the Study

Discourse theory also touches upon the subject of group formation. Groups or organizations are understood “as a reduction of possibilities”¹²⁸. Group identity is formed when some interpretations are excluded, and some are embraced, as with discourses themselves, they work by cutting out alternative meanings. Organizations as such, ignore the differences in its ranks, in its individuals, but focuses on the common discourse, “thereby all the other ways in which one could have formed groups are also ignored”¹²⁹. This is why one could talk about a single discourse of an organization and why usually organizations are imbued with labels like “the others” and “us”, an organization has to be consistent, after all.

According to Fairclough, studies of organizations should include analysis of discourse¹³⁰. This view has a basis in that social phenomena (including organizations) are socially constructed in discourse. Fairclough also quotes Grant and Hardy, on what they define this kind of discourse:

In using the term “organizational discourse”, we refer to the structured collections of texts embodied in the practices of talking and writing ... that bring organizationally related objects into being as those texts are produced, disseminated, and consumed ... Consequently, texts can be considered to be a manifestation of discourse and the distinctive unit¹³¹.

The texts of the organizations are important in that they are manifestations of their discourses on a particular subject. Wodak has this to say on properties of genre and on organized discourse:

¹²⁸ Ibid, 44.

¹²⁹ Ibid, 44.

¹³⁰ Norman Fairclough, "Discourse Analysis in Organization Studies: The Case for Critical Realism," *Organization Studies* Vol. 26 (2005): 915.

¹³¹ Ibid, 919

Discourse communities are defined *inter alia* through a broadly agreed set of common public goals, through mechanisms of intercommunication among its members; through their own genres; through their own lexis; and through a suitable degree of relevant content and discursive expertise. Hence, each peer-group or subgroup will develop their own goals, their own styles, their own genres and their own values.¹³²

I will treat Humanist organizations in this way; as a discourse community each with specific and unique manifestations of their ambitions. Therefore, not only will I be able to make deductions about how the context of the organization determines its language use, and formulation of discourse, for example how the LLE (La Ligue de L'enseignement) uses the French presidential election to advocate for the choice of whichever candidate that promises to maintain the secular tradition, but also about the different definitions and reifications about categories that the organizations put forward, in other words, how does the organization in a Catholic-majority country define and react to religion in the public sphere, in education, and according to an active Humanist agenda. In other words, I am analyzing how floating signifiers such as secularism get caught in the organization's discourse as moments, in addition to how these articulations create an organizational identity. Which players are active in the order of discourse, and what are their contributions?. What further enhances the research is that the organizations try to persuade, since its in their benefit that the philosophy of Humanism, or at least an understanding of non-ideological facets of secularism, such as the separation of the state and the religious institution, spreads, and they get increased membership and popularity. How they try to persuade different communities is highly dependent on the context. Discourse in organizational and social settings, has a constitutive relationship with the status quo, Wodak states "It is constitutive both in the sense that it helps sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it"¹³³.

3.3 Conclusion

I have given further elaboration of methodology in this chapter, and how the analysis of the data mentioned in the first chapter would take place. Besides having elaborated

¹³² Ruth Wodak and Michał Krzyżanowski, *Qualitative Discourse Analysis in the Social Sciences*, eds. Ruth Wodak and Michał Krzyżanowski (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 15.

¹³³ Stefan Titscher et al., *Methods of Text and Discourse Analysis* (London: Sage, 2000).

critical concepts such as hegemony and objectivity, I have also given reasoning as to why I think the specific method of discourse analysis (discourse theory) is suitable for this kind of study, because of its focus on group identity and group formation of discourse. I have coupled discourse theory with Wodak and Fairclough for further richness of perspectives. Next chapter deals with the texts themselves, in a close-reading.

CHAPTER IV: COMPARISON AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Presentation of the Chapter

This chapter starts with the analysis of the material by the French organization LLE. Throughout the analysis, I quote (and translate) large sections of text that I find highly useful, and also that reader can follow my analysis. Then, I evaluate the material of the NSS, however I do not quote large sections of text, since the material is available in English to the reader. In the end of the chapter, I present a comparative discussion of the analysis in this chapter.

4.2 La Ligue de L'enseignement

Upon a general inspection of the material of the LLE, it is possible to see how the topic of secularism intermingles with questions of diversity, integration, and of discrimination throughout the whole text(s). This couples with frequent allusions to the far-right, including what they see as the use and abuse of the concept as a national identity formulation, or as a way to banish the other of the society. The main reference is secularism of fraternity, rather than a secularism of separation, can be seen in Nadia Bellaoui's words, the general secretary of the organization: "The League of today, like that of the origins, is for a *laïcité* of inclusion, not exclusion. It carries within it an ideal of the common, the ideal of a shared world.", this is what according to her, is the reinvention of the law of 1905¹³⁴. The question of secularism has reappeared, and "not only with the various "affairs of the veil" of which the oldest [...] are already 25 years old."¹³⁵.

La laïcité, une émancipation en actes, which literally means "Secularism, an emancipation in action" is the text which will be studied in this section. It promises to explain secularism to its followers, states the following in the introductory part:

"Secularism. [...] rests on the one hand on the assertion and the guarantee of

¹³⁴ "La Ligue d'aujourd'hui, comme celle des origines, est pour une laïcité d'inclusion, et non d'exclusion. Elle porte en elle un idéal du commun, l'idéal d'un monde partagé" Taken from: La Ligue de L'enseignement, "Se souvenir de l'avenir," 31.

¹³⁵ Ibid 30

the freedom of conscience and the free exercise of the religions in the respect of the democratically defined public order; on the other, on the affirmation of a strict neutrality of the state and its public services.”¹³⁶

It will be seen later how this conception of secularism is imbued into the identity category “Republicanism” that the organization articulates as a support for submitting the freedoms of the individual to a strong state authority, which in return provides full public liberty. In this way, secularism is a part of this identity. According to Troper, French conception of liberty is where it is defined closely with the presence of the state, whose laws define the full range of right to act, instead of an emphasis on the autonomy of the citizens¹³⁷.

The definition also refers to Troper's “two branches” of *laïcité*: “the state will remain neutral and avoid funding any religion or favoring one religion over another; on the other hand it will not interfere in religious matters, and it will respect and guarantee religious freedom”¹³⁸. Apart from these guidelines, however, there is neither an accepted definition of *laïcité* or Republicanism¹³⁹. These concepts are invested meaning(s) as floating signifiers, and the organization utilizes them to make allusions to the competing discourses, namely the right-wing secularists of France. It is emphasized that the quality of secularism that the organization advocates is not an ideological concept that aims to leverage a discursive position, is open to all and does not discriminate:

“One can be a believer, atheist, agnostic, even indifferent in a secular Republic. Secularism is not a cultural current, a spiritual family, a religion or a philosophy. Secularism is not an ideology, a part of the conception that one takes of desirable sociability, of the desirable future. Secularism is the legal and political principle that allows the peaceful cohabitation of these different ideological currents.”¹⁴⁰

This definition, accordingly with its acceptance of difference and diversity, stands in contrast to the right, who, according to the LLE, “instrumentalize” secularism as something other than a politically neutral principle, which is deemed the fruit of the Republic's difficult history. The Republic, here, is the *myth*; a signifier to which the

¹³⁶ La Ligue de L'enseignement, "La laïcité, une émancipation en actes," 4.

