Manger à la même table de la République:

Challenges to French Cultural Identity and Secularist-Republican Project due to Food Practices of Immigrants

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Introduction

My Master's Thesis focuses on the analyses of the discourse surrounding dietary (religious) habits and food practices of immigrants within the context of secularization narratives in contemporary France. Such a research topic requires combining several major fields of study such as anthropology of food, political philosophy, religious studies and migration studies. This topic of the Thesis is relevant for several reasons. In recent decades the food studies and anthropology of food have gained a lot of attention as an important field of study that illuminates relevant societal processes, cultural and historical development of societies and explains human behaviour. Moreover, greater number of scholars calls into adequacy different narratives of secularization that no longer look sophisticated enough to theorize the development of the Western world and explain certain cultural changes. I seek to integrate these two areas of study in the case study of France.

In the context of France, numerous works exploring French culinary culture mostly draw attention to the changes in the French gastronomic field since the French Revolution of 1789 and its links with the development of modern French society. These researches explore the issue from a historical perspective by interrogating the changing ideas about food practices through the lens of globalization and analysing the role of migrants as agents for culinary change. However, they seem to ignore the religious and secular aspects of the issue that become so essential in contemporary France.

On the other hand, works that explores French secularism and religious freedom mostly focus on the question whether allowing dietary religious practices in public catering institutions is compatible with the 1905 French Law on secularity. Yet, these writings often overlook or downplay the interactions of global and local dynamics. Moreover, by avoiding analysing the issue from a historical perspective and taking into account the importance of French culinary culture in the development of the modern French society, they miss the broader picture of how dietary (religious) habits and food practices of immigrants that are captured by the narratives of secularization could reflect the relationships between migrants and natives. The relationships between food practices of immigrants, especially those have religious connotations, and the secular vision of the Republic is relevant to analyse in the age of globalization, as new foods and eating habits inevitably enter local landscapes.

In relation to that and speaking of the globalizing scapes in a global world, the contemporary social-cultural anthropologist Arjun Appadurai wrote that 'the central problem of today's global interactions is the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization' (Appadurai, 1996:51). Globalization opens up space for clashing and mixing of cultures either between different societies, or inside them. Because of the globalizing forces, new food habits appearing on local landscapes could be seen as being imposed and, therefore, rejected, adaptable or creating a hybrid system (Featherstone, 1999; Roncaglia, 2013). This intersection of the global and the local forces might result in 'culinary acculturation' and peaceful changes in cultural, national identity, or cause collision between different foodways and increasing social, political conflict.

Fuelling this interaction between different foodways with religious aspects could even further stimulate the conflict. This is the reason why in this Thesis I choose to analyse the changes in French culinary culture and French society due to the food practices of immigrants in the religion-*laïcité* framework and through the lense of globalization. The central research question is: *In what ways do the food habits and eating practices of the immigrants in France (1) challenge French (national) cultural identity constructed through its culinary culture and (2) contest the Secularist-Republican project, i.e. the understanding of the secular public sphere?*

For the further introduction to the problem analysis, few words should be told about the development of the French culinary culture since the French Revolution of 1789 to this day. The two characteristics distinguishing the post-revolutionary culinary culture from the previous pre-revolutionary one are 'secular' and 'modern'. Whereas the pre-1789 culinary tradition in France was defined in terms by Christian-Latin origin, the changes in the post-revolutionary culinary culture marked the entrance to 'Modernity' as well as passage to the secular culinary culture (Abramson, 2007; Clark, 1975; Ferguson, 1998, 2003, 2004, 2010; Spang, 2000). After the Revolution the local regional *cuisines* were united into one national French *cuisine*, 'the parts and the whole coincided' (Ferguson, 2010:104).

The emerging new culinary tradition became an element in shaping French modern national identity and transforming the traditional French society. This transformation can be explained by two main aspects: firstly, whereas before that 'gastronomic pleasures' were seen as sins the restaurants and gastronomic field that started to represent the secular culinary tradition became available not only for aristocracy but for all the members of the society; secondly, this 'modernization' of the culinary culture contributed to the

elaboration of individualism that characterizes the modern French society (Ferguson, 1998; Clark, 1975). What is more, the creation of the modern French culinary culture contributed to the formation of French national identity throughout the nineteenth century and the development of so-called 'culinary nationalism' (Ferguson, 1998, 2003; Clark, 1975).

Moreover, Ferguson's analysis of different newspapers and writings of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century representing both right and left political powers reveal that culinary values were widely promoted across the political spectrum (Ferguson, 2010:105). These examples show how the emerging culinary culture adapted to the changing contexts; it not only became one of the most important cultural fields of France, but also served political motives. Furthermore, during the last two centuries the French *cuisine* experienced modifications but remained a significant value in France (Abramson, 2007; Clark, 1975; Ferguson, 1998, 2003, 2004, 2010; Spang, 2000). Taking into consideration this historical development, the question is how distinct and how distinctly French and for what purposes will be the French *cuisine* of the twenty-first century why and how certain changes might be incorporated in the traditional French culinary culture, and why others might experience resistance.

When food plays an essential role in expressing the collective identity, new food products and habits could be viewed as 'other'. It means that incorporation of foreign products or food prepared in a certain manner is seen as the 'enemy' reflected in foodways. Then incorporation of alien food habits could express the fear of allowing the incorporation of imaginary, symbolic and social power embodied by food (Roncaglia, 2013). It is especially important in culturally heterogeneous communities where emerging food systems play a role in structuring society and maintaining certain social relations (Gumerman, 1997). Therefore, having in mind the close link between culinary culture and the construction of French national identity, it raises questions regarding how identity can accommodate changes and to what degree 'authenticity' can accommodate the demands of new publics. This summarizes the first sub-theme of this research.

New dietary practices of immigrants are entering the French public domain and that calls into discussion the relation between the principle of *laïcité* and religious freedom, and challenges the understanding of the secular public sphere in France. This brings us to the second sub-theme of the research: analysis on what grounds these dietary habits and eating practices of immigrants that are perceived as threatening the French cultural identity are framed in terms of religion-*laïcité*. This is a relevant question because the decisions taken

by different state authorities in relation to the principle of *laïcité* and serving confessional food in public spaces (fast food chains, schools, prisons, hospitals etc.) are often contradictory.

In this Thesis I also argue that specifically the religious dietary practices of immigrants that appear in the public sphere and the controversial reactions of the French majority that are framed in the religion-*laïcité* framework, illustrate the French people's fear of losing their historically constructed French (national) cultural identity ('nostalgia' for the past) and result in a public discourse that expresses the fear for 'outside influence'.

Moreover, the fear of losing its (national) cultural identity and protecting it by putting the debates over food into the religion-*laïcité* framework, also allow suggesting that the principle of *laïcité* is becoming an element structuring the relationships within the society. By this I contend that it may well express the paradoxical wish of reintroducing some degree of holism into France's highly individualistic society as well as to maintain the social hierarchy between the French and the immigrants.

Objectives. This Thesis has three main objectives:

1. Taking into consideration the close links between French culinary culture and the construction of French national identity, the objective of the Thesis is to analyse on what grounds certain changes originating from other food cultures might be incorporated in the traditional French culinary culture, and why others might experience resistance. The objective is also to explore how identity can accommodate changes and to what degree 'authenticity' can accommodate the demands of new publics.

2. In addition, through the context of the principle of *laïcité* and current debates about religious food practices of religious minorities in France, I seek to rethink the division between public secular and private religious spheres.

3. Also, by focusing on debates on food I seek to investigate what is the current perception of the principle of *laïcité* and how does it affect the relationships among different members of the society.

In order to try to find the answer to my central research question I have also set up the following five sub-questions:

1. How and why did the principle of *laïcité* emerge as the fourth pillar of the 'Republican temple' in 1905, and how has the discourse of this 'pillar' evolved since then?

2. What is the role of food in individual and collective identity construction, cultural and religious practices, and social, cultural and political development of societies?

3. How was modern French gastronomy invented and in what ways has it contributed to the construction of French cultural identity?

4. What do the examples of the current debates over foodways from 'outside' say about why certain dietary habits and eating practices of immigrants are perceived as threatening French national identity constructed through the French culinary culture?

5. How are these dietary habits and eating practices of immigrants that are perceived as threatening the French national identity framed in terms of religion- *laïcité*? And what definition of the secular public sphere in France does it allow to draw?

To formulate answers to the last two sub-questions I analyse the social discourse and attitudes surrounding the events that can be seen as representing the meeting of different foodways in the public sphere of France. In order to understand the complexity of this issue, it is helpful to distinguish two different units of analysis: (1) arguments and attitudes toward (not) allowing to serve confessional food (mostly halal and kosher) in public catering institutions; (2) the motivations of organizing public initiatives concerning food, e.g. such gatherings as 'les repas de quartiers', 'les fêtes de voisins', 'Apéros géant'.

According to the research of *Institut national de la jeunesse et de l'éducation populaire* (INJEP), these initiatives could be seen as manifestations against *l'individualisme solidaire* and thereby proves the necessity 'to be together in a postmodern society sick of its individuality' (Richez, 2010). Although this third analysis object does not directly represent the meeting of different foodways, the events such as 'Wine and Pork Sausage Party' are said to have grown out of these initiatives. For this reason and because of the emphasized need of the search for solidarity while organizing such 'eating together' gatherings, this part of the research will examine the importance of food in maintaining social relations in the contemporary French society.

Therefore, these two last sub-questions should help to find the answer to the overall question: on what grounds do the French (national) cultural identity and national ideology,

that is closely constructed through culinary culture and relates to the Secularist-Republican project, is perceived to be under threat due to the impact of food practices of immigrants? In other words, on what basis certain food practices are rejected: because they are new, because they are incomprehensible, or not fitting the Secularist project of the Republic?

Methodology. The research topic calls for an integration of different methodologies such as historical case study, philosophical-conceptual work and field research. For the first two parts I benefit from theoretical analysis of social scientific approaches to food and eating, various ethnographies on food and culture in different societies and French culinary culture in particular, magazines dedicated to food studies and scholarly literature on the emergence of a secular age and the ethic-political implications of secularism.

The case study consists of discourse analysis of French press and is enriched by fieldwork observations in France that I gathered during my three month traineeship, which I did in association working in non-formal education in Paris. The both methods allow to explore the way that global-local tensions affect the modern food panorama in France and analyse the impact of the 'secular' toward contemporary popular attitudes on the relation between dietary religious practices and *laïcité* that flow in the public sphere.

Structure. The Thesis consists of three main chapters. The first chapter, entitled 'Secularist-Republican project of France,' theorizes French secularism and discusses its peculiarities. The second chapter, entitled 'Food and culture' explores the role of food in the development of the society, and focuses on French gastronomy and its contribution to the creation of French cultural identity. Finally, the third chapter is dedicated to the case study where I investigate the current discourses surrounding (religious) dietary practices and eating habits in terms of religion-*laïcité*.

Chapter 1:
Secularist-Republican project of France

In this chapter I theorize the division between the private and the public domains between religion and state, and I focus specifically on the French secularism well known by the term *laïcité*. *Laïcité* is often presented as a significant identity marker of the French Republic. However, the law on the Separation of the Churches and the State of the 9th December 1905 that had the objective of separating state from religion (Catholicism) and to give more freedom to public institutions, nowadays is often criticized for being applied in a too restrictive and narrow approach.

The debates rise around 'positive' image of *laïcité*, and even lead to the question whether French *laïcité* is not becoming a state religion itself. The problematic interpretation of *laïcité* is affected by the lack of a clear definition and ideological struggles between different approaches to its application in public life. The different socio-political and historical environments distinguishing the 'Old' France of the beginning of the twentieth century challenge today the understanding of French secularism and today's 'New' France defined by the multicultural, ethnic, religious diversity.

As the emergence of *laïcité* is a result of a long historical process, and nowadays it is understood at the same time as a juridical and political-philosophical concept, in this chapter I present the changing perception of this principle historically (Conseil d'Etat, 2004). Exploring French secularism in this way provides me with the historical context within which the research question is set. In addition, to better understand this historical context in which the principle of *laïcité* emerged, I also shortly introduce the development of other three main values of the Republican project – *liberté, egalité, fraternité*. These four values have played an important role in the construction of the modern French society since the French Revolution.

In discussing the peculiarities of French secularism, I use the works of John Bowen (Bowen, 2007, 2010, 2011) and I present concepts such as 'civil religion' in terms of Rousseau and Bellah (Bellah & Hammond, 2013), Judeo-Christian Secularism in terms of Elizabeth Shakman-Hurd (Shakman-Hurd, 2007), 'positive' laicism (Ghosh, 2013), secular public and religious private realms by Talal Asad (Asad, 2003, 2006), assertive and combative types of secularism (Kuru, 2007, 2009) and others.

1.1. Republican Values

'France is an indivisible, secular, democratic and social Republic, guaranteeing that all citizens regardless of their origin, race or religion are treated as equals before the law and respecting all religious beliefs'[1]. This is what the French Constitution of 1958 states. For the first time that the configuration of the *République française* as a system of government and a form of sovereignty officially appeared was in the French Constitution of September 25th, 1792. Gradually it became a worldview and an all-encompassing structure, a totality, with certain fundamental values and founding principles (Berenson et al., 2011).

Because of its all-encompassing structure the modern French Republic could also be put in terms of French anthropologist Louis Dumont and be defined as the *Social Whole* (Dumont, 1986) – a public entity and holistic paramount value. This Social Whole is based on the social set of representations or a collection of *ideas-values* common in a society, otherwise called ideology (Dumont, 1986:256). In France this set of representations could be defined by the four main founding principles or values-ideas - *egalité, liberté, fraternité* and *laïcité,* - that have been embodied by the symbolic figure of *Marianne*, which stands as a national symbol of the French Republic (Berenson et al., 2011; McKinley, 2008). Therefore, in order to understand what place the *laïcité* occupies today in the organization of the French society, in the following section I give a short introduction to history of *Marianne* – French Republic with its values.

