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The Variety of Secularisms in the European Political Thought

Only something which has no history is capable of being defined.

Friedrich Nietzsche

Abstract: This article presents three major forms of secularism in the European political thought and social imaginaries: Christian, laicist, and agnostic liberal. It argues that all of them fulfil the minimal condition of secularism, for they clearly differentiate between religion and politics. The article describes two variations of Christian secularism — its Christian-democratic form and a conservative one. Laicism also has two variations — republican and an antireligious one. The agnostic liberal form of secularism, in turn, based on the thought of John Rawls, tries to depoliticize religion whenever possible. It represents the modern form of the unthought, a default form of secularism in public debates. The article argues that a broader understanding of "secularism" (deeply rooted in the European political theory) diminishes the intellectual value of the category of "post-secularism", associated with Jürgen Habermas, as it requires narrow understanding of secularism as a political doctrine alternative to religion — which might refer only to one of the forms of secularism — the antireligious laicism.

Keywords: post-secularism, religion and politics, laicism, laïcité, liberalism, agnosticism

The last two decades marked a renewed interest in the relationship between religion and politics — especially because of the growing tensions between religious and non-religious citizens in some Western states. Probably the most prominent example of these tensions has been the conflict over wearing the veil in the public space (but so are the debates about the presence of the crucifix in classrooms or about religious circumcision). One of the most powerful reactions to the renewed controversy has been the idea of post-secularism, associated with German philosopher Jürgen Habermas, who spoke of "a post-secular society" in which believers translate religious insights into the language of reason. Non-religious citizens, in turn, have made an effort to include these insights in the public deliberation.

The Habermasian idea, however, is based on a very limited understanding of "secularism" — as a doctrine alternative to religion. In this article I would like to

show that secularism very rarely takes the form of such an exclusive worldview. Various forms of secularism present in the West are a complex patchwork which is most often a result of battles between religious and political institutions.

The article thus demonstrates that the question of post-secularism in political theory makes little sense, if one adopts a broader understanding of secularism. The crucial question in the contemporary West would therefore be not whether a given political system is secular, but which form of secularism it has adopted — as virtually all the political systems of the West distinguish between religious and political spheres. Secularism only in its laicist form is understood as an ideology alternative to religion — and can therefore be trespassed by the allegedly new approach — "post-secularism". Nevertheless, the category of the "post-secular" might play a positive role as a normative idea of the search for a new "modus vivendi" between believers and non-believers in modern societies. One should, however, not forget about the ideas that were forged in the past centuries.

Although the concept of secularism adopted in this paper does not prescribe a state's attitude towards religion (religion-friendly, neutral, distanced or hostile), it is still a part of a bigger picture in a story told by, for example, Charles Taylor in *A Secular Age*. We can see that the West has moved from a situation where a belief in God was as obvious as the fact that we breathe toward the world where a belief in God is an option, a matter of choice. Some, such as Charles Taylor himself, see positive aspects of this process, while others — such as, for example, Alexander MacIntyre — see the process as a truly negative phenomenon. Nevertheless, virtually no one claims that the role of religion (faith, belief, transcendence) in the Western world has not been transformed in the last several centuries (although the devil lies in the nature of this change). This transformation is often viewed as a part of the process of "secularization", another contested and multi-faceted term.

It is generally agreed among scholars that "the secularization thesis" was wrong: religion does not seem to disappear from the world, although its role has changed and — what is new — many people, especially in Western Europe, describe themselves as non-believers. Secularization — changing the conditions of belief[1] — is connected to secularism in both a narrower and broader sense, but the latter might take very different forms: from hostility towards religion to an openness towards religious insights in the political sphere.

An important distinction should be made here. The concept of secularism operates on three levels: private, public and political.[2] The private sphere is the level of personal convictions held and practiced in private spaces which are not accessible to the rest of the society (family, friends, and small groups), while political sphere is a sphere which belongs to the political power. The public sphere is a place between

[1] Ch. Taylor, *A Secular Age*, Cambridge, Mass.-London, p. 3–4.

[2] The distinction between political and public sphere is important for example for Rawls — as his *Theory of Justice* concerns the political sphere, not the public one.

the private and the political — a place where different opinions might be exchanged and promoted — for example, in the form of deliberation.[3]

Varieties of secularism

The word "secular" has Christian roots, and it initially referred to the priests who were present in the day-to-day life of local communities (i.e. they were not the members of orders). We cannot really speak of the distinction of worldly and spiritual powers in the early Middle Ages — both the Emperor and the Pope were parts of the *Ecclesia*. However, things became more complex after the 11th century investiture controversy — when Emperors and Popes fought for supremacy. This conflict was a milestone on the way to a modern state, with its distinction between temporal (secular) and spiritual (religious) powers.[4]

For many centuries, the differentiation did not mean separation — the two spheres strove to influence each other, which often resulted in significant conflicts.[5] The conflict between the Church and the state in Europe reached its climax in the 19th century — the period of so-called culture wars, and it is still very much present in the way contemporary Europeans conceptualize the relationship between religion and politics.

We already saw that the distinction between spiritual and temporal powers is of medieval origin. There are, however, many who claim that its modern understanding came into being for the first time during the Treaty of Westphalia. According to Benjamin Straumann, the Westphalian Treaty was the "secular constitution" of the Holy Roman Empire, as it "established a secular order by taking sovereignty over religious affairs away from the discretion of territorial princes and by establishing a proto-liberal legal distinction between private and public affairs."[6] It was, to a certain extent, a transnational secular order (with transnational jurisdiction); the current European arrangements between religion and politics thus have a predecessor. Since then it has been connected to the emerging concepts of state and sovereignty; with the emergence of the concept of the state the two spheres began to be distinguished. Nevertheless, we need to remember that the Treaty of Westphalia did not result in the separation between religion and politics, but rather

[3] J. Habermas, *Between facts and norms: Contributions to a discourse theory of law and democracy*, Cambridge, Mass. 1996.