¹³⁷ Michel Troper, "Republicanism and Freedom of Religion in France," 330

¹³⁸ Michel Troper, "Republicanism and Freedom of Religion in France," 319

¹³⁹ Ibid, 333. ; They are floating signifiers, in this sense. However, as I later do, a distinction between "Republican" and the "Republic" is important.

¹⁴⁰ La Ligue de L'enseignement, "La laïcité," 5.

discourse of the group attaches value and legitimacy as the true social space, in order to forward their discourse. Yet another concept that the organization finds its legitimacy, is the 1905 law, which they frequently allude to in the text. It stands in a relationship with the floating signifier of secularism, the discourse of which takes its legitimacy and power from the enacted law and subsequent discourses build their own meaning to the law.¹⁴¹

The text comes to the subject of “instrumentalization” (in the sense of use and abuse) of secularism by the right-wing rival discourse, accusing them of stealing to strengthen their identity formulation:

“Movements of the extreme right, such as the Front National or Riposte Laïque, who see in secularism the instrument of safeguarding a fantasized and reactionary identity of France. The enemy is for them the Muslim religion made visible through its practices of clothing, worship or food. For them, secularism, contrary to its original meaning and function, is reduced, at best, to an unbearable methodology for managing cultural diversity, which is to silence its visible expression [of diversity] at its worst, racist identity. From an emancipatory approach based on a principle of freedom, secularism comes to be called only as justification for strategies of prohibition [implying the Veil] implemented in the name of an identity supposed stable and ideologically constructed on a refusal of cultural diversity.”¹⁴²

The group acknowledges what secularism has become in France, with a emboldened text on the right top corner of the page 5 of the document, saying that political forces have transformed a neutral political principle, into a identity ideology¹⁴³. After the introduction section, on page 7 starts the first section devoted to diversity named “Reconciling Diversity and Unity”¹⁴⁴. According to the organization a true pluralist democracy is needed, because the difficulties surrounding cultural diversity are more acute today, but it so only in the background of rising inequalities, and not because of the diversity *per se*. LLE then questions the notion that France is “One and Indivisible”, saying that the Republic is only indivisible, and not “one”, because that word implies an uniform framework where everybody has to fit in forcefully; (thus eroding the diverse

¹⁴¹ Ibid 5 ; The wording of the law is particularly open to different fixations of meaning. It does not even refer directly to the legal principle of laïcité.

¹⁴² Ibid 5.

¹⁴³ Ibid 5.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid 6.

nature of France) a notion, admittedly, accepted by some circles¹⁴⁵. The indivisible Republic, then, can function only under a unifying secularism, which “separates only to bring together”, by:

“It separates religious and political power, civil law and religious law, the parish priest, pastor, imam and rabbi from the teacher in order to gather together citizens around shared values. It demands respect for the equal dignity of people and cultures and the reciprocal recognition of otherness. Secularism is respect for specificities and their transcendence, it is the combination of diversity and unity, they are rights and duties, it is respect for peculiarities and the search for "universalizable" values. To get together, you do not need to be alike.”¹⁴⁶

The fraternity (as defined by the group), therefore, is the most important characteristic of secularism. In a way, these signifiers like “diversity” and “pluralism” are invested with meanings to imbue the organizational identity (these are elements that have become moments in the discourse of the LLE), and is connected to the main signifier/nodal point of secularism, in a dialectical relationship where one cannot exist without the other, *vice versa*. On the next page of the Section 1, there is a separate part on Islam, “Encounter with Islam”¹⁴⁷. The reasons of the attention given to Islam are fairly obvious however, in the beginning of the discussion, it refers immediately to the “manifestations” and visibility of Islam that supposedly pose a challenge to “the Republic's capacity to defend its values” and that this visibility comes with “the feeling that Muslims would seek to impose their way of life on the whole of society”¹⁴⁸. Some of the manifestations are in fact, problematic, the group admits. In a way, the signifier of Islam have been invested with meanings of visibility and symbology, perhaps, more than any other religion in France¹⁴⁹. The group also admits that a demand for less visibility of religions, by the majority of French people has surfaced (in line with the emergence of the neutralization of the public sphere), which reinforces the confusion regarding what is to be accepted as not too visually assertive. Secularism also assures freedom of expression, according to the document, and prohibits the imposition of values or ideas

¹⁴⁵ Ibid 6

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 7

¹⁴⁷ Ibid 8

¹⁴⁸ Ibid 8

¹⁴⁹ The veil issue is more complicated, equality of women and sexuality is also involved in this case. European understanding of veil is that sexes are being separated rigidly, and that women are in a weak position under the veil. The European desire to uncover the veil, and liberate the women is strong in secularist positions in France, but not that significant in English secularism. I base my view on observations regarding the visuals of Islam in each country and Joan Wallach Scott's observations

on those who do not share them, and in this way monopolization of any conviction would be impossible, as long as it is enforced by the legitimate authority¹⁵⁰. As some in France think that Islam is trying to impose a certain way of living, the group puts forward the fact that back in history, Catholicism was thought not to be “soluble”, and Islam must surely achieve that at some point, and that it is not less compatible with the Republic than any other religion (the group might have pursued the Jewish question, since Jews were once deemed unacceptable in their traditions, and how they set themselves out from the French society)¹⁵¹.

On the page 9, the group asserts that many in the media and the politicians observe that secularism is being questioned by the rising of communitarianism (as opposed to the universalism of the Republican code or discourse)¹⁵². The group reminds the reader that there cannot be such a thing, that Republic is indivisible and there is no granting special rights to “communities”, and that French people should not be quick in judging people that they want to form groups and establish close links. It is important, says the LLE, not to aggravate the perception of the communities or minorities that they are being threatened:

“The haphazard denunciation of the "communitarianism" of Muslim associations contributes to the refinement of Islam as a religion, a culture, and a community at the same time. This stigmatization solidarizes people who may be distant with religion but who share the identity elements.”¹⁵³

Therefore, France needs a pragmatic approach to secularism, with a softer side on accommodation says the group, opposing the main competing discourse of the right-wing secularists, who think “that being reasonably accommodating would be proof of weakness and laxity, contrary to secularism.”¹⁵⁴. It can be seen how the “inclusive” secularism of the LLE and the discourse of right-wing secularists scramble to claim (as a floating signifier) secularism for their own¹⁵⁵. With a reference to the Veil debate, the paragraph ends with a statement; “secularism is more attached to what is traced in the

¹⁵⁰ Ibid 8

¹⁵¹ Ibid 8 ; Although maybe not anymore, the Jews had profound history in France, for instance, the Dreyfus affair managed to set France into two different camps.