Marianne

The figure of *Marianne*, a half-naked woman figure with Roman style clothing, is mostly known by everyone from one of the most famous works of the French painter Eugéne Delacroix (1798-1863). Originating from a song of the XVIII century, *Marianne* was progressively gaining a physical image, which reached its culmination in the Delacroix's painting 'La liberté guidant le peuple', commemorating the July Revolution of 1830. Gradually *Marianne* became a symbol of the French Republic, and today *Marianne's*

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[1] 'La France est une République indivisible, laïque, démocratique et sociale. Elle assure l'égalité devant la loi de tous les citoyens sans distinction d'origine, de race ou de religion. Elle respecte toutes les croyances. Son organisation est décentralisée.'. *La Constitution du 4 octobre 1958.* Available: http://www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr/conseil-constitutionnel/francais/la-constitution/la-constitution-du-4-octobre-1958/texte-integral-de-la-constitution-du-4-octobre-1958-en-vigueur.5074.html. Last accessed: 09/05/2015.

portrayal shows up on post stamps, French euro coins, facades of state institutions and other France representing elements.

In the course of the last two centuries *Marianne* has encompassed the values that French society is based on, and now embodies the ideal of the Republic. Firstly associated only with the value of liberty, which is always in danger as *Marianne* is surrounded by armed dangerous people in Delacroix's painting, during the XIX century *Marianne* gradually encompassed two other values that today represent French Republic: *egalité* and *fraternité*. This evolution of the republican tradition was followed by the introduction of the principle of *laïcité* in 1905 (Berenson et al., 2011). Therefore, understanding French secularism and defining the place of the principle of *laïcité* in organizing French society could not be done properly without at least shortly presenting the *values-ideas* the French society is built upon.

Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité

The slogan *liberté, egalité, fraternité*, which is considered a part of the French cultural identity, stems from the French Revolution of 1789. However, during the last two centuries it was changing and acquiring different meanings depending on the context and various events, moreover, not all the elements of the motto had the same weight of importance in the construction of *Marianne*.

The influential figure of the French Revolution Maximilien Robespierre used it for the first time as a motto in his speech 'On the organization of the National Guard' in 1790. By 1793 it was replaced by the slogan of 'Unity, indivisibility of the Republic; liberty, equality or death' and was associated with the Jacobin terror. The motto fell into disuse during the Empire and reappeared during the Revolution of 1848 when it was defined as a principle of the Republic in the Constitution of 1848. Finally it was institutionalized in the Third Republic (1870-1940) in the end of the nineteenth century, and included in the constitutions of 1946 and 1958. Therefore, this motto could be said to reflect the evolution of the French political narrative, and understanding the evolution of the French political thought enables assessment of how it evolved over the past two hundred years (Berenson et al, 2011; france.fr).

I further briefly discuss the evolution of the three first elements of the Marianne - *liberté, egalité, fraternité,* - and their link to *laïcité* afterwords.

Liberté

Marianne is an allegory of both *liberté* and Republic, thereby, it represents both 'an eternal value and a regime' (McKinley, 2008:123) that signifies the crucial place that the idea of *liberté* occupies in the ideal of the French Republic. According to French historian Maurice Agulhon (1926-2014) specializing in the analysis of the republican symbols[2], the female representations of *Marianne* appeared during the fights of the French Revolution and during the times of the First Republic (1792-1804), and this symbol was used in a double sense. In one sense, *Marianne* referred to what Agulhon called 'Marianne of Popular Revolt' and *Marianne* of the republican regimes or of bourgeois liberalism (Agulhon, 1979, in McKinley, 2008).

Whereas the first Marianne is more revolutionary, youthful figure and always-in action, the second *Marianne* is more mature and orderly dressed. Even though the *Marianne* of the republican regimes was preferred by the various republican groups in power (First and Second Republics), the redcap avenging Marianne, a symbol of liberty and revolution came back to the popular classes and became the symbol of the fight against bourgeois regimes (Agulhon, 1979, in McKinley, 2008:123-124). Different groups could say many more things about the history of the emergence of this female symbol and different associations it evoked, but the point here is to say that it embodied both, the Republic and the idea of liberty since the French Revolution.

However, the concept of 'liberty' is one of those that could have many meanings and be a subject to misinterpretations. We should focus on what kind of liberty *Marianne* embodied in times of her appearance. French philosopher on politics and religion Benjamin Constant (1767-1830) while speaking of the aims and consequences of the French Revolution proposed a distinction (1819) between two forms of liberty: the 'ancient' and the 'modern'.

The liberty of the Ancients refers to a participatory republican liberty and active citizenship. This kind of liberty with no representative government, no religious freedom and no freedom in private affairs is limited to small and homogenous communities. On the

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[2] Famous works by Maurice Agulhon: *Marianne au Combat* (1979), *Marianne au Pouvoir* (1989), *Les Métamorphoses de Marianne* (2001).

other hand, the liberty of the Moderns is based on representative government, religious freedom and much greater freedom in private affairs. Later on the distinction between these two forms of liberty was characterized as the 'negative' and 'positive' liberties by Isaiah Berlin. By presenting this distinction Constant sought to explain why the first years after the French Revolution resulted in terror and tyranny (Berenson et al., 2011:95-103;Vincent, 2011: 194-196).

Constant explained the emergence of terror in Revolutionary France as a result of the fact that modern liberty extinguished ancient liberty. According to Constant, the Jacobins unsuccessfully attempted to transport into modern age certain elements that belong to other centuries. The Robespierre regime that emphasized the importance of the common good over individual interest ('The good individual was the good citizen, and the good citizen was the good patriot' (Jennings in Berenson et al., 2011:97)) allowed to draw a clearer conception of the ancient liberty in politics and search for the liberty suitable for modern times. The emphasis on individual independence was established as an essential element of the Moderns. Therefore, the difference in the spirit of these two kinds of liberty draw attention to the fact that certain elements that were acceptable in ancient times are no longer accepted in modern times, or new elements enter in the modern understanding of liberty (Jennings in Berenson et al., 2011; Vincent, 2011: 194-196).

Nowadays challenges add many shades of opinions to the understanding of liberty and calls for need of rethinking what different actors mean by liberty in the multicultural and economically individualistic contemporary societies Moreover, recent demands for the recognition of the rights of religious and ethnic minorities—the right to difference—challenge the very principles of liberty embraced by the secular state.

Egalité

Depending on the context it is used in, political, economic, social or legal, the concept of equality (= *egalité,* I am using the English and French terms interchangeably) gains different meanings. It could be associated with equality before the law, equality of wealth and income, equality of opportunity and so on. Understanding the use of equality in republican thinking and its original meaning, one needs to turn to the French Revolution of 1789.

While reflecting on the ancient regime and Revolution, some prominent French philosophers among them Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859) best known for his works *Democracy in America* (1840) and *The Old Regime and the Revolution* (1856), argued the driving motivation for the Revolution was the desire of equality rather than liberty: the French desired to replace 'privilege by equality' (de Dijn, 2008:80) and create a body of equal citizens under the set of laws common to all. However, the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen* of 1789 did not list equality as 'natural and imprescriptible rights of man' that were defined as liberty, property, security and the resistance of oppression.

Even though Article 6 of the Declaration stated that 'All citizens, being equal in the eyes of the law, are equally eligible to all dignities and to all public positions and occupations, according to their abilities, and without distinction except that of their virtues and talents' (Declaration of the Rights of Man), this equality meant equality of rights and equality before the law rather than economic and social equality. The economic equality was rejected as threatening liberty, in this manner, the rejection of economic equality established tensions between the demands of liberty and equality (Jennings in Berenson et al., 2011:103-105).

The principle of equality is hardly dissociable from other republican principles and it affects the way that this principle has been applied. In the republican discourse of the end of the nineteenth century equality started to be strongly associated with equal access to education. Because of the ties of education and the emerging doctrine of *laïcité*, its meaning started to be negotiated in connection with it (teaching 'morale laïque' in public education since 1880 – more in the the sub-chapter 1.2.1) (Stock-Morton, 1988, in Shakman-Hurd, 2007:57; Willaime in Jackson, 2007).

Moreover, the French philosopher Charles Renouvier (1815-1903) analysing the development of French thought suggested that 'perfect equality of conditions' could 'only be established by depriving citizens of their liberty' (Jennings in Berenson et al., 2011:107). Renouvier proposed to combine these two principles of equality and liberty by introducing a principle of fraternity in the French political narrative. The principle of fraternity had a goal to unite the citizens in such a way that they would remain as free as possible but also equals (Jennings in Berenson et al., 2011:108).

Three aspects nowadays challenge this negotiation of the meaning of equality of rights in relation to other republican principles: growing economic inequalities and the appearance of new inequalities in the form of social and educational exclusion concerning

minority ethnic and religious groups. Therefore, the contemporary republican discourse on equality of rights has to be understood in terms of the specific and particular situation of each individual and inequalities of treatment can only be justified in terms of the general interest (Jennings in Berenson et al., 2011:109).

Fraternité

The appearance of the principle of fraternity can also be traced to the French Revolution. It was mentioned in the supplementary articles of the Constitution of 1792, but this principle attracted little attention at that time. Later Constitutions and other relevant state documents also ignored mentioning the importance of fraternity. However, the principle reappeared in the new Constitution of 1848 as the third term of the republican motto.

According to Ambroise-Rendu, the 1848 Revolution conceptualized Fraternity in purely secular terms and put it as a face of the republican ideal. With introduction of the universal suffrage and spirit of revolution, the Republic started to be portrayed as 'a band of brothers' (Ambroise-Rendu in Berenson et al., 2011:113). In this manner gradually fraternity became undissociable from the principles or values of liberty and equality, because only free and equal people could be defined as brothers: 'Country, redefined by the French Revolution, it is the community of rights that develops between everyone a fraternity based on freedom and equality' (Pena-Ruiz, 2014).

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To summarize, the ideas of *liberté* and *egalité* could be seen as individualistic values emphasizing individual independence, whereas the idea of *fraternité* was established with an aim at maintaining the solidarity within the community. The evolution of these three elements, their objectives, and relations among them allow suggesting that an individual can not benefit from the values of *liberté* and *egalité* without respecting the idea of *fraternité*. What is more, being in the heart of the Revolution, being introduced the earliest and affecting the meaning of other two principles, the idea of *liberté* could be said to have been the leading principle in the Republican project that seems to be the most elaborated.

Even though *laïcité* officially gained its place only in the beginning of the XXth century (the law of 1905), it emerged from the philosophy of the Enlightenment (which emphasized individual rights) in opposition to the religion and power of the Catholic Church (Berenson et al., 2011). Moreover, this fourth principle was established with a goal to avoid communitarianism, thus, to maintain fraternity. The close relation between *laïcité, fraternité* and other Republican values could be summarized in such a way: '[…] how to make the *laïcité* the carrier of emancipation and *egalité* […] wherever living together implies fraternity? […] The freedom of conscience means the freedom to believe and not to believe. Alongside the believers we must never forget those compatriots who are atheists or agnostics and that they have the same rights' (EMPAN, 2013). Thus, gradually the principle of *laïcité* became interrelated with the previous triade of values and a significant element of the *Marianne*.

1.2. The Concept of *laïcité*

It is difficult to give a brief definition of *laïcité*. The first time the definition of *laïcité* appeared in 1883 when the French philosopher and politician Ferdinand Buisson (1841-1932) defined it as a situation where 'state remains neutral with respect to all religions, free from all clergymen', also, the 'equality before the law and freedom for all religions' should be promoted (Bauberot in Berenson et al, 2011). *A priori*, it tends to draw a line between the public life and the spiritual aspirations. But that is not that simple. In the context of Hexagon (France) and, one might say, in the majority of the European countries, secularism was a result of a slow social and political evolution that delinks the temporal from the spiritual (Robène, 2013). However, even having this definition the concept of *laïcité* could be seen as one of the most contested concepts in the French political landscape.

Various public figures – politicians, journalist or public intellectuals – speak of it as an historical object that emerged from ideological struggles during the wars of religion and French Revolution, became part of the social contract under the Third Republic, resulted in the law of separation of the state and church of 1905, and was enshrined in the Constitutions of 1946 and 1958. These repetitions of the different historical moments create the illusion that everyone knows what *laïcité* means and that this meaning has long been central to French Republicanism.

John Bowen in his book analysing the debates over the headscarf affair calls this lack of clearness and this illusion a 'misplaced concreteness' that actually makes the use of this term significant in the political debates (Bowen, 2007:32-33). *Laïcité* could refer to the freedom of conscience, the non-domination of any religion over state and society, and the principle of non-discrimination for religious reasons (Baubérot, 2010:57; Maclure & Taylor, 2011; Bowen, 2007).

In his study Bowen has also observed that when intellectuals and officials explain or justify policies in connection to *laïcité*, and speak of the problematic relation between religion and society in contemporary France, they often begin by explaining French history (Bowen, 2007). The way they justify certain application of the principle is presented as (in) consistent with French history. The researcher at Amsterdam University Yolande Jansen, in her book *Secularism, Assimilation and the Crisis of Multiculturalism: French Modernist Legacies* (2013) also argues that it is relevant to look at the multifaceted relationships between assimilation, religion and secularism in the context of France not from present-day discourses but also historically.

Having made this remark, I will briefly present the development of the narrative on *laïcité* in three historical periods proposed by Baubérot: 1789-1905, 1905-1989, 1989-2004 (or present) (Baubérot 2010). I will concentrate on the so-called ideological struggles (Kuru, 2007) and their influence on the development of the principle rather than focusing on the general French history.