[4] E.W. Böckenförde, 'Die Entstehung des Staates als Vorgang der Säkularisation', [in:] *Säkularisierung*, ed. H.H. Schrey, Darmstadt 1981.

[5] A. Pizzorno, 'Politics Unbound', [in:] *Changing Boundaries of the Political*, ed. Ch. Maier, Cambridge 1987, p. 27–62.

[6] B. Straumann, 'The Peace of Westphalia as a Secular Constitution', *Constellations* 2008, no. 15(2), p. 173–188.

in the distinction between the public and the private, and it led to the confessionalization of states and to the subordination of religion to the state.

In today's Western world, these spheres are always distinguished, including in the countries with an established church (like Great Britain, Denmark or Norway). The most crucial question, therefore, is not whether a given entity is secular or not, but what form of secularism it represents. In what follows, I will draw on the concept of secularism developed by Elizabeth Shakman Hurd:

> Secularism refers to a public settlement between politics and religion. The secular refers to the epistemic space carved out by the ideas and practices associated with such settlements. Secularization is a process through which these settlements become authoritative, legitimated and embedded in and through individuals, the law, state institutions, and other social relationships.[7]

Shakman Hurd, following Asad, Mahmood, and Casanova, sees secularism as a tool that has been used to identify "religion" as a concept (the term which was seldom used in the pre-modern times, e.g. only four times in the Latin translation of the Bible) and to separate it from politics, economy and science. Such an understanding of secularism locates it in what Charles Taylor calls "modern social imaginary", defined as:

> [T]he way ordinary people "imagine" their social surroundings, and this is often not expressed in theoretical terms, but is carried in images, stories, and legends. It is also the case that […] theory is often the possession of a small minority, whereas what is interesting in the social imaginary is that it is shared by large groups of people, if not the whole society. […] the social imaginary is that common understanding that makes possible common practices and a widely shared sense of legitimacy.[8]

The way Taylor describes how social imaginaries are being formed and changed is crucial:

> It often happens that what start off as theories held by a few people come to infiltrate the social imaginary, first of elites, perhaps, and then of the whole society. This is what has happened, *grosso modo*, to the theories of Grotius and Locke, although the transformations have been many along the way and the ultimate forms are rather varied. [...] It begins to define the contours of their world and can eventually come to count as the taken-for-granted shape of things, too obvious to mention.[9]

There is no doubt that secularism, both in a broader and narrower sense, is a part of the modern social imaginary in the Western world.

Before I move on to the description of the forms of secularism in the European context, it is important to recall an important insight by Talal Asad, who states that "[w]hat is distinctive about *secularism* is that it presupposes new concepts of 'religion,' 'ethics,' and 'policies,' and new imperatives associated with them".[10] It is because of secularism that we can speak of religion at all. Before our modern

[7] E. Shakman Hurd, *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations*, Princeton 2009.

[8] Ch. Taylor, *Modern social imaginaries*, Durham 2004, p. 23.

[9] Ibid.

[10] T. Asad, *Formations of the secular: Christianity, Islam, modernity*, Stanford 2003, pp. 1–2.

imaginary became secular, religion was not distinguished from other domains of life, such as politics or science. It is also worth noting that every form of secularism has a different concept of religion.

1. Christian secularism

There are two versions of Christian secularism, that is, of a Christian vision of the relationship between religion and politics: a Christian democratic one, and a Christian conservative one. Both are reactions to the European political modernity: the former tries to reconcile it with Christianity, while the other one rejects many constitutive elements of modernity. It is important to note that sometimes both elements of Christian secularism are treated as complimentary to each other: Benedict XVI, with his fidelity to the Second Vatican Council and his critique of modernity, is probably one of the best examples of such a connection between the two versions of Christian secularism.

From negation to ambivalence: Catholicism and political modernity

In the 19th century Europe, the Catholic Church went through a difficult time. After the French Revolution, the religious and political landscape of Europe began to change. In some countries, such as in France itself, the political elites started to see the Catholic Church solely as a defender of the *ancien regime*, while some other countries, such as Italy, they perceived it as an obstacle to the creation of a new nation state, or a potential danger to the state (as in Bismarckian Germany at the times of *Kulturkampf*). The period of culture wars can be defined as "a conflict between Catholic and anti-clerical forces over the place of religion in a modern polity". To a large extent it was caused by the emergence of constitutional and democratic nation states.[11] There were also of course other examples, such as Poland or Ireland, where the Catholic Church served as a basis for national and political identity and a partner in the struggle for freedom. This took place, however, on the margins of the 19th and 20th century politics; the centre of European politics was captured by the deep conflict between Catholicism and the state.[12]

In the nineteenth century, the Church had to take a stance on the new political reality. In the majority of cases[13] it chose to stick with the *ancien régime*, and it

[11] Ch. Clark, W. Kaiser, *Culture Wars. Secular-Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth Century Europe*, Cambridge 2003, p. I.

[12] M. Król, *Europa w obliczu końca*, Warszawa 2012.