¹⁵² Ibid 9 ; This criticism of communitarianism, refers mostly to the encampment of Muslims in France.

¹⁵³ Ibid 9

¹⁵⁴ Ibid 9

¹⁵⁵ I base the right-wing secularists claims on Nilsson's study. See Nilsson for a broad discussion of Riposte Laïque, an organization that belongs to right-wing secularists.

heads than to what is seen on the heads.”¹⁵⁶.

On the next page, the group articulates an open public sphere, and no arbitrary restriction of the freedom of speech, of act (“One can restrict for one time the freedom of expression of people, never get them to think the opposite of what they believe”)¹⁵⁷. We should focus on changing minds, instead of convicting them, since “there is no historical shortcut to change mentalities”¹⁵⁸. The reasonable accommodating conception of secular framework of the LLE opens up possibilities for the believers to conform to the teachings of their religion (the text gives the example of offering pork-free food but not going as far as to make the food halal or kosher, in a way it limits its discourse not to support or conform to the religious norms)¹⁵⁹.

On page 11, the next section starts with the name “A struggle for equality”. The text on this page finds rising inequality at the core of “the disintegration of social ties”, “loss of confidence in institutions” and fear of *the other* coupled with increased withdrawal to the smaller identity formations. Religion takes place here as the major example of this identity formation (“religion becomes a refuge, sometimes the only one, for those who feel rejected by society”). To counteract this tendency, a social secularism is a must, for the LLE, “secularism must promote the gathering, not the exclusion.” and that we should promote equality, and not only keep it in the law, but take it to the practice, to the reality. Education is key not only to this equality but also to a healthy secularism¹⁶⁰:

“More than ever, education has a decisive role. The Republicans, under the Third Republic, had well understood it by instituting free, secular and compulsory education upon their arrival in power. Indeed, in order for citizens to be independent in their opinions, to take control of their destiny and subsequently not to delegate to others what they must think or do, they must be taught, which is to say, to develop their critical thinking, their ability to demonstrate lucidity, imagination and reason to distinguish philosophical convictions, religious beliefs and scientific knowledge.”¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁶ Ibid 9

¹⁵⁷ Ibid 10. ; Freedom of speech is yet another key signifier that is consistently being tried to be invested into. Such articulations are grouped under the heading of "liberal democracy". That, by putting forward the issue of freedom of speech, the LLE, gives the impression that as they are friendly towards liberal democracy, they are no threat to the hegemonic "objective" Republic, and is therefore legitimate discourse.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid 10

¹⁵⁹ Ibid 10 ; "Le cadre laïque permet de ne pas mettre les croyants dans l'alternative d'avoir à enfreindre les interdits de leur religion ou de transgresser les contraintes juridiques ou sociales."

¹⁶⁰ Ibid 11

¹⁶¹ Ibid 11 ; In this citation, the "Humanist" features of the organization is clearly visible. The education

In the LLE's view, the solution therefore, is in equality through education, and the problem is not seen in the culture or the race of the frequently criticised Muslims (as the discourse of the secularists of the right-wing would imply)¹⁶², but instead in their failure to reach good (secular) education and social mobility. It is this education which will also teach them how to “live together” in a diverse environment, that reinforce the common belonging to “the Republic” and not to succumb to selfish, revenge-taking. The establishments “must meet a real recognized academic need, respect the freedom of conscience of the pupils and the school curricula and do not practice confessional or social selection”¹⁶³. The group emphasizes that by equality, not only financial equality need be understood, gender equality is also fundamental to secularism of today, with a separate section below the page 12 that states: “it must be remembered that almost all sexual and reproductive rights (contraception, sexuality and marriage education for all) were obtained by freeing themselves from religious prohibitions”¹⁶⁴.

To make the Republic a “truly common good”, the document refers to the “Charter of Secularism in Schools” published by the Ministry of Education, Vincent Peillon in 2013¹⁶⁵. In accordance with the charter, the state “must strengthen the means for a genuine social mix” and must condition teachers for critical thinking to take place in schools, and use the Charter to promote notions and practice that promote secularism¹⁶⁶. According to the LLE, therefore, the promise of the Republic “Freedom, Equality, Fraternity” will be fulfilled and that secularism is best served when something more is done about it except “talk”, which will make it live concretely. Secularism has, beyond the legal formality of separation of the state and religious institution, an incentive for different cultures to recognize each other, according to the group “it is the framework par excellence that allows to live and articulate this diversity of cultures, beliefs and convictions with common institutions.”¹⁶⁷. Although glamorous in words, the group admits the reality poses many risks and challenges to secularism; France needs to find

grants "autonomy" to the people, and thence enable individual reasoning.

¹⁶² Per-Erik Nilsson, 97. Nilsson says "Anti-Muslim discourse articulates conceptions of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, culture, geography, and temporality in a negative and essentialising manner and ties this articulation onto the very body of whoever is thought to be Muslim"

¹⁶³ Ibid 12

¹⁶⁴ Ibid 12

¹⁶⁵ For the full charter and more information: *Ministre de l'Education Nationale*, accessed 25 June 2017. <http://eduscol.education.fr/cid73652/charte-de-la-laicite-a-l-ecole.html>

¹⁶⁶ Ibid 13

¹⁶⁷ Ibid 13

“a new dynamism around the fight against discrimination to our fellow citizens because of their "origin" and / or their social situation”¹⁶⁸.

On the next page, the third section starts with focus on the dialogue to be “sought” in changing minds. So as to sustain secularism, the dialogues should not use “wooden language” (vague, charismatic articulation to divert attention from sensitive issues) as political correctness and that:

“Democratic dialogue requires rigour. The same applies to the definition of anti-clericalism and Islamophobia. To condemn clericalism, that is to say, the pretension of those who want to direct consciences and to dictate political decisions and social behaviour in the name of their own religion is part of the legitimate secular struggle. [...] criticism of religions, through satire, caricature, parody, is legitimate in the context of a debate of ideas, it must not be aimed at persons for what they are or for the religious or philosophical options they have adopted. [...] secularism simply allows this position to be expressed, in the same way and under the same conditions as a religious conviction.”¹⁶⁹

Setting out from this, the LLE clearly marks out what cannot be defined as Islamophobia (per their definition); criticizing Islam is perfectly justifiable and legitimate action, as long as no incitement of hatred or defamation and insulting of persons are presented. Criticism allows democracy to be fruitful; and only history can show which perspective is more suitable for the present context¹⁷⁰. The organization emphasizes that: “since secularism is not an alternative to religions, but the political way of bringing all beliefs to life, it is the condition for interconvictional debates”¹⁷¹. In addition to many conditioning articulation given to secularism, so far, such as pluralism or diversity, we now see the condition for interreligious debate instilled into secularism. To achieve the most optimal outcome for secularism in France, the LLE sets out its strategy as medium- and long-term, instead of focusing on short-term results¹⁷². For this, the LLE says that people must reflect and debate together on the question of secularism, even if not everyone think it is the “greatest common denominator” of France¹⁷³. LLE

¹⁶⁸ Ibid 13

¹⁶⁹ Ibid 14

¹⁷⁰ Ibid 15

¹⁷¹ Ibid 14 ; "La laïcité n'étant pas une alternative aux religions mais la manière politique de faire vivre toutes les convictions, elle est la condition des débats interconvictionnels qui permettent de dépasser les débats interreligieux ignorant les agnostiques et les athées".