1.3. Understanding *laïcité* in the historical context

The emergence of the principle of *laïcité* is often simply traced back to the Enlightenment and the French Revolution of 1789. In fact, philosopher, writer and a member of the Stasi Commission Henri Pena-Ruiz argues, that we should look for the origins of *laïcité* much further back. The Judeo-Christian tradition has always made the separation between the priests and the kings, God and Cesar, Pope and Emperor. Many medieval and modern times conflicts can be explained by the desire of the temporal power (Emperor, king) to dominate the spiritual power, or by the desire of the spiritual power to inspire the temporal: the investiture controversies between the Pope and the Emperor, conflicts of the French kings defending the liberties of the Galician Church against the claims of the Papacy. During the *ancien* regime in France, the sovereign was 'King by the grace of God',

however, the Revolution sought to submit the religious to politics rather than establish a true secularism: the Civil Constitution of the Clergy in 1791 and later the Concordat of 1801 turned the members of the clergy into civil servants (Pena-Ruiz, 1999, 2003).

The objective of the Revolution to submit the religious to politic, however, culminated in the law of the separation between the State and the Church: 'On December 9, 1905, *Marianne* separates from God.' (Pena-Ruiz, 1999):

> Not to make war, but to free itself from his guardianship and his control […] she [*laïcité*] offers equality to believers of different confessions, atheists and agnostics, and rise to the universal reserving itself for the common good for all […] *laïcité* was accomplished, simple and clear, as the Republican motto which implements the principles: freedom of conscience, equality of rights, fraternal universality of public affairs, now wrested in the general interest and not the particular interests of believers (translated by author, Pena-Ruiz, 1999)

In relation to what has been said in the previous section concerning the evolution of the Republican values, gradually *laïcité,* based on Pena-Ruiz's definition, became the Republican motto which encompasses other Republican principles: 'freedom of conscience, equality of rights, fraternal universality of public affairs'. This draws attention to the importance of further discussing the significant historical moments that led to the separation of Marianne from God, and the implementation of the law of 1905. This historical approach allows comprehending different understandings *laïcité* has embodied during the last two centuries, and why today *laïcité* is also presented as a principle of 'a fight against religious fanatism' (EMPAN, 2013)**.**

First period: 1789-1905

Based on the categories proposed by Baubérot, the first period of the evolution of French secularism contains years from 1789 till 1905 and reflect the conflict between two Frances: 'clerical' and 'anti-clerical'. The 'clerical' France represented the part of the French society that related to Christian baptism of the pagan chief Clovis in 496 and considered it a mythical foundation of the Christian France. Those who saw the ideal of the French Republic based on the modern values appearing after 1789 represented the other side of the conflict. This period characterized by seven different political regimes also reflected a conflict between the supporters of the monarchy and the republic, and the debates about the way that French national identity should be constructed (Baubérot in Cady &

Shakman-Hurd, 2010).

The founding of the Third Republic in 1871, and the passing of the legislative acts that limited the role of religion in public education in 1880 strengthened the political victory of the anticlerical movement. The role of education became to spread the 'morale laïque', the members of the religious congregations were forbidden from teaching in 1904, and the debate of the place of religion and secularism entered in the field of education (Stock-Morton, 1988, in Shakman-Hurd, 2007:57; Willaime in Jackson, 2007). The conflict between the clerical and anti-clerical movements reached its culmination in the French law of 1905 and introduction of the 'liberal *laïcité* (Bowen, 2007:26).

Second period: 1905-1989

The second period of secularization concerns the years 1905-1989 that Baubérot defines as the period of 'secular acts' and which 'refers to the progressive reconciliation of the two Frances, with various highs and lows, and with the conflict cantered in the field of education' (Baubérot 2010:59). The reconciliation of two Frances included the creation of the 'Sacred Union' during the First World War and an agreement between France and the Vatican in 1923-1924 about the place of Catholicism in the French Republic. The current regime of *laïcité* settled into place in late 1950s when it became a fundamental principle in the Constitutions of 1946 and 1958. However, some philosophers argue that it was not until the 1970s that *laïcité* became the general framework for French political thinking (Baubérot 2010:59-60).

Ahmet Kuru (2007; 2009) argues that French secular policies that are a product of the ideological struggles that took place between anticlerical and Catholic forces in the eighteenth century, during this period could be seen as taking place between the defenders of dominant combative secularism and those supporting the pluralistic secularism. Assertive or combative secularism (*laïcité de combat*) aims at excluding religion from the public domain, whereas the pluralistic secularism (*laïcité plurielle*) allows a certain level of the visibility of religion in the public sphere (Kuru, 2007; 2009). During this second period the Catholic Church and conservatives gradually reconstructed their attitudes toward *laïcité*: they ceased opposing secularism while still remaining critical of assertive secularism.

According to Kuru, the dominance of passive or assertive secularism results from the historical conditions and relations during a country's state-building period between secular and religious groups, as well as the character of the *ancien régime* (Kuru, 2007:583, 2009). When the *ancien régime* is based on the union between the monarchy and one hegemonic religion, then the antagonistic relations emerge between religious institutions and new republican regimes that result in assertive secularism (for instance, cases of France and Turkey). On the contrary, the lack of the *ancien régime* might lead to the consensus between secular and religious elites and result in the dominance of passive secularism (United States) (Kuru, 2009:14). Therefore, the dominant form of secularism depends on the presence or absence of the *ancien régime.*

During the course of two hundred years, in France assertive secularism was established more as a bottom-up process and as a result of the movement of the republican secularists against the Catholic Church (Kuru, 2007, 2009). In the eighteenth and nineteenth century the Catholic Church was seen as a hierarchical organization possessing big church properties and isolating itself from the society. In the nineteenth century, assertive secularism in France has coexisted with multiparty democracy and has gained substantial popularity (Kuru, 2007). The conflict between the republican secularists against the Catholic Church continued from the nineteenth century till the collapse of the Vichy regime during the Second World War (Kuru, 2007, 2009).

After the collapse of the Vichy regime (1944), the Church finally recognized that the restoration of the previous position of the church in the state is impossible (Kuru & Stepan, 2013). Since then in France the assertive secularists have so far dominated in the secular policies despite the resistance of passive secularists. The social use of the principle of *laïcité* shifted its attention from the pacification of relations between Catholicism and state. The place of *laïcité* in the construction of the French society started being concerned with such social issues as the nature of family, divorce, and homosexuality. The dominance of combative secularists also gained new shades in response to the rising Muslim population in the late 1980s (Kuru, 2007; Marcel Gauchet, 1998). These new issues rising since 1989 marked the beginning of the third period in the evolution of the principle of *laïcité*.

Third period: 1989-2004

The third period (1989-2004) is marked by debates surrounding Muslim cultural and religious minority in France, for instance, the so-called affair of Islamic headscarves, and the processes related to globalization such as fear of terrorist threat connected to Islam (especially after 9/11). Baubérot argues that the application of the principle of *laïcité* during this period tends to take some aspects of becoming a civil religion. Or actually, the tensions during this period especially over the headscarves in the classroom have led to the tearing of French secularism into two civil religions (Baubérot 2010:60-67). Robert Bellah, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Emile Durkheim had their visions of the 'civil religions' that must be shortly introduced.

In his famous book *Civil Religion in America* (1967) Robert Bellah suggested that since the creation of the state the Americans have interpreted their history in religious terms, and even today the American politicians often mention God in their speeches that reveals a profound religious spirit in American society. Bellah called this aspect an American civil religion that sacralises certain aspects of the civil life, provides a 'transcendent goal for the political process' and contributes to the unity and collective identity of Americans as a national community. In so doing, beliefs and behaviours, acquire a religious dimension (Cristi, 2001). French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau is known for coining this term of 'civil religion', however, his conception was rather different than that applied by Bellah to the American society.

While defining civil religion Jean-Jacques Rousseau spoke of a religion as something that is not attached to any specific religious beliefs or organized church, but rather of a political religion or as a secular ideology. In Rousseauan sense, civil religion is imposed by the state that proposes a set of civil-religious ideas that the citizens must follow. As such, it forces group's identity and legitimizes certain political order by also imposing a transcendental dimension Therefore, civil religion could be seen as a coercive political instrument proposed and controlled by the government, that has political and not religious objectives (Cristi, 2001).

In contrast, Durkheim theorized civil religion as a collection of beliefs appearing spontaneously rather than being imposed by the state. In a Durkheimian sense, civil religion is truly civil and belongs to civil society and not to the political authorities. Similar

to Rousseau, Durkheim agrees that this system of beliefs provides a group with a sense of unity and social cohesion. However, while not always followed by all sections that constitute society, it may also result in a social conflict and tensions. Certain groups could be favoured at the expense of others. Moreover, it becomes problematic when civil religion that reflects the values and beliefs of the society as a whole, starts being seeing as a national religion (Cristi, 2001).

The character of a civil religion is determined by the nature of the state and society; therefore, the civil religions vary accordingly to societies and times. For this reason, the notion of civil religion by Bellah that is so often used might not be so easily applicable in all the cases. This problematic understanding comes from the fact that civil religion can be conceptualized as a phenomenon manifesting in two forms: as a culture (the Durkheimian 'civil' approach) and as an ideology (the Rousseauan 'political' approach). These two forms should not be perceived as opposites but rather as parts of a continuum (Cristi, 2001).

The first attempts to introduce some sort of civil religion (in Rousseau's terms) in the French society could actually be traced to the French Revolution. After the French Revolution France sought to establish more or less secular and aggressive anti-Christian civil religion. The Jacobin regime and Robespierre attempted to replace Christianity with the Cult of the Supreme Being. Christian Churches were transformed into Temples of Reason that reflect the attempt to institutionalize the veneration of the goddess of reason. In short, the whole nation was forced to secularize, moreover, a series of rituals and ceremonies devoted to encourage worship of France and the goddess Reason were imposed upon the nation. These actions had a goal to maintain patriotism and encourage glorification of the nation. Since the Jacobin attempts to establish this kind of civil religion, the French state has occupied a central role in the definition and self-understanding of the French socio-cultural identity (Cristi, 2001:144).

In 2005 Nicolas Sarkozy published a book entitled *La Republique, les religions, et l'esperance* (Republic, Religions and Hope), in which he argued that the French should learn how to speak of religions in public, moreover, he critically assessed the law of 1905 stating that it was being inspired by socialists and it also could be perceived as anti-religious. This refered to the fact that the state ceased subsidizing the churches. These and other views concerning role of Christianity in the construction of Europe and France in particular found place in the Lateran discourse given by Sarkozy during his visit in Rome

in 2007. In Lateran Sarkozy supported Pope's vision that Europe can be without faith, because that would mean that Europe is without hope and maybe even without a future. Moreover, he turned to the past and emphasized the Catholic origins of France. Sarkozy reminded that since Clovis in the fifth century Christianity has contributed to the development of the French state, and that France played a significant role in Christianizing Europe (Royal, 2008; Tabard, 2007).

After hundred year of leading Europe to secularism, the Lateran discourse discussed the importance of the Church in the Republican project. As such, this discourse was perceived as Sarkozy's attempt to put an end to the conflict between the 'two France' steming since the Revolution, and thereby to resolve the tensions between the Republican projet and the Catholic Church. However, this shift in attitudes has also allowed criticizing Sarkozy as being under the American influence and encouraging in France the development of the American-type civil religion. On the other hand, according to Sarkozy recalling the Catholic origins of France should lead to what he calls *laicité positive* - a secular system that would be capable of equally reveiving the contributions or various spiritual traditons, of both the believers and non-believers in the context of France (Royal, 2008; Tabard, 2007). Necessity for this emerges because today *laicité* is often criticized for being applied in a too restrictive and narrow approach.

According to Baubérot, during this third period the French secularism has torn into two representations of civil religions: in 2004 following the law that prohibits from public schools any clothing that could indicate one's religious, and in 2007 after the Lateran discourse. The law of March 2004 could be seen as the creation of a representation of secularism as a 'French exception' – the so-called republican civil religion. This meant that the French abstract republican universalism was no longer enough for solving French problems in this century. The second representation of secularism arose after the discourse of Lateran given by Nicolas Sarkozy in Rome in 2007 that allowed associating French secularism with American-type civil religion (Baubérot in Cady & Shakman-Hurd, 2011). According to Baubérot, this distinction of the French secularism into two civil religions in 2004 and in 2007 appeared because 'civil society becomes aware of the "diversity" of French society, while maintaining a certain mistrust toward religion's possible political dimension.'(Baubérot in Cady & Shakman-Hurd, 2011:67).

International Relations scholar Elizabeth Shakman-Hurd has distinguished two trajectories of secularism: laicism and Judeo-Christian secularism that manage the

relationships between religion and politics and are influential in international relations (Shakman-Hurd, 2007). Each of these forms defends some form of the separation of church and state but in different ways, different justifications and different political effects. 'Laicism' refers to a narrative in which religion is separated from politics, whereas Judeo-Christian secularism considers the Judeo-Christian tradition as an element of secular democracy. Laicism seeks to create a neutral public sphere, and regards the mixing of religion and politics as irrational and dangerous. Secularization is essential for the process of democratization. On the other hand, the Judeo-Christian tradition of secularism emphasizes the role of Christianity as the basis for secular public order, and does not attempt to remove religion from public life. For this tradition, the clear divide between the religious and the secular is not as essentialized as in laicism.

The two definitions of the two types - laicism and Judeo-Christian secularisms - allow associating the French secularism of 1905 with the first type. However, nowadays the law of 1905 is being used as a closed concept: the rejection of any religious expression in French society. Responding to that, former president Nicolas Sarkozy, in his Latran discourse during his visit in Rome in 2007, called for the necessity of looser interpretation of the 1905 law and spoke of 'positive *laïcité*'. He also emphasized the importance of all the religions in the society and especially accentuated the Christian roots of France thus approaching the second type of Judeo-Christian secularism (Ghosh, 2013:52; Willaime, 2009; Baubérot, 2009).

While introducing these two trajectories of secularism Shakman-Hurd has also traced connections between French national identity and laicism, as well as connection between American national identity and Judeo-Christian secularism nowadays. She argues that the (negative) historical representations of Islam affected the trajectory of secularism of each nation and have contributed to the consolidation of French national identity as democratic and laique, and American national identity as democratic and Judeo-Christian secular (Shakman-Hurd, 2007). Shakman-Hurd suggests that Islam represents the 'non-secular', anti-modern and anti-Christian in European and American political discourses. This approach to the politics of representation directs attention to the changing historical contexts, and evolving philosophical and political terms, through which secularist representations of Islam have developed over time (Shakman-Hurd, 2007).