[13] Although many priests supported the French Revolution, especially before the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, which subordinated the Catholic Church to the French state, was adopted by the National Constituant Assembly.

was a fateful choice. Let us now take a look at some examples of this position. In 1832, Pope Gregory XVI issued an encyclical "Mirari vos. On Liberalism and Religious Indifferentism" where he expressed his deep concern about the new epoch and a critical view on some pillars of political modernization, such as freedom to publish or the liberty of conscience:

> This shameful font of indifferentism gives rise to that absurd and erroneous proposition which claims that liberty of conscience must be maintained for everyone. It spreads ruin in sacred and civil affairs, though some repeat over and over again with the greatest impudence that some advantage accrues to religion from it. "But the death of the soul is worse than freedom of error," as Augustine was wont to say.[14]

Gregory XVI also expressed his negative view of the separation of Church and State:

> Nor can We predict happier times for religion and government from the plans of those who desire vehemently to separate the Church from the state, and to break the mutual concord between temporal authority and the priesthood. It is certain that that concord which always was favourable and beneficial for the sacred and the civil order is feared by the shameless lovers of liberty.[15]

This anti-modern line was taken up by his successor, Pope Pius IX in the encyclical with a telling title *Quanta Cura. Condemning Current Errors*,[16] which was supplemented with *Syllabus Errorum* — a list of errors condemned by the pope. While the first part concerns philosophical issues such as the rise of naturalism, absolute rationalism and religious indifferentism, the second part is political and it condemns different novel features of political modernity. Among the long list of errors is the idea that "the Church ought to be separated from the State, and the State from the Church".[17]

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to think that this line of thinking was present throughout the entire 19th century. The change came already in 1878, at the beginning of Pope Leo XIII's pontificate.[18] The new pope engaged in a critical dialogue with political and social modernity. He still defended "princes" against political revolutions and preferred the stability of the political order which was in line with the Catholic Church, for example in the encyclical *Diuturnum. On the Origins of Social Order*. However, in the same encyclical he expressed a new notion — the idea that the Church could not subscribe to a concrete vision of the

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[14] Pope Gregory XVI, *Encyclical Mirarivos: On Liberalism and Religious Indifference*, 1832 http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Greg16/g16mirar.htm [acc.: 21.05.2015].

[15] Ibid.

[16] Pope Pius IX, 1864, *Quanta Cura: Condemning Current Errors*, http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius09/p9quanta.htm [acc.: 21.05.2015].

[17] Ibid.

[18] Leo XIII as Bishop Vincenzo Pecci (1810–1903) was a nuncio in Belgium and witnessed the role of Catholics who hand in hand with liberals helped to obtain Belgium independence from the Netherlands. P. Pombeni, 'Christian Democracy', [in:] *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies*, eds. M. Freeden, L.T. Sargent, M. Stears, Oxford 2013, p. 312–329.

state or a political doctrine. He preferred the alliance between church and state, where possible, but did not denounce political orders where this was not the case — provided that it would be "a just order":

> There is no question here respecting forms of government, for there is no reason why the Church should not approve of the chief power being held by one man or by more, provided only it be just, and that it tend to the common advantage. Wherefore, so long as justice be respected, the people are not hindered from choosing for themselves that form of government which suits best either their own disposition, or the institutions and customs of their ancestors.[19]

Pope Leo continued this line also in other encyclicals, such as *Au Millieu. On Church and State in France*,[20] where he condemned the idea of the separation of the Church and the state as a matter of fact, but at the same time encouraged Catholics to participate in the political life of France. He also stated that all the forms of government that France has experienced in the 19th (republic, monarchy, empire) century were good, "provided [they] were oriented toward [their] end — that is to say, toward the common good for which social authority is constituted".[21]

He also clarified the Church's attitude towards liberty; he did not condemn modern attempts to strengthen the liberty of the people, but he also attempted to show the limitations of this liberty:

> Man, indeed, is free to obey his reason, to seek moral good, and to strive unswervingly after his last end. Yet he is free also to turn aside to all other things; and, in pursuing the empty semblance of good, to disturb rightful order and to fall headlong into the destruction which he has voluntarily chosen. […] there are many who imagine that the Church is hostile to human liberty. Having a false and absurd notion as to what liberty is, either they pervert the very idea of freedom, or they extend it at their pleasure to many things in respect of which man cannot rightly be regarded as free.[22]

The encyclical *Rerum Novarum*[23] is certainly the best known among all 95 encyclicals written by Leo XIII and most relevant for the Christian democratic political project. It was published in 1891, and it was the first attempt to formulate the Catholic answer to the rise of communism and socialism. Before becoming a pope, Leo XIII visited many European countries,[24] which is why he was familiar with low standards of living for the workers, as well as the growing popularity

[19] Pope Leo XIII, *Diuturnum: On the Origins of Social Orde*r, 1881, http://w2.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_29061881_diuturnum.html [acc.: 22.05.2015].

[20] Pope Leo XIII, *Au Millieu: On the Church and State in France*, 1892, http://w2.vatican.va/content/ leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_16021892_au-milieu-des-sollicitudes.html [acc.: 23.05.2015].

[21] Ibid.

[22] Pope Leo XIII, *Libertas. On the Nature of Human Liberty*, 1888, http://w2.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_20061888_libertas.html [acc.: 23.05.2015].

[23] Pope Leo XIII, *Graves De Communi Re: On Christian Democracy*, 1901, http://w2.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_18011901_graves-de-communi-re.html [acc.: 21.05.2015].

[24] J.W. O'Malley, *What happened at Vatican II*, Cambridge 2008, p. 63.

of communist ideas among them. That is one of the reasons why he decided to take a stance in the debate on the relationship between capital and labour, which was initiated more than twenty years before by Karl Marx. As Wolfram Kaiser[25] pointed out, contrary to Karl Marx, Leo XIII prioritised social action over political participation.