¹⁷² Ibid 15

¹⁷³ Ibid 15 ; Here, as before, allusion to the *myth* of France and the Republic supposedly must strengthen their discourse. Taking into account that the LLE has always been well received by French officials.

says that secularism should prescribe the conditions of equality and freedom so that the elemental social problems of the people can be taken into account. The group gives the evidence that history has shown that secularism was accepted by even the staunchest Catholics because of the freedom it has offered to all as well as the advantages of secular ethics for the development of science and research¹⁷⁴.

On page 16, the text states that despite all these, there should not be a model to be conformed to, to take participation in the debates in democracy, there should always be divergences present for a functioning society¹⁷⁵. In other words, democracy takes its power from the freedom of dissidence. In a digital world of unlimited and ever-growing information, the citizen has to be ready to sort right from wrong, for her- or himself, and for that, freedom of conscience is a must¹⁷⁶. Then it talks about the organizational identity of the LLE; “in the 1970s, the League deeply integrated respect for cultural pluralism as a given of human dignity and as a constituent element of the development of democracy.”¹⁷⁷. Throughout its history, the LLE has realized and argued that it is not possible to prohibit the expression of diversity except to the detriment of democracy. The LLE couples secularism as the nodal point, with moments such as pedagogy, diversity and equality in its organizational identity and discourse¹⁷⁸. It claims that this identity and discourse is diffused through its employees, activists and members.

Concluding the document, the organization lists three vital efforts for the current circumstances; secular pedagogy, identity and culture¹⁷⁹. Pedagogy stands as a challenge in maintaining the public order, because religious demands present themselves in the public sphere, the educational (pedagogical) efforts should aid the search for a “common” ground between all members through education to achieve a plural, social public, though in this common ground, not everything can be acceptable. Secondly,

¹⁷⁴ This assumption about acceptance by Catholics is also confirmed by Kelly in *Laïcité and atheism in France*.

¹⁷⁵ Just as freedom of speech discussed above, "democracy" is a floating signifier with significant meaning potentials submitted to it, every actor uses it differently, and according to their needs. In this case, the discourse here argues that they are on the same side with the good, "the democratic", but never define democracy or democratic in clear terms, just make arbitrary allusions to some features of this ideal to constitute benefit for their cause. One could see this siding with "the democratic" frequently in the political discourse, and it has become the ordinary back-bone for leverage for every actor in political discourse, even if they do not see themselves as "democratic", they would use it anyway, for a better image.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid 16

¹⁷⁷ Ibid 16

¹⁷⁸ Ibid 17

¹⁷⁹ Ibid 18

according to the group, the identity question should be taken out of the extreme-right discourse, and its implied xenophobic logic and be subjected to the debate of identity itself, that we make identity in relation to others, in fraternity, and in community. The secular identity of France, can then flourish without the overtones associated with exclusion of minorities and “the other”. The LLE defines its ideal public sphere; it is inclusive but secular at the same time; open to debates and exchanges, but refusing unacceptable behaviours. Thirdly, the group asks the question: “can we conceive of a secular legal order in the absence of a secular 'culture'?” in return, answers that secularism has not fallen out of the sky, without being built from the inside, that secularism is a patient construct, the result of fighting, but possible to be reversed. The group argues that the abuse of “secular identity” of the right-wing discourse represents the other side of the coin, secular culture being defined artificially, and used for a purpose that is not related to principal reason for existence of secularism, but to praise and protect the inner circle of the French society. To counteract this, the LLE promotes what it sees as the real secular culture that France has long fought to establish.

4.3 The National Secular Society

Rethinking religion and belief in public life is divided into six sections. After an introductory discussion by the secretary of the organization, the document is continued with a section that gives concise set of aims, which can also be seen as the summary of the whole material, called *The Secular Charter* for reforms for a secular state where:

- “• There is no established state religion.
- Everyone is equal before the law, regardless of religion, belief or non-belief.
- The judicial process is not hindered or replaced by religious codes or processes.
- Freedom of expression is not restricted by religious considerations.
- Religion plays no role in state-funded education, whether through religious affiliation of schools, curriculum setting, organised worship, religious instruction, pupil selection or employment practices.
- The state does not express religious beliefs or preferences and does not intervene in the setting of religious doctrine.
- The state does not engage in, fund or promote religious activities or practices.
- There is freedom of belief, non-belief and to renounce or change religion.

- Public and publicly-funded service provision does not discriminate on grounds of religion, belief or non-belief.
- Individuals and groups are neither accorded privilege nor disadvantaged because of their religion, belief or non-belief.”¹⁸⁰

In the first section of the document, “Our changing society”, the NSS focuses on the rising irreligion and multiplicity of beliefs to argue for a secular society, basing its arguments on public polls. The change in the UK's society, has not followed with changes in legal and political system of the country, the organization argues, the changes should happen and “be based on the principles of secularism”¹⁸¹. The UK is more diverse in its religious make-up, after decades of immigration, coupled with increasing irreligion and decline in practice of religion, according to the organization. To handle this change better, secularism is “especially necessary when there is an established or dominant state religion. [Secularism] also plays an essential role in governing religiously plural societies. Paradoxically, the UK falls into both of these”¹⁸². The group emphasizes that recently, the multiculturalism model has turned into “multi-faithism, with identity described around religion”¹⁸³. The NSS says this approach is not suitable because it emphasizes communitarian rights over the individual, and treats “minority religions as homogeneous”¹⁸⁴. This approach also causes “the rights of women and 'minorities within minorities' to be abandoned” and shrinking of the secular space, whereas at the same time strengthening the discourse of the religious leaders, who are most likely to be traditionalist and male. Instead, *vis-à-vis* multiplicities, the NSS argues that “the need to treat people as individual citizens rather than members of a religion has become even more apparent.”. They support “a national identity based on fundamental values of democracy, separation of religion and state, the rule of law, individual liberty, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs”¹⁸⁵. In the end of the section, the group cites several public polls that show the majority supporting secular principles that they advocate¹⁸⁶.

¹⁸⁰ The National Secular Society, "Rethinking religion and belief," 5.