The third period of the development of French secularization narrative since 1989 marked the convergence of the fears of the rise of Islam with fears of globalization, that

has also led to the rejection of what could be referred to as Anglo- Saxon communitarianism. This juncture of perceived internal and external threats, and the historical as well as emerging contemporary representations of Islam influenced the secular policies in France. Bowen's study on headscarves also could be seen as the way to combine anxieties over domestic and international threats at certain time to produce a set of opportunities for politicians (because of the 'misplaced concreteness'). According to Bowen, at three such moments, in 1989, 1993–1994, and 2003–2004, the headscarf became a convenient symbol of external and internal dangers to France.

The law of 2004 prohibiting from public schools any clothing that could indicate one's religious many as, although termed in religion-neutral way, understood affiliation, directed against Muslims. The report of Stasi Commission that was created to present a position upon this issue in media coverage was portrayed as the threat of Islamic radicalism to French secularism, as a trend toward communalism, and the oppression of women in the poor suburbs. Therefore, a vote against headscarves would support the wish to reintroduce the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity (Bowen, 2007).

The different approaches to *laïcité* represented by so-called combative and passive secularists pertain. Some prominent combative secularists worth particular mentioning are Regis Debray, the socialist thinker and activist, and Henri-Pena-Ruiz, a philosopher of secularism. Both emphasize the need of a neutral public sphere free from all religious symbols and discourses (Kuru, 2007). Even though aware that secularism is based on a plurality of principles, Pena-Ruiz claims that secularism is a monolithic principle and that the separation of combative and pluralistic secularisms is meaningless. He avoids the possibility that the principles of secularism may enter into conflict with one another when secularism is applied correctly. But the sensitive dilemmas in the secular state of applying secularism correctly are complicated by the 'structural reality' (Maclure & Taylor, 2011:25).

However, the defenders of pluralistic secularists criticize this claim about secularism as a monolithic principle: thinking of secularism as monolithic makes it seem closed to change. Pluralistic secularists propose a more open and new understanding of the principle of secularism. The appearance of the new social issues in French society also allows passive secularists to challenge the dominance of the assertive secularists: based on different cultural environment the passive secularists suggest the need to liberalize secularism in France with a new emphasis on individualism and multiculturalism. Such

intellectuals represent the pluralistic secularism in France as Jean Baubérot, historian of French secularism, and Jean-Paul Willaime, a sociologist of religion and secularism (Kuru, 2007, 2009; Cady & Shakman-Hurd, 2011; Willaime, 2009; Baubérot, 2009).

For Baubérot, in France secularism should be reconsidered in such a way that it would open to changes and diverse interpretations. He suggests that secularism should be understood as a collective value that is based on mutual compromises (Baubérot in Berenson et al., 2011; Baubérot, 2009; Willaime, 2009). Similarly Jean-Paul Willaime considers the dominant French combative type of secularism as being too dogmatic, and even for becoming a religion itself. Therefore, Willaime suggests 'la laicisation de la *laïcité'* – secularize secularism by removing its dogmas. The French state should become more neutral and secular if it was to abandon its dominance over civil society and recognized the input of various religious groups to public life.

What is more, according to Willaime, today's civil religion of France incorporates aspects of the two Frances. And it is not by accident that this reconciliation occurs precisely at the time when France became multicultural society (Baubérot, 2009; Willaime, 2009). Hence, it seems that France today finds itself facing the same problem as many other democratic societies: how to reconcile respect for freedom of conscience with the presence of large segments of the population with very different attitudes toward secularization (Baubérot in Berenson et al., 2011; Kuru, 2007). Passive secularists want to liberalize secularism in France with a new emphasis on individualism and multiculturalism.

Yolande Jansen in her reflections on the deepening crisis of multiculturalism critically evaluates multiculturalism's contemporary alternatives in terms of secularism, assimilation and (civic) integration, while also tracing the interconnections between these in the context of France. Jansen's study suggests that the presentday discourses in French politics, particularly those advancing *laïcité*, assimilation or integration as their vital concept, in many ways depend on the modernist conceptual dichotomies inherited from the nineteenth century. This could lead to insufficiently democratic concepts and practices of citizenship in present-day societies, and therefore Jansen considers the 'paradoxes of assimilation' experienced by the French Jews in the end of the nineteenth century by analysing Marcel Proust's novel *In Search of Lost Time*. 'Paradox of assimilation' refers to pressures to assimilate that could result in forms of exclusion because of not being assimilated enough (Jansen, 2013).

Moreover, by tracing these interconnections between multiculturalism, secularism, assimilation and (civic) integration, Jansen argues that the questions that used to be put in terms of tensions between multiculturalism and assimilation, in France nowadays are being reframed in terms of dilemmas between secularism and religion. In her research Jansen also demonstrates how in French public debates *laïcité* is often used in opposition to communitarianism. Communitarianism in its broad sense of recognition of ethnic and religious boundaries in practices of citizenship could be seen as a synonym for multiculturalism. In this sense it is easy to trace the link between *laïcité* and (anti) multiculturalism (Jansen, 2013).

1.4. Understanding French secularism today

According to Talal Asad, today religion continues to affect politics in France – 'partly as parody (the "sacred'' foundation of the secular Republic) and partly as civilization (''Judeo-Christian'' values in the education of secular citizens)' (Asad 2006:525). Asad suggests that today's secular French state is following the principle of *cuius regio eius religio* ('Whose realm, his religion'), even though it denies any religious allegiance. Also, *laïcité* does not guarantee a total separation between religion and politics, and religion reflects the endeavours of the 'state apparatuses to encourage subjects to make and recognize themselves through appropriate signs as properly secularized citizens who ''know that they belong to France'' (Asad 2006: 525). Therefore, *laïcité* could be seen as functioning as any other modern form of political rule that has an aim at creating certain kinds of secular subjects. This secular subject engages in the so-called 'game of symbols' to show his loyalty to the state.

Moreover, in trying to understand French secularism Asad explores Islam's place in the construction of French society, and suggests that Islam is 'integral to the secular project attached to the Republic' which is held to be incompatible with an 'Islamic subject' (Asad in de Vries & Sullivan, 2006:510). Likewise, in his book *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (2003), Asad looks at how Europeans understand themselves as Europeans to answer the question whether Europe is actually capable of accommodating a culturally and religiously diverse population. Describing Europe('s history) as characterized by violence, Asad moves on to the narrative that Europeans draw.

In this narrative, Europe is depicted as having a certain essence, suggesting a European 'civilization,' which Muslims are not a part of: 'Europe (and the nation-states of which it is constituted) is ideologically constructed in such a way that Muslim immigrants cannot be satisfactorily represented in it.' (Asad, 2003:159). This leads to a distinction between 'us' and 'them.' Especially the notion of religious minorities has the effect that some people are singled out as not being part of the mainstream in which (in a democracy) every person is equal and has the same rights. To mark someone as not being equal but part of a specific minority is the result of power relations (Asad, 2003).

Looking from the multicultural perspective, the assimilationist policy seems to be politically unstable and could become politically paradoxical. Therefore, Jansen argues, it is useful to remember the paradoxes of assimilation (Jews): the discourses about equal citizenship have also contributed to the history of exclusion and marginalisation of minorities as well as racist doctrines, for instance. Similarly, the politics of multiculturalism that attempt to establish equality between majority and minority groups within the society, could turn to a policy and public discourse with rather paradoxical and undesirable outcomes. Jansen proposes to implement a more dynamic and critical multiculturalism as an alternative to integration, assimilation and secularist policies. However, all these political paradoxes are useful as they may provide with better understanding of the religious minorities, especially Muslims, in contemporary France in the context of debates about secularism, assimilation, integration and multiculturalism (Jansen, 2013)

The crucial element that French secularism shares with a more general European thread of understanding 'the secular' is the idea of 'interiorization of religion'. However, Jansen suggests that it is relevant to make a distinction between religion's interiorization, that refers to the 'relegation of religious belief to the interior of the self' (Jansen 2010: 72), and its privatization: 'Religious privacy does not necessarily imply the rejection of religious practice or an interpretation of religion in terms of interiority' (Jansen 2010: 72). Privacy is rather a political-legal concept and the process of privatization implies giving up any direct political power. Interiorization refers to a psychological or metaphysical state, and proposes a specific interpretation of the relation between religious practices and the inner self, and means the rejection of religious practices and focus on the inner self (Jansen 2010).

According to Jansen, the reason why the debates over the headscarf in schools gained so much public attention was not their visibility in the public, but the perceived threat of what might lie behind: 'and if these claims are hidden behind the scarf, then its public relevance, ironically, is a symbol of something "private," not in the sense of "apolitical," but in the sense of "secret," or "interior" (Jansen 2010: 78). Therefore, the 'interiorization of religion' refers to the idea that religious practices can be separated from their meanings, and so religious practices could actually mean something else than the practitioners understand the meanings themselves.

Asad also explored the link between representation, knowledge and religion, and claimed that certain understandings of religion and politics are imposed upon the citizens by the sovereign state. These representations create (knowledge about) particular collective subjects, for example, the headscarf affair could be interpreted as 'the will to make appear an Islamist identity'. Asad argues that in this manner the French state is involved in 'the business of uncovering dangerous hidden meanings' (Asad 2006: 524; Jansen 2010). According to Asad, operating as an absolute power the French state defines the threats that menace the order, unity and security of the State. In the context of the headscarf debate, acting out of this fear the state has defined religious symbols as threats to French public order and the founding values of *laïcité*—Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity —from outside (Asad 2006: 510).

The defenders of *laïcité* see these debates as part of the French state's attempts to articulate national unity and recognize a group identity within a Republic which is represented as a 'collection of secular citizens with equal rights, inhabiting a level public sphere' (Asad in de Vries & Sullivan, 2006:505). While articulating this national unity, state and secularism encourages the attachment of citizens to the larger 'community of affections': 'that collection of images, values, dreams, and wills that sustain the Republic.' (Asad 2006: 505). Of course, the differences might be recognized so long as they do not threaten the unity of society; however, the religious liberty must be subject to the demands of public order.

One of the aspects making understanding of French secularism more problematic is the definition of the term 'public'. According to Maclure & Taylor, it is too often forgotten that the 2004 law that prohibited the wearing of religious symbols in the public schools was justified in the name of public order and *not in the name of secularism:* 'Today the question is no longer freedom of conscience but public order.' (Stasi report in Maclure &

Taylor, 2011:33). The term 'public', while used in French, could express three different meanings. In the first sense, it could refer to the institutions and actors that are part of the state and therefore 'public'. In the second sense, that is all that is out in shared social space. And finally, anything that is of general interest and of public interest (Bowen, 2007, 2010).

Trying to make it clearer, in 2011 the High Council for Integration (le Haut Conseil a l'Integration) proposed a distinction between the public and the private spheres by defining three types of space. (1) In the 'public space' the principles of *laïcité* are applied rigorously and the neutrality primarily concerns the agents of the public service. (2) 'Civil space' refers to the space that contains the public domain of circulation and the private enterprises open to the public, and the shared space regarding where the public liberties are fully practiced but with respect to the liberties of the others and public order. (3) The 'intimate space' which concerns home and places of worship or any other philosophical expression. But even these three dimensions contain ambiguities, as something could be public in one sense but not in the other. Thereby, some uses of the term 'public' in speeches leave unclear which meanings are involved (Bowen, 2007, 2010).

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To conclude, in this chapter I have analysed how the notion of *laïcité* has developed and changed during the last two centuries. This historical-developmental approach was necessary in order to gain an understanding of to what extent and how the international context (re)defines national identity based on the four republican principles (*liberté, egalité, fraternité, laïcité*) and how this fundamental republican principle of *laïcité* adapts to varying socio-cultural landscapes. It is evident that today's French socio-political landscape is very different from the context of the nineteenth century or of the first part of the twentieth century France. While in the nineteenth century the idea of *laïcité* was being constructed to manage relations between clericals and anti-clericals, and to reduce the influence of the Catholic Church in state affairs, today *laïcité* is being examined in terms of citizenship and diversity, respect of others and differences.

Besides analysing the changing notion of *laïcité* and its current perception, in this study I also attempt to investigate the link between this principle and French culinary culture in the construction of French cultural (national) identity nowadays. In order to do that, in the second chapter I examine the importance of the French food culture in

constructing French cultural identity, and how it reinforces the sense of belonging to the same social whole, the *République.* Similarly as I did with the analysis of *laïcité* I will examine the construction of French culinary culture by applying historical-developmental approach. This theoretical framework exploring *cuisine* as a marker of cultural identity constructed historically will allow me to explore how France is capable of accommodating a culturally and religiously diverse population through the changes in its food culture, and how food culture changes due to various processes such as migration and globalization. Finally, in the third chapter I will investigate the relation between these two cultural markers – *laïcité* and culinary culture – in the construction of today's French secular citizen by using various concepts from this first chapter on French Secularist-Republican project.

Based on the Jansen's considered 'paradoxes of assimilation' experienced by the French Jews in the end of the nineteenth century, in my research I will focus particularly on Islam's place in today's French society. I intend to analyse whether allowing/rejecting certain food demands of Muslim religious group in France represents the pressure to assimilate and how this pressure is put in terms of French culinary culture and *laïcité.* Moreover, as the analysis of the Republican motto has shown all Republican principles originated in times of confrontation and in search of compromise. Therefore, it is curious to see in what ways the current debates over food demands challenge the current perception of *laïcité.* Furthermore, I wish to investigate if the second representation of civil religion – American-type civil religion in Bellah's terms or Judeo-Christian tradition of secularism by Shakman-Hurd, - that is said to have emerged in France in 2007 reflects in the debates about food having religious symbolism appearing in the secular public sphere. This would allow me to evaluate the significance of the Christian heritage in the construction of the present-day French society.