The main points of the papal message can be summed up as follows: he defended private property, seeing it at as a fruit of labour. He also linked it with the dignity of a person and viewed it as a natural right: "Man precedes the state, and possesses, prior to the formation of any state, the right of providing for the substance of his body".[26] The right to property was, however, not unlimited: there was a necessity of just wages and proper working conditions for the workers. The Pope also encouraged the right of workers to organize themselves in order to fight for their rights. This encyclical set a precedent for other popes to address social and economic issues.[27]

Ten years later Leo XIII wrote an encyclical on Christian Democracy — "Graves De Communitas",[28] in which he took a stance in the debate on a question whether it is legitimate to use the term "Christian Democracy". His answer was positive, though not with respect to any political party, but in relation to — one could say — the political culture. For Leo XIII, Christian Democracy was a positive project of the European culture and not a political ideology, as he stated that it would 'be a crime to distort this name of Christian Democracy through politics'.[29] This is why George Weigel called him a post-Constantinian[30] pope, along with John Paul II.

Despite papal ambivalence towards the organized political activity of Catholics, the culture wars of the late 19th century and the mobilization of the Church against socialists and liberals (started by Pius IX and later transformed by Leo XIII) led to a growing political activity of the European Catholics. In the beginning they were interested mostly in the defence of the Church against emerging or existing nation states (Italy, Germany, Netherlands, Belgium), but with time the growing presence of Catholics in the public and political spheres led to the emergence of Christian democracy as a political ideology.

One can say that the final moment of the shift is the political message of the Second Vatican Council: it encouraged Catholics to engage in politics, but at the same

[25] W. Kaiser, *Christian democracy and the origins of European Union*, Cambridge 2007.

[26] Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum: On Capital and Labour*, 1891, http://w2.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum.html [acc.: 23.05.2015].

[27] Pope Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno*, 1931; Pope John XXII, *Pacem in Terris*, 1961; Pope John Paul II, *Centessimus Annus*, 1991; Pope Benedict VI, *Caritas in veritate*, 2009. All the encylicals can be retrieved at: http://www.papalencyclicals.ne.

[28] Pope Leo XIII, *Graves De Communi Re: On Christian Democracy*, 1901, http://w2.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_18011901_graves-de-communi-re.html.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Post-Constaninian in a sense of trying to influence the public sphere and society and not politics.

it forbade priests to run for parliament, and it fully accepted the separation of church and state while calling for cooperation between both forms of social organisation. In recent decades, Pope Leo's stance was endorsed by John Paul II and his follower Benedict XVI, who dedicated a large part of his pontificate to the issues of the relationship between religion and politics — which can be seen both in his encyclicals and speeches. In his speech in Bundestag in particular, Benedict addresses the issue of democracy by saying that "for most of the matters that need to be regulated by law, the support of the majority can serve as a sufficient criterion". His interventions are seen as a polemic with John Rawls, who excludes some forms of religious presence from the political sphere. Benedict stresses the need to complement the public reason with the "listening heart," which, for him, means the Christian message.

Although both John Paul II and Benedict XVI supported democracy, they often expressed their disappointment with the shape of current Western culture, especially when it came to abortion, euthanasia, sexual ethic, and consumerism. The split between the Catholic teaching and the secular modern ethic is often associated with the 1968 movement. John Paul II even coined the term "the culture of death," which was taken up by his successor.[31] This is one of the reasons why the Church distanced itself from Christian democratic political parties, as they often embraced some of the dominant attitudes which were condemned by the popes. This position has been mediated by Pope Francis, who does not dismiss the teachings of his predecessors, but accentuates those parts of the social teaching of the Church which are largely accepted by Western societies: fight against poverty and social inequalities, and the need to counteract the climate change.

Christian democratic secularism

The relative unity of Christian democratic phenomenon has to large extent a lot to do with its strong links with the Catholicism. The role of Catholicism in the countries with strong Christian democratic parties was normally crucial (Italy, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg) and after the Second World War both Catholics and Protestants were active together in Christian democracy — in my opinion political differences concerning the form of secularism were not decisive here, though there were some, which I will later briefly elucidate.[32]

Christian democracy is a rather under-researched phenomenon of the political history of the twentieth century European history. This oversight is a shortcoming on the part of political science since Christian democracy was fundamental for the political order of post-World War II Europe and has been one of the most important political forces in Germany, Italy, Austria, and Belgium. The beginning of European

[31] Ph. Portier, *La pensée de Jean-Paul II*, Paris 2006.

[32] *Religion and the Struggle for European Union: Confessional culture and the limits of integration*, eds. B.F. Nelsen, J.L. Guth, Washington DC 2015.

integration process should also be ascribed to Christian democratic politicians — Robert Schuman, Alcide de Gasperi and Konrad Adenauer.

The roots of Christian democratic political project (and thus of the Christian-democratic concept of secularism) might be seen as an attempt by Catholics (who did not always share Vatican's political views similar) to retain political influence in the modern nation states in which the political elite saw in the Church a threat to the sovereignty of the state, as in the case of Germany's *Zentrumspartei*). Italy is another example — continuous efforts of Father Luigi Sturzo led to the creation of Partito Populare Italiano in 1919, with a hesitant support of the church. This is, however, not really true for France, where a truly Christian democratic party (*Mouvement Republicain Populaire*) came into being after the period of *culture wars* (and lasted until gaullisme conquered its electorate). In his seminal book "Christian democracy and the Origins of European Integration," Wolfram Kaiser argues that there was a direct link between pre-war Catholic parties and organizations and post-war Christian-democratic parties.[33]

The true beginning of the history of Christian democracy as full-fledged political doctrine took place after World War II (though we must not forget about its pre-war roots and to certain extent even its 19th century origins; see: Hans Maier "Revolution und die Kirche"). I agree with Wolfram Kaiser's view that there was a clear link between pre-World War II Catholic parties and post-war Christian-democratic parties. I am arguing, however, that there was a fundamental transformation of Catholic views on politics, which fundamentally changed the character of these political parties. Firstly, they moved from being relatively opposed to the democratic political order to the acceptance of democracy, and secondly, they moved beyond the solely confessional character of the Church, towards accepting Christians of other denominations and even non-Christians who accepted the basic ideas of Christian worldview. This was not only a political and strategic shift. It reflected a deeper intellectual change that happened after the World War II.