¹⁸¹ Ibid 10

¹⁸² Ibid 10

¹⁸³ Ibid 11 ; This description of multi-faithism seems to resonate with the Anglo-American secularism (Diversity model of Charles Taylor).

¹⁸⁴ Ibid 11

¹⁸⁵ Ibid 12 ;Just as was in the French case, "democracy" is not defined properly, and used to fill the floating signifier emptyily.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid 12-13.

In the second section, “The role of religion in schools”, the text alludes to many aspects of religious education and schools in the England and Wales¹⁸⁷. The text finds that “we urgently need to move towards a more inclusive, secular state education system.”¹⁸⁸ A secular education would entail complete neutrality on teaching of religion and non-religious topics, independent from their parents' religious orientation. The organization bases current educational system's backwardness on the Butler Act of 1944, which established different sorts of public-funded faith schools, where in some of them, the governors were appointed by the church¹⁸⁹. The organization argues that today the UK's composition is much more different than it was on the date of the Act, and that this has a large influence due to a third of publicly-funded schools being in a religious character¹⁹⁰. Moreover, this situation, according to the group is not supported by the majority. The faith schools “segregate children along religious and ethnic lines.” especially during a time when ethnicities are defined more closely with religious background¹⁹¹. The NSS states that on the top of that, these schools are funded by the taxpayers (this, according to them, is only a part of religious privileges endowed by the network). The group sets out the guidelines for secular reform: “Promoting shared universal values [instead of religious values which divide them communally] would better enable schools to develop a strong common social identity” in this way, the students could be able to make their own decisions for a religious, or a non-religious world view that they embrace¹⁹². The discrimination in student admissions to faith schools should end, and teachers should be able to teach in publicly-funded schools independent from their religious beliefs¹⁹³. The NSS recommends that a truly secular education system is adopted, and function without any heed to religious organizations and that religion in schools be approached like politics; not in a normative, but informative way¹⁹⁴.

The NSS advocate that the schools curriculum must be rid of confessional and

¹⁸⁷ Not the whole of UK, because law in Scotland and Northern Ireland have different statute. But many statements also could go for the whole of UK.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid 16.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 17.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid 18.

¹⁹¹ Ibid 18.

¹⁹² Ibid 19.

¹⁹³ Ibid 22

¹⁹⁴ Ibid 22

theological teaching, but retain information about a diverse range of religions and traditions that have impacted the world, as well as “secular and philosophical critiques which are a part of, and not separate from, religious literacy”¹⁹⁵. The group diagnoses the stem of religious privilege in schools in the “historic relationship between the Church of England and the state”¹⁹⁶. The text points to another far-reaching issue in the UK schools; compulsory worship, which the law of England and Wales “provides that children at all maintained schools 'shall on each schools day take part in an act of collective worship” and that it must be in a Christian way”¹⁹⁷. The group defines this as “anachronism”, and recommends that “the legal requirement on schools to provide Collective Worship should be abolished”¹⁹⁸

The third section, “Freedom of expression” starts with the debates around blasphemy laws and the media. The group points out that, although the blasphemy law is no longer valid in England and Wales, self-censorship remains a problem, and “is enforced by a mix of terrorism, state-sponsored violence, 'safe space' ideology on campuses and identity politics”¹⁹⁹. Then there are referrals to media outlets, and their loyalty to Islamic blasphemy codes, that they are still reticent about breaking this “taboo” of depicting religious imagery, despite the debate moving into the mainstream observation²⁰⁰. The group thinks “only after the attacks on [...] Charlie Hebdo” that there is a progression in abandoning this code, they point out that not publishing a cartoon “is not an editorially neutral decision”, it embraces the prohibitory stance of dominant religions²⁰¹. The NSS deplores the state to promise and provide the defence of people engaging in free speech, without regard to whether they are designated by some discourses as “inflammatory”. The state also, must “incur the financial cost of defending free speech, as it does unequivocally in France” but now, the state remains very passive, as seen in the Rushdie affair, the NSS thinks that not enough had been done, which communicates to the public that free expression is not under complete protection²⁰². This, in turn, is related to the

¹⁹⁵ Ibid 23

¹⁹⁶ Ibid 23

¹⁹⁷ Ibid 26 ; There are other laws in the rest of the UK that prescribe similar religious observance. See the text for these laws.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid 26-28

¹⁹⁹ Ibid 32

²⁰⁰ Ibid 32 ; The NSS claims freedom of expression as its moment, and oppose what they see as the hegemonic discourse of the media.

²⁰¹ Ibid 32

²⁰² Ibid 33 ; There are repetitions of references to France in the document, France is seen as a role model of secularism for the group.

special protection amounted to religion as a “sensitive” topic, with many political leaders claiming that free expression must be limited not to aggravate some people. However, the NSS says not only themselves, but also the public is “in favour of allowing Mohammed to be depicted”²⁰³. The NSS recommends that further restriction of free expression be stopped, and the core value of free expression be diffused in all education system.

The fourth section focuses on the interaction of religion and the law. The NSS posits that:

“in challenging traditional religious privileges in law and society, we maintain that legal rights and the administration of justice should be based on equality, respect for human rights and objective evidence”²⁰⁴

It is observable how the NSS claims equality, human rights, and objectivity as the moments that make out their discourse. They point to the social antagonism between them and the Church (in that they refer to the same terrain of meaning). The group comes to the point with their rivalry against the Church of England and their presence in the law; “the Church has played an integral part in shaping the law of the land – a law that privileges the Church to this day.”²⁰⁵ For this privilege to end, the NSS recommends the disestablishment of the church, which had a traditional force in the common law²⁰⁶. There are 26 bishops “with *ex officio* seats” in the Parliament, which gives these unelected clergy voting power in affairs of the whole kingdom. The group recognizes that this, *inter alia*, is the result of historical force the Church of England had held, and that still holds some, leading to religious privilege in every sector of the country, because the bishops usually vote in unison, against reformist measures such as euthanasia²⁰⁷. The text states “the existence of a legally-enshrined, national religion and established church privileges one part of the population, one institution and one set of beliefs.” and supports its statement with a public poll which claims 58% of Britons being against Lords Spiritual in the House of Lords.²⁰⁸ Disestablishment in the England

²⁰³ Ibid 33.

²⁰⁴ Ibid 34.

²⁰⁵ Ibid 38 ; The group is formulating the Church of England as hegemonistic, particularly with the Church-related Anglican bishops in the parliament, who have voting power.

²⁰⁶ Ibid, 57 ; The disestablishment of the Church would be a hegemonic intervention, and would be in the clear benefit of the NSS. For instance, this would *at least* take away the voting power of the competing discourse from the Parliament, not to mention schooling.

²⁰⁷ Ibid 56 ; The text claims that historically "the church could punish the populace, even having its own courts and prisons."