All things considered, these various components regarding politics of secularism and cultural heritage are destined to analyse political dimension of 'selfing' and 'othering', and the relations between immigrant (Muslim) populations and the broader French population.

Chapter 2. Food and Culture

In the first section 'Food, Identity, Globalization' I focus on food systems as cultural constructions and explore the relationships between food and construction of individual and collective identities, religious and ethnic aspects of foodways, and the impact of migration on changes in food cultures. As my main emphasis for the case study is on the change and continuity in French foodways, in this chapter I discuss the motives why and how certain changes in foodways might be accepted and others might be rejected. The force for change is presented as emerging from the tensions between globalizing and localizing forces in the contemporary politics of food. Later in the second section, I discuss the link between the development of the French culinary culture and the construction of the French national identity.

2.1. Food, Identity, Globalization

According to anthropologist Arjun Appadurai, food could be defined as 'highly condensed social fact' and a 'marvellously plastic kind of collective representation' with the 'capacity to mobilize strong emotions' (Appadurai, 1981:494 in Bell & Valentine, 2013; Appadurai, 1981:494). Based on this definition, food should be understood as a particularly powerful semiotic device that shows who we are and where we come from. Indeed, food serves as a grammar that sets certain rules, which the individuals within the society unconsciously accept and follow. Hence, due to different food grammars and food rules, food could either serve as an element maintaining and reinforcing solidarity within the community, or setting different groups apart by demarcating cultural boundaries between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' (Oyangen, 2009; Phillips, 2013; Phillips, 2006; Roncaglia, 2013).

2.1.1. Foodways

I shall introduce the term 'foodways' which I use throughout my research. There is no one unique definition of the term, but what unites the all proposed characterizations of the term by different scholars is what foodway describe the intersection between *cuisine*, culture and politics. Foodways define attitudes, rituals and practices around food (eating habits of

how people prepare and consume food) thus reflecting connection of food with culture, tradition and history in a given (local) environment at a certain historical moment. As consumption of food is socially constructed, foodways explain what impact food has on culture and politics (Lawrance & de la Pena, 2013).

Foodways can only be understood looking from the holistic perspective while taking into account every feature of human life (Anderson, 2014:7). Society is constituted of individuals who interact with each other in order to satisfy their needs. The results of these interactions could be defined by a term 'culture' that refers to costumes, beliefs, knowledge, rules of behaviour, and other. This understanding of society as interaction stems from Kantian times. Bourdieu (1977, 1990) defined a theory of culture as practice. Anderson links both perspectives and sees 'both economics and ideas as growing out of practice—out of interactions that are repeated and repeated until people develop from these interactions the generalizations that we know as "foodways" or, more broadly, as "knowledge" and "culture." (Anderson, 2014:5). Religion, class, gender, and other abstract symbolic systems structure these practices; therefore, communities have very complex and different foodways.

Food models and foodways vary according to times and societies but what unites them all is that each food model is 'a system of symbolic codes' that bear collective values 'involved in the construction of cultural identities' (Poulain, 2002, in Mathé, Tavoularis, Pilorin, 2009:9). Belonging to the same foodway allows members of the group to develop a deep cultural connection and a common cultural identity rooted in their collective memory. By establishing a continuity with a suitable historical past and instituting certain cultural values and norms of behaviour that are constantly repeated, food and foodways serve as an 'invented tradition' that evokes group's cultural identity and supports it (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 2012). Every time preparing and consuming food that embodies certain meaning, individuals perform an act that reinforces this tradition. This unconscious reproduction of tradition could even pass as a conscious performance of identity (Oyangen, 2009).

Foodways with their food taboos could provide the members of a certain group with a symbolic system and articulate the feeling of solidarity within the group. However, food could also serve as a separation mechanism by articulating sameness and otherness, expressing inclusion and exclusion (DeSoucey, 2010; Oyangen, 2009; Phillips, 2006; Phillips, 2013; Roncaglia, 2013). More should be explained about this 'othering' and separation function. Culturally and religiously oriented foodways can powerfully reinforce

religious or ethnic boundaries, and thereby provide with a 'comprehensible basis for connection or distance' (Phillips, 2013:73). I shall discuss the role of food in identity formation.

2.1.2. Food and identity, 'selfing' and 'othering'

In his book *Cooking, Cuisine and Class* (1982) Jack Goody, and later Sidney Mintz in his work *Sweetness and Power* (1985) laid grounds for the analysis of food-related issues from the historical perspective. They used comparative history as their framework for sociological and cultural analysis to explain the differences within the societies and how the material conditions and symbolic representations changed over time, for instance, Mintz explored the way that from being a luxury good sugar became a basic commodity (Albala, 2013:4). Therefore, in the beginning being concerned with looking in the societies from functionalist, later from structuralist perspectives, today's food anthropologists became more attentive to history and identity that became a dominant theme (Albala, 2013).

Due to its social and symbolic powers food practices are quite a sensitive subject. The reason for this sensibility is the way that food is consumed – by taking into the body. As food is one of the richest sources of symbols that embody associations with nation, ethnicity, family, religion and cultural 'others' (Douglas, 1975, in Anderson, 2014), consuming culturally unfamiliar food products of accepting eating habits makes it a very intimate act. Allowing food into the body 'potentially involves an anxious encounter between self and world, or the known and the unknown' (Oyangen, 2009:323). In many cases food can play a significant role in identity formation, hence the analysis of food practices and eating habits is relevant as it could provide us with an understanding of how food is used to construct 'other' and to internalize it.

Georg Simmel in his essay 'Sociology of the Meal' discusses this effect of food as a result of being a subject to cultural manipulations. In the essay Georg Simmel analyses the sociological structure of meal and the individual and collective levels of eating. Simmel defines food as a uniquely individualistic activity because it cannot be re-consumed by other individuals. However, the shared meal can elevate the process of eating to the sphere of social interaction. This individualistic/collectivist aspect of eating Simmel defines as

'selfishness of eating with a frequency of being together, with a habit of being gathered together' (Simmel, Frisby & Featherstone, 1997:130). Hence, this habit of being together emerges as a necessity to oblige to masses and social regulations, and makes food subject to cultural manipulations (Simmel, Frisby & Featherstone, 1997).

This idea is supported by the studies of Arjun Appadurai on Indian food culture, cookbooks in contemporary India and gastro-politics in Hindu South Asia. The studies have revealed that food transactions could send a message either of homogeneity (in a form of equality, intimacy, solidarity) or heterogeneity (in a form of rank, distance, segmentation). Food 'transactions are built around the contrasts between host and guest, giver and receiver, insider and outsider' and they hold certain social logics that can 'regulate rank, reify roles, and signify privileges' (Appadurai, 1981:508).

The role of food in drawing boundaries between in-group and out-group becomes even more sensitive in complex societies where individuals are from different backgrounds and therefore consume different foods because of economic, political or ideological reasons. It is especially complicated, as all members of the society do not follow the culinary rules. Consequently, in culturally heterogeneous communities emerging different food systems could play an important role in structuring society and maintaining certain social relations. In his study of food in complex society, Gumerman also stresses the role of food in expressing social relationships (Gumerman, 1997). Speaking of the way that food provides the sense of solidarity or separation, it is relevant to glance at the religious aspects of food and eating.

In relation to Appadurai's definition that food has the 'capacity to mobilize strong emotions' and religion, the emotional activities such as religious rites involving food and other food taboos could affect the relationship between different religious groups. Pressure to consume food that symbolizes the 'other' in religious terms could be met with strong resistance. This resistance can strengthen group solidarity even more. One of the historical examples illustrating the role of food as a marker of a religious group was India's First War of Independence of 1857, otherwise known as the Sepoy Rebellion.

Several months before the Rebellion rumours spread that the cartridges of the Bengali Native Infantry (BNI) were wrapped in paper greased with cow and pig fat. As the cartridges had to be opened by mouth, by the Muslim and Hindu soldiers of the BNI it was interpreted as affecting the religious sensibilities and as an attack against Hindu and Muslim cultures. This triggered the soldiers' rebellion that turned into a national rebellion

and India's war of independence (Cozzi, 2010). This example illustrates that when foodways are related to religious traditions, a conflict over food traditions could be intensified in heterogeneous societies constituted of different faiths and ethnicities (Gumerman, 1997).

Speaking of food and the construction of national-cultural identity through food, Benedict Anderson explored how texts and writings contributed to nation-building and national identity in the nineteenth century. According to Anderson, through reading people get the sense of belonging to the same community or to the 'imagined community' (Anderson, 2006). Indeed, various studies have proven that culinary texts such as cookbooks, culinary journalism and other culinary writings have also contributed to the construction of the 'imaginary community' of members that share the same culinary values and food traditions (Anderson, 2013; Ferguson, 2003, 2010; Tarulevicz, 2013). They reaffirm food's effect on the development of national consciousness and the idea that culinary values and food traditions are quite significant in reinforcing national identity.

Nicole Tarulevicz's (2013) study about Singaporean culinary culture and its cookbooks shows that the cookbooks function not only as books with recipes and instructions on how to prepare certain foods, more, it serves as an instrument creating shared collective memory. Cookbooks and culinary culture 'do important ideological work, tethering identity to the nation' (Tarulevicz, 2013:92). The Singaporean cookbooks and descriptions of food provide 'citizens with an illusion of cultural connection that ultimately serves the government by endorsing a notion of racial harmony based on multiracialism' (Tarulevicz, 2013:92). Also, while fostering the national identity, the cookbooks provide the 'culinary conception of the other' (Tarulevicz, 2013:93).

Other examples could be the analysis of the role of cookbooks for the construction of Spanish national identity in the nineteenth century done by Lara Anderson (2013); and I elaborate more on the role of culinary writings for the French national identity in the following sub-chapter.

2.1.3. Changes in foodways due to globalization and migration

Food anthropologists Sidney W. Mintz and Christine Du Bois argued that there are two sources that influence the social changes on foodways: globalization and migration (Mintz

& Du Bois, 2002). Globalization complicates the understanding of how cultures adapt their local food to the global context and how new food habits shape local culture (Lawrance & de la Pena, 2013). Thus, this is an interesting point of analysing the junction of food and foodways from global and local viewpoints.

Many new terms carrying the prefix 'gastro-' emerge as a response to globalization, its homogenizing effects and challenges to identity. I would like to introduce some of these terms that will be also used in the research. Arjun Appadurai in his research on culinary culture in India proposed the concept 'gastro-politics'. The previously defined research of Appadurai shows how food in South Asia serves two opposed functions – homogenization or heterogenization - and the outcome depends on the actors, context and audience (Appadurai, 1981). By 'gatro-politics' he defines a conflict or a competition over particular cultural or economic resources as a result of the emerging social transactions around food (Appadurai, 1981).

The other relevant concept 'gastrodynamics' introduced by Rao in his article 'Conservatism and Change' was influenced by Appadurai's work (Rao, 1986, in Oyangen, 2009). By the term 'gastrodynamics' Rao refers to the changing dietary styles, food behaviour and conceptions of food. However, he emphasises that cultures in most cases would resist changes and even though food habits are far from being fixed, they are also far from being easily changed as well. It is the case because a group is unconscious of its culture and has internalized certain behaviour code with its values unconsciously; we internalize cultural traditions so that they become an inseparable part of our self-identity. Knut Oyangen (2009) has applied the concept of 'gastrodynamics' to his study on immigrant food and foodways to demonstrate the social, economic and cultural restraints that immigrants undergo during the so-called 'transplantation of culture' (Oyangen, 2009:323).

Whereas many scholars emphasize the way that immigrants experience cultural continuity in their lives, Oyangen (2009) argued that immigrants are forced to adapt to new circumstances. The research indeed revealed the tension between individual needs and cultural imperatives inherent in any food in an immigrant context. Immigrants engage in the process of place-making and creatively negotiate their gustatory identity thereby taking care of their gastronomical displacement. The process of negotiating their gustatory identity also allows them to define the relationships between self and other through food (Oyangen, 2009; Rahn, 2006).

In her analysis of the contemporary food policies in the EU, DeSoucey (2010) has developed one more concept that of 'gastro-nationalism' and she uses this concept to demonstrate how food politics relate to identity politics and thereby challenge the homogenizing forces of globalization. Gastro-nationalism suggests that certain food practices could be interpreted as an assault on a nation's cultural heritage and the state could intervene as an ideological agent in order to protect collective identity. State intervention means that food culture is included in the political agendas and could be used for nationalist projects. Therefore, the research reveals that food could be seen as an important aspect of cultural practices that demarcate national boundaries and defines identities (DeSoucey, 2010).

The globalizing homogenizing tendencies have resulted in the appearance of the new forms of identity politics and need to protect one's authenticity and culture: 'the result of the negotiations between globalism and locality is the creation or invention of cultural authenticity' (Berger & Huntington, 2002:49). Hence, we cannot discuss only the effects of globalization without at least shortly mentioning its counter-force localization.

2.1.4. Forces of localization: in search of authenticity

So-called 'purity' or 'authenticity' of food could be defined as a link between specific ingredients, techniques or recipes, particular time and place. It is a locally constructed idea or tradition that defines a certain configuration of cultural values for a certain group (Lu & Fine; Weiss, 2011). By doing that 'authenticity' constitutes a world of polarities (not binary oppositions, according to Weiss) such as 'in' and 'out', 'closed' and 'open', 'here' and 'there, 'before' and 'after' and so on, that contrasts the traditional and old with a foreign and new and so on (Weiss, 2011). Because of these polarities it might be not surprising that in times of globalization the category of 'authenticity' is occasionally criticized by cultural analysts who argue that it could be used as a discursive strategy seeking socio-political goals (Taylor, 1991 in Lu & Fine, 1995).