The philosophy of personalism

Christian democracy is something more than just a set of positions taken by Christians in favour of democracy. It is a distinct political phenomenon — a complex one, but nevertheless distinguishable from other political doctrines. Although the links between Christian democracy (understood as political ideology) and papacy were complex, it remains one of the most important phenomena of both the 20th century European Christianity and European political history. As mentioned above, its history started before the World War II, but there is no doubt that "the heyday of Christian democracy" (to use Martin Conway's expression) is the post-war period.

[33] W. Kaiser, op. cit.

Regarding the varieties of Christian democracy and its political outlook, Gabriel Almond wrote that "it consisted both of conservative supporters of ancient regime and — at the same time — social Christians close to the political Left". He described Christian democracy as the "third force," situated between Marxism and capitalism, which confirms the view that Emmanuel Mounier and personalism were intellectual fathers of Christian democracy. A phrase by the French MRP leader Georges Bidault (1899–1983) is often quoted to explain the policy of his party "govern in the centre with the aid of the right to reach the goals of the left". Alcide de Gasperi also underlined Christian Democracy's multidimensional character when he described it as 'a party of the centre which looks to the left'. This was, among others, a result of the disgrace associated with "the right" after World War II, especially in Italy and Germany.

The most powerful movement came from France, with Jacques Maritain, whose concept of personalism was a reinterpretation of neothomism. Maritain joined this debate not because of the nostalgia for pre-revolutionary times; rather, his was a critique of the shortcomings of modernity and Marxism, which he famously called 'a Christian heresy'.[34] He embraced some elements of progressive movements; for instance, he supported the republicans in Spain. Therefore, personalism (and also Christian democracy) is not a clearly right-wing or conservative doctrine, although in general Maritain's work (as opposed to Mounier) was closer to the right side of the political spectrum.

Maritain's influence on the ideology of Christian democracy was not direct, and he was opposed to Christian democratic party politics. Nevertheless, his intellectual work bore very important political fruits: both as an inspiration for political doctrines of Christian democrats and as a basis for the post-World-War II legal and political order in Europe. One of them was the Universal (and European) Declaration of Human Rights, in which Maritain played a central role.[35] The success of the philosophy of personalism seemed to be enormous; as Jean-Paul Sartre wrote to a Swiss writer in 1948, "you personalists have won… everybody in France now calls themselves a personalist".[36]

Christian conservative secularism

Perhaps the most eminent thinker of Christian conservative secularism is French Catholic philosopher, Rémi Brague. His books on Europe, modernity, Christianity and Islam are widely discussed and published in many European countries (Great Britain, Italy, Germany, and Poland). Brague is highly critical of modernity — he condemns its lack of interest and knowledge about Christianity in Western European

[34] P. Pombeni, op. cit., p. 331.

[35] S. Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History*, Cambridge, Mass. 2012.

[36] J.W. Müller, *Contesting Democracy: Political ideas in twentieth-century Europe*, New Haven 2011, p. 140.

societies. He is also much more skeptical when it comes to human rights than Jacques Maritian: Brague claims that our interest in human rights is accompanied by the lack of interest in what it means to be a human. It makes sense that Brague was awarded the Ratzinger Prize in 2012: their respective critiques of modernity are similar.

Indeed, Pope Benedict XVI is a central figure for many European conservatives. He has been very much interested in the idea of Europe, and he strongly criticized the developments in modern Western societies, especially regarding sexual mores and the lack of respect for life (abortion and euthanasia, i.e., the pillars of "the culture of death"). Without doubt, a very important moment for Christian conservatism was the revolution of 1968. While Christian democrats were divided and saw both its positive and negative elements), conservatives viewed it as a moment where the problems of the European culture began.

Another important component of the conservative secularism is the view of Islam as posing danger for Europe. While Christian democrats often see in Islam a possibility to renew continent's interest in religion and believe in a possibility of Muslim moderation (following Christian democrats in their way of reconciling religion with political modernity), the conservatives view Islam as a religion which is incompatible with Western values, especially that of the separation between religious norms and politics. Moreover, they often point out Muslim inclination for violence, which — as many conservatives claim — do not have equivalent in Christianity or Judaism.

Although it is highly sceptical when it comes to transnational projects, Christian conservative secularism is a transnational phenomenon. In Poland, it is represented by authors such as Pawel Lisicki,[37] who wrote about the dangers linked to the (anticipated) Muslim immigration and the need to revitalize Christianity in Europe. Similar voices can be found in Germany.[38] Also many American authors are vitally interested in the fate of Europe.[39]

2. Laicist secularism

> Je veux l' État laïque, exclusivement laïque..., je veux ce que voulaient nos pères l'Église chez elle et l'État chez lui.
>
> Victor Hugo

Many scholars argue that there is no single French concept of laïcité, but Jean Baubérot is perhaps the most prominent among them. He states that among seven

[37] P. Lisicki, *Dżihad i samozagłada Zachodu*, Warszawa 2015.

[38] P. Hahne, *Schluss mit lustig*, Lahr 2004.

[39] G. Weigel, *The Cube and the Cathedral: Europe, America, and Politics Without God*, New York 2005.