²⁰⁸ Ibid 56-57

must follow, as had happened in Ireland and Wales, along with the bishops, who do not represent the current plural make-up of the UK, and is biased for Anglican Christianity. The NSS argues that there is another emerging threat to the secular law; the community “courts”, which establish themselves in religious or identity grounds, most common and effective being the sharia courts that, “wield significant *de facto* power” in British Muslim sectors²⁰⁹. The NSS points out that there are around 85 sharia “courts” that operate in the UK, that pose a threat to the function of the secular law, because these courts run on the fear of the individual being excluded from their minority groups or close circles²¹⁰. Moreover, they are largely in a “patriarchal” character, as women are communally pressured to submit to the courts. It is unacceptable, because “allowing groups to opt out of the state legal system in favour of a religious alternative strikes at the heart of citizenship and a cohesive society”. The NSS recommends careful review and tracking of these tribunals, and the extent they are becoming *de facto* law, and even consider measures to ban them, including the sharia law itself, as ever increasing number of Muslims and orthodoxy in Islam might reach a scale that a simple toleration cannot endure any longer.²¹¹

The group implies that their rivals (primarily conservative Christians, evangelicals and the Woolf Commission) are increasingly well organized and well funded locally as well as internationally, and pursue to “undermine” existing legislation. Moreover, these groups are bent upon restricting women's rights internationally: “Such bodies also work in international fora including the EU and the Council of Europe, where the restriction of women's reproductive rights is a particular focus”²¹². The religious pry into women's private decisions also exist in the Northern Ireland, the group points out, and that despite being criticized by the UN, the UK government has not implemented the abortion law to the whole of UK, “denying human rights to Northern Ireland women that are enjoyed elsewhere in the UK”²¹³. Accordingly, “civil rights must not be compromised on the grounds of others' religion; a secular state defends these principles” and in a secular country “the law protects people and not beliefs”²¹⁴. The conscience

²⁰⁹ Ibid 39

²¹⁰ Ibid 44

²¹¹ Ibid 45-47 ; This foreshadows the Islamic threat, as the potential to become *hegemonic* discourse.

²¹² Ibid 39 ; Here, they identify rival discourses on the macro-context.

²¹³ Ibid 40 ; Northern Ireland and Ireland are still strict in local abortion law regulation, similar to Poland, as Catholic discourse on abortion is strict and religion affects the secular law.

²¹⁴ Ibid 40 ; The latter quote alludes to the distinction of Anglo-American secularism, that tends towards the protection of religion from the state, rather than concentrating on protection of people from

opt-outs in healthcare are understandable as long as they are reasonable, the group argues that they must also be not as overspread as to hamper the reach to legal services like abortion²¹⁵. However, they also point out that if pharmacists refuse to prescribe a drug, then they are not doing their job properly, because it was originally prescribed by a medical practitioner; the NSS recommends that these “opt-outs should not be granted where their operation impinges adversely on the rights of others”²¹⁶.

Last sections in the document are focused on religion's role in public services, institutions and ceremonies (Section 5 and 6). The text acknowledges that the Equality Act created grounds for discrimination on behalf of religious organizations, for example a religious employer can discriminate between a religious worker and a non-believer one²¹⁷. This can, cause injustice to marginalized groups, even under public contracts taken for the state, to alleviate this imbalance, the NSS recommends the amendment of legislature to secure minority groups against religious cronyism, as well as measures to ensure equality and non-discrimination is held in publicly-funded services provided by religious companies²¹⁸. Moreover, healthcare facilities such as chaplaincy should function “within a secular context”²¹⁹. On the topic of ceremonies, the group asserts that likewise everywhere else, many ceremonies hold religious attributes in the UK; they criticize Remembrance Day ceremony, the Coronation of the monarch, and the monarch being the ultimate head of the Church, as all examples of a biased state structure, and should all be secularized to “reflect the country as it is today”²²⁰. Moreover, the prayers in Parliament, and in any part of the local democracy undermines religious freedom due to their denominational nature, and should be abolished, or provided with non-religious alternatives.

4.4 Comparative Discussion

It can be seen after the analysis of texts that the both organizations' discourses are a result of present and historical interactions between the community, religion, the degree

religion, as is in France. I discuss this further in next chapter.

²¹⁵ Ibid 42

²¹⁶ Ibid 43-44

²¹⁷ Ibid 50

²¹⁸ Ibid 52

²¹⁹ Ibid 54

²²⁰ Ibid 59-62

of secularization of each country (and of course, openness to the Humanist philosophy), and aims of organizations; but these factors more or less determine their differences and similarities too. While the NSS often brings up the issue of rising non-belief, and demands reforms on these grounds, postulating that it is at odds with increasing religious indifference in the country. The French organization does not touch the subject, instead focus on rise of other religions except Christianity, and the need to better accommodate them under their conception of inclusive secularism and pluralist democracy. The two differentiated secularist integration categories are distinguishable here. The LLE visualises all minorities, and minorities within minorities (such as Ex-Muslims), to take part in a “melting-pot” of secular French Republican values, while the NSS advises instead a human-rights based, individualistic approach, but nonetheless, secular in its norms, where the state's role in determining the religious is reduced, for instance, by abolishing religious worship in schools. The LLE's argument is that this way of secularism makes possible positive identification of people, not in what they differ with “the others” as the identity secularists propose, but the identification based on what they have in common²²¹. The NSS claims that the voice of majority is in their support (with the use of public polls, that show diversification and people's waning faith), and in this way their discourse is legitimized and gains *objectivity*. The French organization legitimises itself by the referral to the historical, traditional values of what they perceive as Republicanism (and secularism as the founding myth of France), which has become a quasi-religion, or civil religion, and the continuation of the French Revolution²²². In this way, they do not admit objectivity by the public, but through the hegemonic discourse, the sovereign state. Yet another difference lies in the “others” of their discourses, most of the opposing force of the French group is the right-wing secularists, whereas the UK group finds its rival in conservative Christianity. Their discourses are, thus, shaped against different contact points. But the organizations also have similarities, except what they have common as Humanist organizations.

Education is similarly an important topic for both organizations. The French organization claims the educational sphere as its moment, whereas the NSS seeks to secularize that sphere. I formulate that this focus on education, could have at least two sources; firstly, as Foucault claimed, education is a platform one could access permitted

²²¹ As Nilsson has shown, Riposte Laique's political logic depends on what the French people identify as, in opposition to the others, like the Muslims. Nilsson, 92

²²² As Talal Asad says, "secularized concepts retain religious *essence*", Republicanism has retained this essence. Perhaps the same may be said about Humanism in the light of Engelkes research? Taken from: Engelke, 295, 299

discourses, permitted by the winners of the historical socio-political conflicts and more importantly, seen in this angle, educational systems are the main channel of sustaining and modifying allowances and exclusivities of discourse, accompanying the power and knowledge ties²²³. Secondly, as to be seen more transparently in the case of the French organization, and its historical context, with its connections to the so-valued French Revolution, education and schools is vital to the sustainability of secularism, and its own existence is founded on the protection of school's secularity. This is not only because of the influence exerted on the new brains of the coming generations, but the school has a special weight, or force in the Republican, and subsequently the French secularist discourse²²⁴. This is why, the veil problem was mostly concentrated to schools, during the *affaires du foulard*, though exceptions were present in other levels of the state. The French sensitivity to the schools was very well observable, and according to Bauberot, “school remains the place where the historical trace of the war between the two Frances, persists”²²⁵.