One of the recent examples when the homogenizing forces evoked the need to demonstrate group's cultural differences, was the decision taken in 2009 by the city councils of some Tuscan cities (Lucca, Siena, Milan) to ban ethnic and fast food restaurants from their city centres. Besides the arguments that this decision can convince the citizens of these cities and the tourists to choose healthier food, the right-wing councils

claim the need to protect local specialties, culinary identity and culinary heritage of Italy (Fort, 2010). France's far right party Front National (FN) used similar discourse during the electoral campaign of the local elections of March 2014. The candidates of FN accused kebab shops of 'cultural Islamisation' in France and used the metaphor of 'kebab' and the process of 'kebabisation' to draw attention to the Middle Eastern culture taking roots in France (Sage, 2014).

Localization is not the only response to the threat of globalizing homogenization. The other response could be when 'individuals and groups seek to annex the global into their own practices' (Appadurai, 1996:4) and that could be defined by the term 'glocalization' coined by Robertson (Robertson, 1995, in Hermans & Konopka, 2010). Glocalization refers to a process of appropriating foreign elements into local circumstances because of globalization. Jourdan's research (2010) on rice culture in the Solomon Islands draws attention to the culinary changes and analysis of how foreign items – rice were not grown in the Solomon Islands but imported - come to be considered as local. It put emphasis on food identities that speak of place and ideological concerns that accompany the process of localization (Jourdan, 2010).

Introduced 150 years ago rice was first conceived as an exotic food product, a sign that an individual eating it is rich and has access to the world. However, during the years rice became more accessible for busy urbanities as its price dropped, it was easy to cook and quiete filling. This glocalization of rice was also accelerated by major social transformations such as increasing urbanization, increasing levels of education and development of social classes. On the symbolic level eating rice represented a contact with Europeans who the Islanders saw as the representatives of Modernity. Hence, the Islanders sought to appropriate European lifestyle through appropriation of the food item. Moreover, by appropriating rice the Islanders also started reanalysing their cultural identity in relation to certain food products such as sweet potatoes or yams. Therefore, this example shows that when the symbolic and the economic conditions satisfy the locals, the previously foreign food product can be easily integrated in the local food repertoire alongside other local food items (Jourdan, 2010).

Speaking of the perception of 'authenticity' one should add on remark: members from the in-group could hold different standards for 'authentic' cuisine than the members of the out-group. For the in-group members the 'authentic' cuisine evokes cultural past and history. On the other hand, the members of the out-group perceive others' cuisine not

through the sensory memory but through the social memory. Hence, the authenticity of cuisine works on two different levels: on psychological for the in-group and on social for out-group. Therefore as mentioned before, food is a sensitive matter in complex societies where members do not follow the same culinary rules. Culinary rules corresponding to class, gender, religion, ethnicity, occupation analysed from the structural perspective could reveal that food often masks important variations among different groups within a society (Gumerman, 1997).

Summarizing what has been said before about the tensions between globalizing and localizing forces, the intersection of different culturally oriented foodways could be defined by three reactions: resistance, hybridism or appropriation (Roncaglia, 2013). These reactions could also be defined in terms of cuisine authenticity, hybridization or culinary acculturation. According to Roncaglia (2013), resistance refers to 'the refusal that may be expressed by restricting use of products and foods arriving from abroad, or identified as symbolising a culture extraneous to one's own' (Roncaglia, 2013:122). In case of hybridism, new culinary traditions emerge from the intersection of different cultural systems. Appropriation means the process when one foodway is capable of absorbing external influences and transforms them to something that becomes familiar and could be considered as part of the culture (Roncaglia, 2013). That could relate to the process of glocalization by Robertson (1995). Different scholars use different concepts to define these processes but the idea undermining them remains similar: reject, accept, or transform the incoming eating patterns.

2.2. Construction of French Cultural Identity through its Culinary Culture

Following the previous sub-chapter about the 'invention' of food cultures and their functions, in this sub-chapter I focus on one of them – the French food model. In this part of the research I discuss the development of the French modern culinary culture since the French Revolution of 1789 until nowadays, and examine how it contributed to the construction of French cultural identity. The understanding of the construction of French cultural identity through food will explain the reasons why food is taken so seriously in

this country and some scholars even apply the concept of 'culinary nationalism' and emphasize the 'culinary consciousness' while speaking of French culinary culture.

Moreover, the historical approach to the development of the French food model will demonstrate how the French culinary culture has transformed in the last two centuries. Overall, these aspects will allow making a clearer picture of what does 'authenticity' mean in French national *cuisine* and how historically French cultural identity represented by its food culture has accommodated changes. This question is particularly relevant for the case study where I analyse how the contemporary French culinary practices are being challenged by immigration and traditional practices related to food brought by immigrant groups. Additionally, new religious dietary requirements are entering the French public domain and that brings into discussion the relation between the principle of *laïcité* and religious freedom, and challenges the understanding of the secular public sphere in France.

2.2.1. Construction of the modern and secular French culinary culture

The well-known famous proverb 'Tell me what you eat and I will tell you what you are' was actually introduced by the French. It was proclaimed by Jean Brillat-Savarin (1755-1826) who gained fame for elevating gastronomy to the level of science and justifying what he called 'social gourmandise' due to its exceptional social utility. Together with other first internationally renowned French chefs and gastronomes such as Grimod de la Reynière and Carême, the writings of Brillat-Savarin contributed to the conversion of gastronomy from only being seen as a practice and a technique to a topic of discussions and analysis. He also proposed a model for sociology of taste, began discussions of the 'pleasure of the table', researched the correlations between the social and culinary attributes of taste, and thereby joined the more general discourses on class distinctions (Ferguson, 1998:616-618). Since then in France the cultural rather than the material product becomes of primary concern.

The contemporary French food model is based on three socially and taste-based criterions such as the primacy of taste, social practice of conviviality and rules conditioning food intake (Mathé et al., 2011; Mathé, Tavoularis, Pilorin, 2009). As the French food model could be seen as an institution whose norms are respected and followed by the majority of French society, these three principles and the emphasis on

food as a unifying and socializing element between people are widely diffused within society, transmitted through generations and thereby reinforces the importance of maintaining the specifics of the French food model (Mathé, Tavoularis, Pilorin, 2009).

These principles and rules became characteristics of the French culinary culture only after the French Revolution of 1789, which marked the changes between two types of French food models. According to the research of the *Research Centre for the Study and Observation of Living Conditions* (CREDOC), that analysed the continuity of the French food model and its gastronomy, the construction of the French food institutions could be divided into four historical stages: *Greco-Roman* (Antiquity), *Catholic* (Middle ages), *Centralization of Gastronomy* (Enlightenment) and *Liberation/Democratisation of Taste* (Modernity) (Mathé, Tavoularis, Pilorin, 2009:15). All four stages distinguish themselves by different characteristics and it would be appealing to describe all of them, however, this Thesis is concerned with the fourth stage - Liberation/Democratisation of Taste that define Modernity – and its differences from the earlier stage of the Centralization of Gastronomy existed during the period of Enlightenment.

The effects of the Revolution of 1789 on the development of French culinary culture could be explained in French anthropologist Louis Dumont's terms of modernity and growing sense of individualism (Dumont, 1986). Whereas the pre-revolutionary culinary culture is defined as belonging to the French elite, the emerging modern French cuisine became available to wider society and could be characterized as stimulating individualism. According to Ferguson, the 'modernization' of the *cuisine* self-reflected in self-conscious individuals: 'Haute *cuisine* shifted from private homes into public restaurants; the spectacle of the banquet was replaced by a more intimate encounter; the hierarchy of the banquet of the *ancien régime* was supplanted by a more egalitarian order; and the extravagance of banquets gave way to economy' (Ferguson, 1998, in Rao, Monin, Durand, 2003:799). In the times of the *Ancien Régime* chef depended on his patron, the emergence of a restaurant allowed them to declare independence (Clark, 1975:36; Spang, 2000).

In her book about the invention of the restaurant in France, Rebecca Spang explores the way that the invention of a restaurant reflects the social, cultural and demographic changes of nineteenth century Paris (Spang, 2000). The first restaurant in France was opened in 1766 by Mathurin Roze de Chantoiseau and its evolution from being a place to eat in the Eighteenth century to becoming a place of social interaction and enjoyable

leisure activity after the Revolution, contributed to the invention of the modern culture of food. According to Spang's research, the new way of eating in a restaurant is reflected by the rationalization of dining (fixed prices, written menu), personalized service and most importantly the autonomy of the dining experience and the depolitization of the eating process. Before the Revolution, dining at a restaurant could have been seen as a place for politically motivated meetings directed against *Ancien regime*, for democratic changes or gathering counter-revolutionary forces. In the nineteenth century a restaurant became a public place where people went to be private (Spang, 2000).

This search for private even reflected in the way of service. The new way of serving – from the tradition *à la française* (the banquet type service) to the service *à la russe* (each meal is served at its own time) – symbolized the beginning of the modern gastronomic culture. Spang even applies the concept of 'gastrotopia' or 'gastronomic utopia' to define the restaurant of this century because of the emphasis on search for privacy in a certain space (Spang, 2000). Also, this kind of depoliticized modern eating institution and autonomy of the eating process drew attention to the primacy of taste and contributed to the so-called 'liberation' or 'democratisation of taste' (Mathé, Tavoularis, Pilorin, 2009).

This 'liberation of taste', the shift from tradition to modernity and the phenomena of restaurants changed the attitudes toward the 'gastronomic pleasures' that used to be seen as sins. Whereas the pre-1789 French culinary tradition could still be defined as of Christian-Latin origin (Mathé, Tavoularis, Pilorin, 2009), besides marking entrance to the Modernity and Revolution also provoked the shift to the secular culinary tradition (Ferguson, 1998). What is more, by becoming available not only to the aristocracy but to all members of the society, the emerging culinary tradition also 'constructed a paradigm for the cultivation of a self-consciously national identity' (Ferguson, 1998:624).

Moreover, according to Jean-Pierre Poulain, French sociologist specializing in the history of the French culinary tradition, French gastronomy can be perceived as a key to the understanding of the French society. Moreover, knowledge of its history provide with awareness of how French cultural identity has been built since the French Revolution of 1789. One of the examples he proposes is to look at the names given to popular French dishes created after the Revolution. These names - *Bouchée à la Reine, Poularde Royale, Fruits Condé, Potage Conti* and others – refer to the gillotined or driven out of France members of the French royal family and French aristocrats. The bourgeousie that took

power had pleasure in eating dishes called in this manner as 'when a chef named a dish after one of these new power mongers, they raised and incorporated him into the aristocratic "pantheon".' (Poulain, in Goldstein & Merkle, 2005:164). The names 'metaphorically cannibalized aristocracy' (Poulain, in Goldstein & Merkle, 2005:164).

As this short summary based on various studies suggests, after the Revolution the French *cuisine* with its values and representations, certain principles and practices, became a tradition that started shaping French modern cultural identity and French society (Rao, Monin, Durand, 2003; Ferguson, 2010). This modern French society can be characterized by its secular tradition and individualism.

2.2.2. Development of the French 'culinary nationalism'

Ferguson applies the concept of 'field' by French social scientist Pierre Bourdieu to define the development of the French gastronomic field in nineteenth century France. The term 'field' defines the cultural domain of certain social practices and power relations that has a certain level of independence and operates according to its own set of rules. Being in a certain field, individuals perform certain actions sometimes not even knowing why but because of the right feeling to behave in a given field. Thereby, the field can regulate our behaviour and our actions. According to Ferguson (1998), the foundations for the development of the field were laid down by the gastronomic writings such as gastronomic journalism, cookbooks, essays, political philosophy and literary works.

The relation between gastronomic writings and development of the cultural domain of certain social practices could be linked to Benedict Anderson's (2006) ideas about the way that writings, 'print capitalism', contributed to the creation of the 'imaginary community' and sense of belonging to the same whole. Anderson (2006) suggests that writings in national languages reinforced the development of national consciousness and resulted in the rise of nationalism. Indeed, by arguing that French national cuisine's creation depended on language, Ferguson defines the French gastronomy of the nineteenth century as diffusing ideas of 'culinary nationalism' (Ferguson, 2003). It was the diffusion and circulation of the 'discourse alimentaire' that transformed the cuisine of the *Ancien regime* to the gastronomy of the nineteenth century (Ferguson, 1998; Clark, 1975).

In the times of *Grande cuisine* of the *Ancien regime* the chefs belonged to their patrons and had no need to diffuse their experience and knowledge to the public (Clark,

1975:39). In the case of France, culinary texts appeared at the crucial time of nation-building, and therefore not only contributed to the codification of the culinary system but also shaped the feeling about nationalism and national identity (Ferguson, 1998; Clark, 1975; Anderson, 2013). Culinary writings evoked so-called 'culinary consciousnesses' or 'conscience gastronomique' putting emphasis on the social dimension of eating process and developing a perception of gastronomy as a form of art. Once again, different discourse concerning 'pleasures of the table' arose (Mathé, Tavoularis, Pilorin, 2009; Ferguson, 1998, 2003, 2004, 2010).

Hence, I have briefly presented the transformation of the *Grande cuisine* of the *Ancien regime* to the gastronomy of the nineteenth century in France and how this shift marked the passage to modernity and secular culinary tradition. The other change that happened in the French culinary culture took place in the second half of the twentieth century and represented struggle between *cuisine classique* and the *nouvelle cuisine*.

1970-1997 marked the emergence of the *nouvelle cuisine*, a new approach to cooking and food preparation in French culinary culture. The emergence of the *nouvelle cuisine* reflected chefs' desire to break off with the classical culinary culture, *cuisine classique*, introduced by Auguste Escoffier (1846-1935) – a legendary French chef who popularized French traditional cuisine, - and expressed wish to adopt creative attitudes in cooking. Moreover, Rao et al. (2003) in their research of the reasons that determined the appearance of this 'nouvelle cuisine' and why elite chefs abandoned *cuisine classique* argued that it was a result of the identity movement that arose in opposition to the dominant cultural codes. This identity movement that aspired to cultural change and promoted new institutional logics were influenced by the events of May 1968 (Rao et al, 2003). There are few main elements characterizing this new cuisine.