French ways of understanding secularism, only two are anti-religious to certain extent. Nevertheless, without a doubt the anti-religious component in the French concept of laïcité plays a part in what is considered to be laicist secularism both in France and in the rest of Europe. As this article does not explore the character of the French model, I will not enter into this discussion. I will rather try to outline here what is perceived as the laique model of secularism.

The roots of laïcité are often located in the Enlightenment. However, our knowledge about the Enlightenment today permits us to say that its attitude toward religion was rather complex and certainly not unanimously anti-religious.[40] The conflict between the supporters of religion (Catholicism) and the supporters of "reason" intensified at the time of the French Revolution, and perhaps this is the moment when a serious anti-religious strand in the European politics was founded.

French laïcité is often perceived as an exception because it represents a specific form of Western secularism. As Olivier Roy puts it, "France may be the only democracy that has fought religion in order to impose a state-enforced secularism. In France, laïcité is an exacerbated, politicized, and ideological form of Western secularism […]." Roy distinguishes the legal laïcité, a strict separation of church and state, from the ideological one, which he defines as the interpretation of laïcité which claims to provide a value system common to all citizens by relegating religion to the private sphere. Roy states that the latter "defines national cohesion by asserting a purely political identity that confines to the private sphere any specific religious or cultural identities".[41]

1905: the structuring event and a myth

The 1905 French law on the Separation of the Churches and State established state secularism in France. This law is seen as the fundament of the French principle of laïcité. However, the legal outcome of the 1905 law is not fundamental for the ideal-typical understanding of laïcité, as the final outcome was rather liberal — securing the freedom of religious exercise, along with state neutrality regulating public powers related to the church. But the circumstances that led to its adoption are very telling and allow us to identify a strong non-liberal component in the laicist secularism. Starting from the French Revolution, the tension between French republicans and the Catholic Church was very pronounced. It was a part of the narrative of French nation-building, as it was often the case in many Western European states.

As Jean Baubérot describes it, the parliamentary struggle over the laws concerning the relationship between religious denominations and the French state was

[40] D.J. Sorkin, *The Religious Enlightenment: Protestants, Jews, and Catholics from London to Vienna*, Princeton 2008.

[41] O. Roy, *Secularism Confronts Islam*, New York 2007.

a fight between three camps: anti-Catholic politicians (often allies of the Masonic Lodges) who aimed at eliminating Catholicism from the French culture. These attempts were clearly opposed by the Catholic Church and religious citizens. Antireligious groups supported the idea that the freedom of conscience should not include the freedom of religion (as religion, in their opinion, restricted human development). This was obviously not acceptable for the Catholic Church and its believers. The conflict became exacerbated after the Dreyfus Affair, when the Catholic Church and the Catholic newspaper *La Croix* took part in an anti-Semitic campaign against a French Jew. According to Louis Begley, it influenced the anti-Catholic political atmosphere that led to the separation law.[42]

Interestingly, there is an ongoing discussion with respect to the meaning of laïcité in France. Baubérot describes as many as seven sorts of French laïcité (he understands this term in a similar way the term secularism is understood here, in a rather broad and non-deterministic way): antireligious laïcité (where the state supports atheism); gallican laïcité (where the state controls religion); separatist laïcité (separation with ensured individual religious freedom); collective-separatist laïcité (with ensured both individual and collective religious freedom), open laïcité (more open towards religions), identitarian laïcité (mostly directed against Muslims), and concordate laïcité (in Alsace-Moselle). However, only two forms of laïcité mentioned by Bauberot are present in the European social imaginary today: the antireligious one and the republican one.

Antireligious laïcité

The antireligious laïcité is above all an anti-Catholic (and very often anti-Christian) form of laïcité. Nevertheless, I did not include "religion" in the label, as most of the authors I am presenting here did not subscribe to any other religion and their views on religion were sceptical in general. This is certainly true of François-Marie Arouet, better known as Voltaire.

Voltaire, a deist, was a strong antagonist of Christianity:

> [Christianity] is assuredly the most ridiculous, the most absurd and the most bloody religion which has ever infected this world. Your Majesty will do the human race an eternal service by extirpating this infamous superstition, I do not say among the rabble, who are not worthy of being enlightened and who are apt for every yoke; I say among honest people, among men who think, among those who wish to think. [In a letter to Frederick II, King of Prussia, dated 5 January 1767]

Although Voltaire's work and life also contain elements that shed different light on his views on religion, it is rather uncontested that he thought of Christianity (but also Judaism and Islam) as clearly detrimental for humans. He is also the Enlightenment figure who symbolises its negative views on religion (although

[42] L. Begley, *Why the Dreyfus Affair Matters*, New Haven 2009.

— as stated before — the Enlightenment itself was much more complex when it comes to its attitude toward religion).

It is not a coincidence that another anti-Christian thinker, Friedrich Nietzsche, dedicated his *Human, All Too Human* to Voltaire, as certain elements of Volterian anti-religious sentiments can be found in the work of Nietzsche, perhaps the most prominent critic of Christianity of all times. In the book mentioned above, he expresses his disgust with the way noble values in Roman Society were corrupted by the rise of Christianity, which to him is a religion for weak and unhealthy people, and whose general historical effect has been to undermine the healthy qualities of the more noble cultures.

We should also mention Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud — the other two representatives of the school of suspicion, as Paul Ricoeur famously called them. All of them thought that religion was invented in order to support particular social and cultural order. I will come back to Marx and Freud in the last chapter of this paper, but here I would like to mention that the former is very important because of his continuous influence on the European left and, — what is significantly from the perspective of Eastern European countries — on their state ideology during the communist period. Here we touch on an important point: although there were politicians in France in the beginning of the 20th century who claimed that the state should be atheist and that the freedom of conscience does not include the freedom of religion, they never succeeded in making atheism into a state ideology.