French group realizes the increasing tension amid religious difference and visibility, and puts the context in broader international conflicts, such as the battle against Islamic terrorism. It can be said that while the French organization uses secularism, they argue that it guarantees the freedom of conscience, and to argue for diversity of the society, perhaps stemming from increasing problems regarding Islam in France, such as the veil, the question of terror in the name of Islam. While the UK group is campaigning for a less “assertive” definition of secularism, to remove the ties of church and the state, subsequently bases its arguments less on diversity. This could also be fused with the assessments that while secularism has a large presence in the political mainstream in France, as many things including it being marketed as a defensive measure against the Muslim immigration. In the UK, it is difficult to see secularism as a category this active as it is in the mainstream as in France. This is due to systematic differences in the British approach to integration, and that secularism in France has had a historical nationalizing substance (for example as used in Anti-Muslim discourse, which is the most prominent among the ways of “othering”). It is possible to see the reasons behind

²²³ Michel Foucault, "Orders of Discourse," *Social Science Information* 10, No. 2 (1971): 19.

²²⁴ Bauberot says "In the French republican perspective, the school does not merely impart knowledge, it is the place of apprenticeship and liberty of thought." Taken from: Jean Bauberot, "Secularism and French Religious Liberty: A Sociological and Historical View," *Brigham Young University Law Review* No. 2 (2003): 451.

²²⁵ Quoted from Nathalie Caron, 117.

this substance, according to Nilsson, it was even “employed as a technique of governance to reify state sovereignty, to legitimise control, regulation, and discipline of what falls under the category of bad or political religion (Islam) as well as to identify a secular (white) French national identity”²²⁶. And that: “Contemporary French secularism, as a mode of identity and as a political and social practice, has become a foundational aspect throughout the political spectrum in France”²²⁷. Secularism in the UK is yet to find such a definition, or position in the hegemonic discourse.

4.5 Conclusion

First of all, as was in the French case, I have identified secularism to be both a floating signifier and a nodal point in the British organization, in the sense that not only it becomes the center of their discourse, where other signs are defined accordingly, it is also floating signifier in the sense that it is invested with differing meanings. I have also set out, especially in the French case, how the competing discourses are scrambling to claim secularism or Humanism for their own. It could be seen from my analysis how more or less established secularism in the France, did not correspond to Britain, due to it having a state structure which is not secularized, and thence the organizations articulated and addressed secularism differently. Moreover, the organizations also criticized what they see as “multiculturalism”, or “multi-faithism” and its perceived failure to integrate the different, or the other of the society. They have implied that this failure is not subjective any more, after the terror attacks in Europe such as the Charlie Hebdo assault. In the next chapter, I discuss my comparison and findings.

²²⁶ Per-Erik Nilsson, “‘Secular Retaliation’: A Case Study of Integralist Populism, Anti-Muslim Discourse, and (Il)liberal Discourse on Secularism in Contemporary France,” *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 16 (2015): 103.

²²⁷ *Ibid*, 105.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION AND GROUND FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

5.1 Presentation of the Chapter

This chapter provides two different lines of discussion. First, I try to place the study into the previous research, the new information that my study offers, and the concurrences I find of my research with the previous research. Secondly, I discuss the study in relation to the broader socio-political context; not only the European context, with which I started the study, but also the broader topics on the level of individual countries.

5.2 Discussion in relation to the Previous Research

While, as Engelke says, that the UK humanists act in relation to religion, and especially Christianity, this point of reference for French Humanists under the study, after the analysis of the LLE would show, comprise mostly of Islam. This could be due to, as what Zay perceives as increasing visibility or visibility of Islam, Islamic symbology and dress codes such as the veil. Viewed from the discourse theoretical perspective, since visualities are discourses themselves just like anything else, it is then arguable that these dress codes or mannerisms ascribed to Islam, has gone through a shift of objectivity, under the hegemonic discourse, to become antithetical to Western European culture and way of living²²⁸. In this sense, this has given rise to social antagonism, similar to the antagonism created between Humanists and Christians, before Islam was incorporated into the order of discourse, or it can be argued that the ban of the veil, seen as a hegemonic “top-down” intervention, relieved the social antagonism²²⁹. I do not mean to say that UK Humanists do not talk about Islam, but it is not as embedded into their discourse as their counterparts in France, as my analysis has shown.

Again, as Engelke has asserted before the quasi-religious nature of Humanists and secularists, in the religious fervour they come around concepts such as human rights, individualism and secularism, I find that it is observable in how they set out their discourse in their publications. Humanists replace religious belief with belonging, and

²²⁸ However, Muslims are still given a second chance, after the ban of veil, to give consent to the state they live in, and adopt the "hegemonic" way of living by abandoning religious symbols, at least in schools and "get-togethers".

²²⁹ Although, it is still arguable that this antagonism has not been relieved, Scott's picture of the Veil ban seems to suggest that such a relieving has occurred, at least temporarily.

put reason in the place of divine providence, in an age of secularizations, however their means of acting, articulating; belonging or reasoning, or at least how they set out their discourse might still be in a way, quasi-religious.

Bauberot's research on French secularism The LLE argues that the formulation of secularism as identity secularism (which distinguishes "imported" religions from old, rooted religions) does not provide adequate solutions and answers to the problem of pluralist society, which is, according to the group, the big question. The group clears itself of accusations of being anti-religious (as defined by Bauberot as *laicite anti-religieuse*). Bauberot has a definition, however, for how the LLE defines itself, he calls them inclusive and collective secularists (*laicite collective et inclusive*). They defend and define themselves as Republicans, and praise the state as the ultimate authority which regulate the freedoms of all, and subsequently protect the equality and diversity of citizens. In this conceptualization, the state commands a monopoly in the defining the religions, their organization, or restriction²³⁰. Seen from this angle, the organization is in line with the Jacobin tradition, in its desire for a strong state. It is interesting because, secularists and Humanists traditionally have opposed state intervention into the affairs of the individual, in the name of the autonomous, reasoning men and women. French secularisms, in this sense, could be exceptional in their praise of the state authority.

In the light of Caron's conception of *laicite de combat*, as what she defines as the militant secularists of France, the LLE can be understood to belong to this category considering their historical genealogy (such as their connection to Enlightenment thought) and their emphasis on the dangers of communitarianism, along with their proposal that active measures need to be taken to eliminate it.