This new cooking idea combined dual cooking heritage: the *haute cuisine* and the table manners of the elites, and the regional gastronomic cultures (Goldstein & Merkle, 2005:168). Poulain in his work with the intriguing title *The sociology of gastronomic decolonisation* he analyzed the food exchanges between East and West up to the end of the 1970s and the role of chefs. He suggests that the by 1970s the role of chefs was reduced to being simple interpreters of the *cuisine classique* of the 'golden age of nineteenth century gastronomy', and therefore, the *nouvelle cuisine* was needed for them to be creative again. Such local cuisines, called *cuisines de terroir*, became sources of inspiration and opened doors to the modern history of world gastronomy or in Poulain's terms, to the

decolonization of the *haute cuisine*. French *nouvelle cuisine* rediscovered its regional roots and this concept of the French gastronomy spread across the world in the 1980s (Rao et al., 2003; Poulain, in Nair-Venugopal, 2012).

According to Poulain, a conflict within French gastronomy emerged in the 1990s between the defenders of the local culinary identities and exotic new traditions coming from 'outside'. The latter valorised the great gastronomic tradition of France, and saw the need to defend the French culinary arts in the face of the aggressors especially from the American agro-industry. They blamed the second group that supported a more global cuisine, for betraying French culinary heritage. This group supporting the so-called 'world cuisine' was more open to *métissage*, and also argued that French cuisine as we see it was constructed through multiple influences (times of colonization etc.), and it adapted certain elements without losing its own French identity (Poulain, in Nair-Venugopal, 2012:226-227). This conflict should be put in the context of modernity, suggests Poulain, as the contemporary interest in the traditional cuisines reflect the nostalgia for 'a social space where the eater is supposed to live without anxiety, sheltered by a culinary culture that is clearly identified and identifiable.' (Poulain, in Nair-Venugopal, 2012:226-227).

2.2.3. Symbolic representations and contemporary challenges to the French culinary culture

Today's French socio-political landscape is very different from that of nineteenth or early twentieth century France. Nowadays French culinary culture is being challenged by the processes of globalization and homogenization, the accelerating pace of daily life, increasing popularity of fast food and the food practices of immigrants. The homogenization of taste seems to represent the inverse of French culinary values (Fantasia, 1995; Raulin, 1990).

As a response to these homogenizing influences and to ensure the protection of the country's gastronomic heritage, in 1989 the Ministry of Culture created the *Conseil National des Arts Culinaires* (National Council for the Culinary Arts). Some initiatives of the Council worth mentioning are the programme of 'Taste Education' for children and the 'inventory' of the culinary patrimony of the regions of France. From the point of view of the critics of globalization, the creation of such an institution mirrors the threat to French

'gastronomic sovereignty' and the collective struggle against the forces of globalization (Gordon & Meunier, 2001; Stabinsky & Brush, 1996; Fantasia, 1995).

The struggle for maintaining French 'gastronomic sovereignty' and efforts to defend the authenticity of French national products because of their relation to the French cultural identity could be presented in a story of the well-known French cheese Camembert. The research of the historical transformation of this cheese by Pierre Boisard (2003) shows how a simple food product has become a symbol of the Republic and French cultural identity. What is more, according to Boissard, its pasteurized version contradicts unpasteurized version illustrates the struggle between tradition and modernity in the creation of French culinary culture and French cultural identity.

Based on Camembert legend, it was born in time of the birth of the French Republic. Therefore, Boissard calls Camembert a 'national myth' that serves as a national landmark, an 'invented tradition', and shows the implications of food for social history and culture: 'Questions of our age can be found reflected in this cheese, and each of its misfortunes can be interpreted with reference to the nation's fate. As an avatar of the national sensibility, Camembert takes on the country's concerns and communicates them in its own language' (Boissard, 2003:224). As in the case of *foie gras*, the producers of Camembert are fighting to keep the tradition of producing this cheese alive and resist the pressures to standardize it in order to keep it a national landmark. Authenticity, a certain traditional way of producing a product, is important for France and every new cheese has to 'claim place in the cheese tradition' (Boissard, 2003:195).

As the previous examples show, globalization challenges the traditional way of making certain French products that are important in promoting their cultural identity. Analyzing the contemporary food politics in times of globalization, DeSoucey (2010) has constructed a metric of culinary self-consciousness that expresses responses to the homogenization of taste in so-called food-nations. This metric of culinary self-consciousness consists of three variables: existence of national food festivals, books about cuisine for foreign audiences and whether a country recently applied to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for the recognition of their culinary heritage.

In 2008 France applied to UNESCO to include its French cuisine to the UNESCO's World Heritage List as an intangible cultural heritage. During the lobbying campaign in 2008 the French President at that time Nicolas Sarkozy claimed that the French 'have the

best gastronomy in the world — at least from our point of view' (Jarboe, 2008). On 16th November 2010 UNESCO announced that the French culinary tradition satisfies all the criteria and can be included in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

As the main criteria for inscription in UNESCO's World Heritage List was mentioned the importance of the French gastronomic meal in the transmission of knowledge and identities: 'The gastronomic meal of the French plays an active social role within its community and is transmitted from generation to generation as part of its identity' (UNESCO, 2010). It proves that the French valorize their cuisine because of its socializing aspect and as an element strenghtening social tie within the society. However, it also proves that France feels the need to ensure the survival of its culinary tradition in the face of globalization and modernity.

The research of CREDOC (2012) about the *communautaire* alimentation concentrates on the impact of immigrant food habits for changes in French culinary culture: whether they are perceived as a threat and how that is framed. In recent years the number of the markets of halal or kosher food products and other so-called *communautaire* food markets has increased significantly in France. This draws attention to the important transformations in the demand and supply as well as the progression of public religious expressions (CREDOC, 2012).

Through the development of the *communautaire* food markets, the food practices attached to the religious communities appear in the public sphere. The research on the alimentary consumption in France demonstrates that through the consumption of halal or kosher food products – as concerns the Islamic and Judaist cultures of the population – serves as a way to express the need to reinforce and reaffirm their identity. Public expressions of identity issues witness the transformations concerning the public-private and individual-collective divide in contemporary times (CREDOC, 2012).

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The second sub-chapter entitled 'Construction of French cultural identity through its culinary culture' presented the major historical steps in the development of the famous French food model. To summarize these steps, the transformation of the *Grande cuisine* of

the *Ancien regime* to the gastronomy of nineteenth century France, invention of the restaurant, marked the social, cultural and demographic changes in the French society. These changes meant the depolitization of the eating process, the passage to modernity and secular culinary tradition. In the second half of the twentieth century the *nouvelle cuisine* emerged that reflected the chef's desire to break off with the classical culinary culture, *cuisine classique*. Further, since the Revolution, French cuisine with its values and symbolic representations became a tradition that shapes French modern cultural identity and structures society. Therefore, the knowledge of the historical context provides with awareness why food in France is taken so seriously and to what extent French cultural identity is being constructed through its culinary tradition.

In the following chapter dedicated to the case study I explore the way that contemporary cultural eating patterns take into account the past forms, and this relates to developmental perspective of looking at food issues. Further, the examination of what symbolic representations certain food products evoke for the French people during the long-term process of the development, enables examination of this issue from structuralist and also from functionalist perspectives. I use all these approaches in my case study presented in the following chapter in which, in relation to *laïcité,* I investigate in what ways the food habits and eating practices of the immigrants in France (1) challenge French (national) cultural identity constructed through its culinary culture and (2) contest the Secularist-Republican project, i.e. the understanding of the secular public sphere. More precisely, I examine how the contestation between the religious and the secular, public and private, and the politics of cultural heritage decisions unfolds the relations between immigrant (Muslim) populations and the broader French population in the context of changes and continuity of French culinary culture.

In the introduction and in the first chapter I argued that the principle of *laïcité,* which is close to the idea of fraternity in a sense that both were established with an aim to preserve solidarity within the French society, might structure the society in two ways. Firstly, today it might express the paradoxical wish of reintroducing some degree of holism into French highly individualistic society and secondly, it might result in maintaining the social hierarchy between the French and the immigrants. French anthropologist André Iteanu, who analysed the headscarf affair in France, considered the two conceptions of the value of *laïcité* and argued that imposing value of *laïcité* creates social hierarchies ('ideological twist'). Iteanu's research revealed that the principle of *laïcité* might be used

to mask the differentiation of individuals within the French society. This differentiation occurs because the immigrants who do not reject their religion publicly are not put on the same level with other members of the society. (Iteanu, 2013). Therefore, by pushing differences out of the public secular sphere and organizing French society while imposing certain secular order in its practice *laïcité* migth remind of a kind of hierarchisation mechanism.

While the ideal of *laïcité* seeks to create a society of equal and fraternal citizens by assigning their religious differences to the private domain, the second chapter on French culinary cultural and cultural identity has demonstrated that the French culinary heritage promoting one cultural idea is a strong fraternizing element as well. Besides, the studies have shown that the dietary regimes migh also function as hierarchisation or exclusion mechanisms. It happends because cultural groups internalize certain food behaviour code with its values unconsciously, cultural traditions become a significant element of group's identity and in most cases would resist changes. The immigrant foodways are forced to undergo certain social and cultural restraints during the period of transplantation of culture and are forced to adapt to new circumstances. Rao conceptualized this double process of forcing and negotiating gustatory identity within the two groups as 'gastrodynamics' (Oyangen, 2009). Therefore, in the following chapter I investigate the French cultural imperatives that force to negotiate the gustatory identity of immigrants in today's French society through the context of the principle of *laïcité* and current debates over religious food practices of ethno-religious minorities in France.

3. Case study: how to gather different ethno-religious groups at the same *Table de la République?*

Taking into consideration close links between French culinary culture and construction of the French cultural identity, in this chapter dedicated to the case study, I research several aspects. Firstly, I seek to analyse to what extent French nationals perceive that a French culinary culture exists and of what it consists. Moreover, I investigate the circumstances under which such a culinary culture could incorporate changes originating from other food cultures and why some within French society might resist this inclusion. In addition, given the context of the principle of *laïcité* and current debates about food practices of religious minorities in France, I seek to rethink the division between public secular and private religious spheres.

The research is based on analysis of documents and of relevant events in France as reported in French newspapers. It is also enriched by the data collected from the semi-structured interviews with 8 French youth (3 men and 5 women of the age group of 20-32 years) and fieldwork observations while doing my traineeship in Paris, France. I used the interviews to comprehend how French youth experience food and French culinary culture from their own perspectives. In order to have a more diverse view of the social-cultural context of France, the study has included individuals coming from different French regions such as Alsace, Auvergne, Île-de-France, Languedoc-Roussillon and Nord-Pas-de-Calais. Moreover, I interviewed the individuals of age group of 18-32 years or the so-called 'globalized generation'. This generation is characterized by higher appreciation for diversity and multiculturalism and a wider and more open worldview (Henseler, 2013). Therefore, I have chosen to compare this age group with the analysis of the press to evaluate what the actual difference is in attitudes towards foreign food practices between the youth and the politicians representing older generations.

All eight interviewees currently live in Paris. Two of them are pursuing their studies in Master's degrees while the other six have already completed their Bachelor or Master's degrees. They are working with international mobility programmes and youth projects, in internal communications with an association of non-formal education, as a pedagogical assistant, as a web designer, and two of them are giving French language courses for immigrant families in the Parisian region. Four interviewees did or are doing

their studies in educational sciences, two in communications, one in architecture, and one in history of art. All participants have travelled abroad or have even lived in a foreign country for some time while participating in student exchange programs. Seven interviewees come from urban families and one from rural family. The interviews took place mostly during lunch breaks in the parks or over diner in places chosen by the participants. Talking during these times of the day seem to have added psychological ease for the interviewees to express themselves as they all were extremely eager to communicate, curious and enthusiastic about the research topic, and felt free to discuss all kinds of topics.

Before the interviews the informants were given a short description of the research, introduced to the three main objectives and to the research question (annex 3). The questions corresponded to the three objectives set up in the beginning of the research and focused on the following three elements: (1) the perception of French culinary culture and culinary identity, authenticity and changes; (2) religious dietary practices of religious groups in France; (3) perception of the principle of *laïcité*. The transcripts of the interviews are included in annex 3. Below I present the findings of the research.

Firstly, I discuss to what extent French culinary heritage is being used as a cultural marker and as a tool of drawing boundaries between different cultural groups within French society today. Secondly, I consider secularism as a second cultural marker, and I discuss how this principle is challenged by new food practices with religious symbolism appearing in the secular public sphere. Finally, I analyse these debates in the context of school and also how it reflects in the political discourses.

3.1. French culinary culture as a cultural marker

In the second chapter food cultures were presented as historically and culturally developed constructions which could also be defined as 'invented tradition' holding together an 'imaginary community' through the reinforcement of a certain collective memory. I have also introduced and used the term 'foodways' to stress the connection between food and culture, and to demonstrate how various food items and foodways could be used as tools to reinforce solidarity within a group or as playing a role in drawing boundaries among different cultural groups. In order to comprehend to what extent the French culinary tradition functions at reinforcing a certain collective memory and sense of solidarity within

the French society, one of the final questions asked of interviewees was to try to summarize French culinary culture in three words.