The ideas of the thinkers mentioned above clearly influenced the political proponents of anti-religious version of laicism. According to Jean Baubérot, its most prominent proponent was Maurice Allard, for whom continuing the work of "dechristianization of France", started by the Convention of 1792–1795, was crucial. In his eyes, this work was a step toward the annihilation of religion, seen as an obstacle to progress. Legally, the proponents of the anti-religious laicism proposed not to include freedom of religion in the tenet of the freedom of conscience, arguing that religion oppressive to conscience. The objective of Maurice Allard and his supporters was to create a state where atheism was a state ideology — this was acknowledged by a free-masonic journal *La Raison*, which labelled him as a fighter of the "etat athée," as opposed to Jaures and Aristide Briand who fought for "etat laïque".[43]

The republican laïcité

Republicanism in the French context means something different than in other parts of the Western world. It was perceived as a political project, an alternative to

[43] J. Baubérot, *Les sept laïcités françaises: Le modèle français de laïcité n'existe pas*, Paris 2015.

the monarchy and the ancient regime. Today it is defined against "Anglo-American" multiculturalism and communitarianism, which promote special rights for ethnic and religious groups, while French republicanism grants similar rights to all citizens.

It was the republican, separatist laïcité that won in 1905, although there were other political sides of the political spectrum that tried very hard to push for another solution (either a stronger, antireligious option or no separation at all). In 1905, the laicist secularism had two champions: Aristide Briand and Ferdinand Buisson. Both of them wanted to include religious freedom into a broader freedom of conscience, although there were also differences in their proposals. Buisson was in favour of restrictions on the freedom of religious practices for religious congregations, while Briand was against strong restrictions. In the end, it was the second option that prevailed in 1905. This is why, according to Jean Baubérot, the 1905 law is in reality not far from the intellectual tradition of liberalism, and it is described as derived from the Lockean tradition. One should remember, however, that besides securing individual and collective freedom of religion, the law forbade the state to finance religious schools or any other religious activities.

Table 1. The forms of laicism

	Antireligious secularism	**Republican secularism**
Promoted worldview	Atheism	Republicanism
Values	Freedom of conscience, Reason	Equality
Against	Religion as such	State support for religion
Views on religion	An obstacle to the full development of a human person, and in consequence — a state	Possible to danger to the value of equality of the citizens
Sources	Voltaire and antireligious strand of Enlightenment	Locke, liberalism
Civil religion	Atheism as a civil religion	Republicanism
Views on the politics of multiculturalism	Negative	Sceptical

3. Agnostic liberal secularism

The ambition of agnostic secularism, in contrast to the two forms of secularism presented above, is to depoliticize religion. While both Christian-democratic and laicist secularisms keep religion in the field of the political (in different roles, of course), the agnostic secularism tries to avoid it and eliminate it from the field of the political. It is strongly linked to the liberal tradition, but people and institutions

which represent this point of view often do not use it in a more comprehensive way (as it is with two previous forms of secularism). It is often used as a kind of default option, an "unthought", a natural direction things take. As in the case of the other forms of secularism, it should also be noted that those who support it do not have to be agnostic themselves — sometimes they might be believers or atheists. The private beliefs can but do not have to be the identical with the "institutional belief".

The myth of religious violence

The belief that religion is a source of violence is one of the most important components of the agnostic secularism. Analyzing this assumption in depth is beyond the scope of my research, but it is fundamental here that this point of view on religion is very important for the agnostic form of secularism. I will limit myself to note that there is a deep disagreement among scholars whether this indeed is the case. Some, such as Mark Juergensmeyer, tend to argue that "religion and violence seem to be connected virtually everywhere",[44] while others, such as William Cavanaugh, vigorously oppose this thesis, saying that religion is not that much different from secular ideologies, which may but do not have to be used as inspiration for violence.[45]

Cavanaugh defines "the myth of religious violence" as the "idea that religion is transhistorical and transcultural feature of human life, essentially distinct from 'secular' features such as politics and economics, which has a peculiarly dangerous inclination to promote violence. Religion must therefore be tamed by restricting its access to public power. The secular nation state then appears as natural, corresponding to a universal and timeless truth about the inherent dangers of religion". The story of these wars serves as a kind of a creation myth for the modern state. According to this myth, "Protestants and Catholics began killing each other over doctrinal differences. The modern state was born as a peace maker in this process, relegating religion to private life and uniting people of various religions around loyalty to the sovereign state".[46]

Intellectual sources: the Anglo-Saxon tradition

While for the laicist tradition it is the French context which matters mostly (although other contexts are visible there as well), the agnostic tradition has been shaped by the Anglo-American world. This is important: although the forms of

[44] M. Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the mind of God: The global rise of religious violence*, Berkeley 2003.

[45] W.T. Cavanaugh, *The myth of religious violence: Secular ideology and the roots of modern conflict*, Oxford 2009.

[46] Ibid.

secularism "live their life" apart from the traditions which have constructed them, they are still genealogically connected to the events that shaped them.

One of these events was the English Revolution (1640–1660), which was a fundamental experience for Thomas Hobbes and his writings on church and state relations. Although Hobbes was an important thinker for the liberal tradition and some of his insights were taken over by, for instance, John Locke, Hobbes himself was by no means a liberal thinker. His main concern was to provide stability to the political system and security to the citizens. As religion played a hugely important role in the English Revolution, Hobbes was in many respects interested in the question of the relationship between religion and politics, and his answer was similar to the Gallican or Erastian model of secularism. Religion, in his opinion, was supposed to be subordinated to the sovereign. As an interpreter of Hobbes Jeffrey Collins puts it:

> The migrations in Thomas Hobbes' political allegiance away from the royalist cause and towards the triumphant revolutionary regimes, were driven by an obsessive fear of the independent power of the Christian church, and by a sympathy with one of the central political goals of English revolution: securing an Erastian church settlement under the aegis of modernizing state.