5.3 Discussion in relation to the Broader Context

As Danielle Zay argues, could a European-level secular framework better handle diversity, better handle each religious category, with its different conceptions of truth, as she supposes, the failed multiculturalism could not? Asserting the Judeo-Christian identity of Europe in the face of the failing multiculturalism, possibly cannot be the

²³⁰ Troper says, in France, "freedom of religion, as other liberties, results from an active intervention of the state." and not, resulting from the autonomy of the citizen, as in the American liberties. Taken from Michel Troper, 332.

right answer, she finds, although many see this as the legitimate solution. Zay considers the shift of multiculturalism towards secularism in Europe as a possible trend, amidst what she claims as the growing secularist platforms in Europe, though France stands alone in having such a secular state policy in Europe. She points out the problem of multiculturalism is the triumph of the identity of the community, of ethnicity, instead of the nation, and its failures in practice. Zay considers adoption of secularism and secular principles in the European-level governance as an adamant solution to religious and ethnic stratification, “bringing a new vision of Europe closer to the French conception of State”. Zay supplements her claims with several quotes and quantitative studies that show that French Muslims are better integrated than their British counterparts.²³¹ In this sense, it can be argued that secular integration handles differences well, as Joppke says “in reality, France is the only country in Europe to confront its Muslim minority with an attitude, and one that has paid off.”²³²

Dressler pictures a history, where separations of the self, as having started by Luther's subjectivization and interiorization of the faith²³³. Luther has started the first separation by separating between the love of God and love for other beings. This separation came to be secularization in the second case, in that it gave way to love for its own sake and love of humanity as a whole, which is then “disaggregated into singular individuals”. This started a chain of equivalence, of individualism which led, finally to the birth of what is accepted as the Humanist tradition of Europe²³⁴. In this way Humanism and its critique window asserts separating oneself from the past, and through this separating, secularize, to replace the sanctity of religion with the sanctity of critique²³⁵. And according to Dressler again, become inviolable. In proposing to secularize the way of life, or as in the French case secularize it in a particular way, the organizations are separating themselves from their historical-religious origins. Dressler quotes Hegel that traditions are defined as critical if from their very beginning they are able to contest their own origins²³⁶. Thus, secularizing in the first place, adds the critique window, the

²³¹ Zay 17-18.

²³² Quoted from Zay 18

²³³ Dressler says "because the individual is both sinner (through its capacity to act freely) and justified, the self is never simply itself but is something other than what it is." 8

²³⁴ "Luther's divided subject inadvertently prepared the way for the shift from theological foundation to rational (secular) foundations of the modern world." Dressler 9

²³⁵ In Luther's case, it did not led to secularization, however, it has changed the way God and the subject interact. And after that event, subsequent events led to further appraisal of the individual, and to secularization in each level.

²³⁶ Markus Dressler , 7.

sanctity of the critique. If so, The NSS, for example, separates itself from the Protestant past of the UK, the French organization separates itself not only from the Catholic Christianity in the first place, but also the competing *laicisms*; the first separation secularizes it, therefore adds the critique window, while the second is the post-secular element, it determines what comes after secularism.

Although, The NSS makes a separation from Protestantism (or Anglicanism in this case), the effects of the desired secularism still reflect a Protestant undercurrent; it is a secularism of the individual, independent of the binding connections that a Catholic Christianity would imply. However, in the French case, the desire of a more zealous assimilation is evident, which is inherently rooted in Catholicism, mixing with the libertarian spirit of French Revolution desiring to create a “new man”.

5.4 Ground For Further Research

The field of Humanist organizations are largely unexplored, and the research that I have been able to find does not correspond to the possible increase of interest in these organizations in Europe. Aside from itself being a contribution, I hope that this study would give ideas to the interested researchers, and spark further interest into studying these organizations, both on the local level and on the European level, such as the EHF.

CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION

I have asked in the beginning chapter that how and why do the discourses of the organizations differ and what does this have to say with the secularism in each country. While The NSS's conception of secularism of the UK, is legitimized through it being (suggested as) the majority opinion, whose holders are irreligious or privately religious and thus in support of the secular state (hence a democratic plea), the French organization instead of needing a public opinion to forward its discourse, focuses rather on the integrative aspect of secularism, than political secularism (separation of the state and religion) itself. This is the main reason, I have found as to why the discourses of these organizations differ, although practically they have a lot in common in their campaigning objectives. But they extend their conceptions of secularism to fit better the needs of the today, hence they combine secularism with the notion that secularism integrates the different of the society better.

While the NSS opposes the state support for religion, which is according to Charles Taylor's Anglo-American model of secularism, based on the protection of religion from state intervention. The group defines this approach as the multi-faithist and multiculturalist in their argumentation, which does not assure a separation of state and religion (as it is seen today in UK's Parliament). As the French group does not criticize the state, because it is supportive of its current conduct of secularism (though, not integration, the organization proposes a more inclusive secularism), because it contains and controls religions in a rather strict way, and integrates them according to their "suitability" to the public order. This difference in integration, can easily be visualized in the allowance of religious clothing in the services subordinated by the state. For instance, one Sikh man can retain its religious attire working in the police force in the UK, whereas the same is not imaginable in France.

Both organizations share similarities in that they oppose the multicultural model of integration, while accounting the differences due to their context. In this sense, secularism is not only separation of state and religion, but also an integrative framework. The NSS claims that the "slide" into multiculturalism did not work out well in the UK, thence, from the integration point of view, secularism could suit the UK better to emphasize individuality, and pull people away from group warfare. The LLE,

focuses rather on promoting the features of their own “way” of inclusive secularism, among many different secularisms which also offer an integrative framework. The LLE's conception of secularism, like that of NSS, is targeted against the multicultural model, where as the French group claims, led to stratification among people of different ethnicities, religions, and races. In that way, the secularisms of both organizations line up in their articulation that secularism is the right way “to live together” and that multiculturalism is not.

The opposition, or accusation, lies not in multiculturalism's ability to respect differences, instead lies in multicultural fostering of break-up into communities, rather than unify individuals under a secular national framework, or as the LLE calls republican “universalism” rather than “communitarianism”²³⁷. These accusations, reflect the features of the particular secularisms of both countries, as well as the European idea for secularism and Humanism to replace multiculturalism.

The French organization problematizes inequality, on grounds of diversity and rising wealth gap between individuals, while the UK organization proposes that equality is what the not-yet established British secularism would bring. In this way, the referral point of equality as a moment in their discourse is different. Overall, both organizations fill up important spaces in their respective countries, and merit further consideration and inspection of their arguments.

²³⁷ Zay gives evidence of French Muslims' integration into schools (that some girls decided to give up veil to participate in the education) in the secular framework of France. However, she compares it to the UK, with the claim that British Muslims are less incorporated into the society under the multicultural framework, and thus less satisfied compared to the French Muslims. She has compiled secondary quantitative data in her study reflecting these statements. While %81 of British Muslims opt for their religion as what defines them the most, only %46 of French Muslims say so. See Zay 24

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