Hobbes supported the idea of the freedom of conscience, but not of the freedom of expression. His thought was then taken up by one of the pioneers of liberalism — John Locke. In his "Letter Concerning Toleration", Locke developed his own conception of the relationship between church and state. He claimed that the state should not use force in order to convince people of the true religion and that religious organizations were voluntary and had no right to use coercive power over their own members or those outside their group. Locke argues that even the Bible gives no indication that violence is a proper way to save people.

The agnosticism of public reason

In the introduction to *Political Liberalism,* John Rawls writes that one of the most important inspirations for his work was Judith Shklar's thought, and he gives an example of her essay "Liberalism of Fear".[47] Shklar also argues that the origins of liberalism lie in the wars of religion. Her concept of a "liberalism of fear" identifies the basic political objective as securing peace against cruelty. She suggests a deep affinity between the liberalism of fear and scepticism and humanism of Montaigne or John Madison when he wrote, in *The Federalist*, that the best solution to sectarian conflicts is freedom:

> This is a liberalism that was born out of the cruelties of the religious civil wars, which forever rendered the claims of Christian charity a rebuke to all religious institutions and parties. If the faith was to survive at all, it would do so privately. The alternative then set, and still before us,

[47] J. Shklar, 'Liberalism of Fear', [in:] *Political thought and political thinkers*, Chicago 1998.

> is not one between classical virtue and liberal self-indulgence, but between cruel military and moral repression and violence, and a self-restraining tolerance that fences in the powerful to protect the freedom and safety of every citizen, old or young, male or female, black or white.[48]

In order to explain her concept of "liberalism of fear", Shklar uses the Emersonian category of a party of memory as opposed to a party of hope — although for Emerson these were the conservatives who belonged to the first group, while liberals, who look into the future, were on the side of the party of hope. Shklar, however, argues that the memory of past cruelties is decisive for the form of liberalism she proposes. It is not a surprise that many scholars after II World War shared her view, and John Rawls was perhaps the most prominent among them.

In *Political Liberalism* Rawls argues that citizens' shared conception of political authority, rather than their comprehensive doctrines, should guide their public deliberations and decision-making, at least in the context of matters of political significance, such as when considering constitutional issues. Public or political reasons should take priority over reasons that reflect citizens' comprehensive doctrines. He also argues that reasoning based on comprehensive doctrines may be admitted into the independent framework of political authority.

It is worth noting that his attitude towards religion (as one of the "comprehensive doctrines") has changed from a relative restrictiveness in the *Theory of Justice* to a relative openness in the *Political Liberalism*. Rawls' relative openness distinguishes him from authors such as Richard Rorty, who does not accept religion in the political sphere and sees it as a "conversation-stopper". Rawls argues that citizens may accept shared conception of political authority based on different reasons, and he proposes a solution to the proliferation of religious and nonreligous worldviews in contemporary societies. This response acknowledges the pluralism and force of these worldviews, while nonetheless insisting that political authority can be justified by citizens' consent.

One of the interesting traits of Rawlsian public reason is — as Cecile Laborde puts it — "the indeterminacy of public reason" with respect to religion. This is one of its most important traits: it is indeterminate about the public role of religion since different sorts of arrangements may take place in the liberal framework, from "modest establishment" to "modest separation":

> Political liberalism, as a theory of justice, is inconclusive about the public place of religion. Inconclusiveness refers to the fact that citizens exercising public reason may hold a range of competing reasonable views, none of which is decisive in the matter at hand. Liberal public reason can accommodate a range of reasonable views about the public place of religion […].[49]

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[48] J. Shklar, *Ordinary Vices*, Cambridge, MA 1984, p. 5.

[49] C. Laborde, 'Political Liberalism and Religion: On Separation and Establishment', *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 2013, 21(1), p. 77.

Różnorodność sekularyzmów w europejskiej myśli politycznej

Abstrakt

Artykuł prezentuje trzy główne formy sekularyzmu w europejskiej myśli politycznej i imaginariach społecznych: chrześcijańską, laicką i liberalno-agnostyczną. Autor argumentuje, że wszystkie wypełniają minimalne wymaganie sekularyzmu, czyli wyróżnienie sfery religijnej i politycznej. Artykuł prezentuje dwie wersje sekularyzmu chrześcijańskiego — chadecką i konserwatywną. Także laicyzm ma dwie odsłony — republikańską oraz antyreligijną. Agnostyczna forma sekularyzmu z kolei jest umocowana w myśli Johna Rawlsa, który szukał możliwości wyłączenia religii ze sfery politycznej tam, gdzie się da. Autor argumentuje, że filozofia polityczna Rawlsa staje się dziś domyślną reakcją na problem religii w sferze politycznej. Autor argumentuje, że szersze rozumienie sekularyzmu (głęboko zanurzone w europejskiej teorii politycznej) pomniejsza intelektualną wartość kategorii postsekularyzmu, zazwyczaj kojarzonej z Jürgenem Habermasem, jako że wymaga ona wąskiego rozumienia sekularyzmu — jako doktryny politycznej alternatywnej wobec religii, która może odnieść się wyłącznie do jednej z form sekularyzmu — i sprowadza go do antyreligijnego laicyzmu.

Słowa-klucze: postsekularyzm, religia i polityka, laicyzm, laïcité, liberalizm, agnostycyzm

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