The descriptions of the French culinary tradition involved nouns and adjectives such as 'grande-tablée' (this expression refers to a big number of people gathering at the table for a meal), sophisticated (mentioned 2 times), festive, socializing, diversified, 'wine', 'pleasure', 'take-your-time', complex (mentioned two times, and references to the French gastronomy as being complex in its variety), simple (in its construction), convivial, regional. The idea of conviviality, the pleasure of eating and social aspect of eating time that dominated the interviews could be well summarized by the term of 'bonne-chère' explained by one of the interviewees as:

> […] A term that appears very often […] that's a term that dates from Middle Ages and there is a French author who is really important, that's Francois Rabelais […] when you read the accounts of the adventures of Gargantua and Pantagruel you see that kind of love for a meal, and that's a huge meal […] The term 'Rabelaisir' [Rabelais + plaisir] and when you talk of something rabelaisir, you generally speak of something that concerns food and you speak of pleasure of eating well. (Interview, T, 12/06/2015)

It is interesting that almost none of the participants have mentioned precise food items (except for wine mentioned once) to define French food culture; they have rather chosen social aspects of the eating process as the essential characteristics. As it could be noticed, these answers meet the same criteria - the primacy of taste, social practice of conviviality and rules conditioning food intake, - that the French food model is based according to the research of CREDOC (Mathé et al., 2011; Mathé, Tavoularis, Pilorin, 2009). It proves that these principles and the emphasis on food as a unifying and socializing element between people are widely diffused within the French society, are transmitted through generations, and most importantly, are something shared by everyone.

Additionally, the studies presented in the second chapter have also shown that various food practices that could be perceived as opposed to traditional French culinary values are entering the public sphere. Several examples could be given to illustrate that the French perceive certain food practices as a threat to its cultural values expressed by its gastronomic heritage. Most of these actions concern pork meat, which is often presented as a traditional element of French *cuisine* and a forbidden food product for some Jewish and Muslim people.

The beginning of the tensions between the religious dietary practices of religious minorities with the French culinary traditions would seem to go back to 2004. In 2004 in one of the Paris neighbourhoods (Gare de l'Est) a right-wing association *Bloc Identitaire* started organizing charity events and activities in shelters for the homeless where they served 'Pig Soups' (*soupe au cochon* or otherwise called *Soupe Identitaire*). These 'Identity soup' events in homeless people's shelters spread across France and even to Belgium (BBC, 2006; Conseil d'Etat, 2007).

Spreading across France the 'Identity soup' events started worrying local authorities, especially after the events of the three-weeks long riots in October and November 2005 in Paris suburbs and other French cities. Due to the risk of disturbing public order, the local authorities in various cities prohibited these 'Identity soup' events. However, in Paris the soups were banned not on discriminatory but administrative grounds although the Strasbourg's mayor Fabienne Keller claimed that 'schemes with racial subtexts must be denounced'. This referred to the fact that the charity associations defended their decision to serve soups with pork as serving traditional French cuisine (BBC, 2006; Conseil d'Etat, 2007; ECHR, 2007).

The other event that attracted public attention as provoking a threat to public order was called the *Apéro saucisson-pinard* party that was planned to take place on the 18th of June 2010 in a heavily Muslim populated neighbourhood in Paris (Goutte-d'Or in the 18th arrondissement). The organizers defined the objective of the event as protesting against the encroachment of Islam and to spread traditional French values in this neighbourhood. This street party included eating pork sausages and drinking wine. To have a more powerful effect the organizers chose Friday for this event. Friday is the day when Muslims pray on the streets because of the lack of the mosques in the neighbourhood. The local authorities deemed the planned activity as a provocation that could result in riots. As a response to this ban, another demonstration protesting the prohibition of the party was organized in the new venue at the Arc de Triomphe. It was estimated that 600 to 800 people gathered on the Champs Elysees to eat pork sausages and drink wine during what organizers called a 'giant cocktail party' (Reuters, 2010).

Since March 2009 massive drinking parties or Giant Cocktail Parties (*Apéro géant*) gathered large numbers of youth to drink and party in the city and became a social practice in France (l'Express, 2010; Hugues, 2010; Pascual, 2010). According to many sociologists analysing this phenomenon, the main reason of the success is French youth, who are

generally characterized as being very individualistic and searching for sense of belonging. Moreover, the results of FONDAPOL revealed that these gatherings (as well as popular *les repas de quartier* or *les fêtes de voisins*) symbolize *l'individualisme solidaire* and reveals the necessity of 'being together in a postmodern society sick of its individuality'. Therefore, the 'Pork and Wine Parties' became a special form of the *Apéro géant* gathering French nationals mainly against Muslim communities (INJEP, 2010).

Moreover, the *apéro géant* – huge drinking parties – are usually organized through Facebook. The Internet and social networking sites like Facebook in particular, were 'accused of isolating youth and cloistering them in a virtual and abstract world' but at the same time they 'could be used to reconcile and bring together' (INJEP, 2010). The Facebook group that was created to gather people for the *Apéro saucisson-pinard* party suggests that this is the case. In a short time 7000 people joined the Facebook group to participate in this anti-Muslim pork-sausage party that demonstrates Facebook's power to quickly mobilize large crowds.

To recapitulate, in this section I have shown that French culinary culture and the way of eating have proven to be a significant element, a profane rite, and reinforce a shared French culture. Moreover, I sought to demonstrate in what ways eating practices and certain food items have been used in recent years as an instrument to draw boundaries between two cultural groups, the Muslims and the non-Muslims in the French society. This section has shown that pork meat, which is one of the main ingredients of most of the French dishes and is considered as a traditional component of the French *cuisine,* has been used as a kind of 'heritage food' that seems to be threatened as it is not consumed by certain religious groups living within the society.

According to Holtzman (2006) and Poulain (2012), 'heritage foods' and culinary traditions are closely tied to collective memory and if threatened, it might evoke social tensions between the groups within the society with different eating patterns. Poulain (2012) argued in his article that contemporary generations show increased interest in traditional local cuisines because they experience the nostalgia for the past. This kind of 'gustatory nostalgia' could resurface as a reaction to foreign food practices, and in this case the past ways of eating can contrast the present to a better past or an inferior past to an enlightened Modernity. Therefore, this section suggests that new eating patterns, which appeared in the French socio-cultural landscape due to the processes of globalization and

immigration, have pushed certain segments of the French society to contrast the French foodway to the foodways of other ethno-religious groups.

Moreover, these actions that include protests against religious symbolism having food such as halal or kosher, and the use of the French gastronomic heritage as a cultural marker have become particularly visible in recent decades. According to Florence Blackler, a sociologist at the *Institute d'Etude et de Recherche sur le Monde Arabe et Musulman* (CNRS), it was long believed that when an immigrant child who eats like the natives, the French, it is a sign of a successful social integration. It could even be called a form of 'integration through a plate' - *l'intégration par l'assiette* (RTL Info, 2010). However, it can be argued that this symbolic integration was rather imaginary since the newly immigrated Muslims in the 1970s and in the 1980s paid less attention to what and how they ate, besides, before the mid 1970s the slaughtering of animals for personal use and according to religious rules was not met with opposition (Fournier, 2009 (3)).

Today the demand for food with religious symbolism among the second and third generation young Muslims is paradoxically stronger than for their parents. According to certain researches, this demand has grown with the influence of the ritualistic trends and fundamentalists such as the Muslim Brotherhood advocating rigorous religious practice (Fournier, 2009 (3)). Besides, the research of CREDOC[3] revealed that today the individual appears in the heart of the consumer society and becomes a consumer-citizen that reflects particular social links within the society. Individuals participate in the 'engaged consumption', which the authors define as differentiated eating practices that allow an individual to assert his religious affinities, cultural or social choices (Mathe, Siounandan & Tavoularis, 2012).

The fear of public religious expression that associates with the fundamentalist trends might be one of the reasons why these food practices by the non-Muslims started to be perceived as a threat. The reactions towards this fear in the French society Blackler even calls a form of 'gastronomic intolerance'. She particularly refers to the debates over the menus of school canteens or other forms of rejecting certain demands concerning food (Fournier, 2009 (3)).

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[3] Le Centre de recherche pour l'étude et l'observation des conditions de vie.

3.2. *Laïcité* as a cultural marker

Although the issues of the religious eating practices and religious food requirements in the Republican-Secularist project of France have been discussed since before 2000, it seems that it became an especially publically debated topic only around 2008-2010. In the end of summer 2010, controversies erupted when the fast-food chain *Quick* announced the transition to halal meat burgers in some of its outlets. This decision raised questions concerning the suspicions of sectarianism (communitarianism) and entrepreneurial freedom. That the debates over food with religious symbolism appearing in the public sphere emerged as France's new cultural battleground demonstrates the way this question of serving halal in *Quick* and other public catering institutions was later mobilized in political debates during the 2012 Presidential and 2014 Municipal electoral campaigns.

In 2010 in response to *Quick*'s decision to introduce halal in their menus, a faction of the right wing party of Union Movement Populaire (UMP), La Droite Populaire, argued that offering halal-meat burgers in fast-food restaurants has become a widespread phenomenon in France and that it is 'absolutely against *laïcité*' (Le Monde, 2010). Moreover, the extreme right party Front National (FN) in the electoral project of the 2012 Presidential elections dedicated a section to express its position towards religious food practices in the secular French state. Besides *laïcité,* FN also emphasised the Christian origins of France in its argumentation against the appearance of religious food practices in the secular public sphere. *Laïcité* was portrayed as an instrument to promote Christianity and to fight against the:

> […] Political movements that want to establish the supremacy of a religion or religious law […] under the Islamist pressure, businesses end up offering their customers halal food (Quick). Pork is not served in the school canteens. [....] It must be repeated that Christianity was for a millennium and a half the religion of the majority of French. (Front National, 2012).

The reminder of the French Catholic roots relates to the Lateran discourse given by the President of the Republic, Nicolas Sarkozy, in 2007 in Rome. These discourses seem provocative since they appear shortly after the controversial debates of the French national identity that took place in 2009 and 2010. It is a complicated issue since France is home Europe's largest Muslim population that constitutes around 4-5 million and of whom the majority is of North African origin (Marquand, 2010). Moreover, during the presidential

campaign in 2012, the presidential candidate of FN, Marine Le Pen, claimed that the meat sold in the Parisian region is halal. She was the first one among all the candidates to bring this issue up, and the other candidates followed it in their own political discourses (Liberation, 2012; Le Monde, 2012).

Shortly after Le Pen's speech, Socialist candidate François Hollande also expressed his position that 'under [his] presidency nothing will be tolerated in terms of the presence of halal meat in the canteens of our schools (municipal). There is no need to fear' (tf1, 2012). Moreover, the President at the time and candidate of the right-wing Union Movement Populaire (UMP) Nicolas Sarkozy supported this position and announced that 'the first concern of the French is the issue of halal meat' (Le Monde TV, 2012). According to various newspapers that analysed the vocabulary of the discourses of the presidential candidates in the elections of 2012, such terms as *populisme*, *démondialisation*, *crise*, *halal* and similar were most often used. The new and old terms used in the discourses marked the concerns of the moment and the priorities of the candidates (AFP, 2012; Marquand, 2010).

Furthermore, after the municipal elections in March 2014, FN announced plans to forbid no-pork menus in schools in municipalities governed by FN: 'We will not accept religious demands concerning the menus in school canteens [...] there is no reason why religion should enter into the public sphere' (Ouest-France, 2014). We can see the instrumentalization of *laïcité* by the extreme right in order to hide its hostility to Muslim citizens. According to Henri Pena-Ruiz, Marine Le Pen does not embody the figure of *laïcité* but she exploits and instrumentalizes *laïcité* to disguise its rejection of part of the French population (Moussaoui, 2015).

In this section I sought to show how food with religious symbolism appeared in the centre of the political debates and was placed in terms of *laïcité*-religion. I focused particularly on various protest forms against halal and the reactions to the halal food policy of Quick. In this case the new food practices with religious symbolism appearing in French socio-cultural landscape was opposed to the Republican-secularist project of France, especially since it affected the Republican sanctuary that is school. Therefore, in the following section I continue focusing on the debates about the menus in the canteens of the Republican school.

3.3. School as a battleground

The Republican school of France has often been at the centre of public and political debates on various multicultural issues in France. Moreover, the development of the principle of *laïcité* discussed in the first chapter and the answers of the interviewees have confirmed that one 'cannot separate *laïcité* and school' (Interview, M2, 18/06/2015). Hence, it should not be surprising that debates concerning the religious connotations of food (particularly kosher and halal) take place in the school canteens. The question arises whether in the name of *laïcité* one meal should be proposed for everyone, or in the name of *laïcité* the specific arrangements should be made.

The *Observatoire de la laïcité* is the governmental body that reports to the Prime Minister and whose object is to advise and assist the Government in its efforts to respect the principle of secularism in France. The body was created on 25th March 2007 by the decree of the President of the Republic Jacques Chirac, but was installed only on 8th April 2013 by the President François Hollande. In response to the debates concerning the menus in the canteens of the Republican school, the *Observatoire de la laïcité* recommends 'not to take into account the religious laws.' It also advises to propose various menu options in the canteens to respect the diversity, which refers to the menus with or without meat (Observatoire de la laïcité, 2014; 2015).

The educational facilities can offer menus with or without meat only if it does not generate a spatial segregation during the mealtime, according to the *Observatoire de la laicité* (2014). This means that the different menu options should not indicate one's confessional particularities but to give the possibility for everyone to choose whether they want to eat meat or not while preventing any form of stigmatization based on religious features (Observatoire de la laïcité, 2015). However, diverse local contexts, differences between political positions and the fact that there is no binding rule results in contradicting decisions in different municipalities and departments concerning menus in schools. A few examples should be given to illustrate this ambiguity.

I shall firstly start with the examples where this differentiation was introduced in terms of *laïcité* allowing diversity. Since autumn 2008 the City Hall of Lyon has imposed menus without meat in school canteens of the city and this decision has been interpreted as 'a victory of *laïcité* against religion'. Also, in schools of Villeurbanne, a suburb of Lyon,

students have their colour chips: blue means 'meatless', and red 'no pork' (or vice versa). This method, introduced by mayor of Jean-Paul Bret (PS) is obviously a success as it persists since 2010 without any major protests. The mayor of Villeurbanne claims that 'diversity is part of our identity. It was always a factor of enrichment,' and it is also important to understand that in order to 'avoid stigmatisations' (Levy, 2012).

In another municipality in the northern suburbs of Paris, Sarcelles, the mayor François Pupponi (PS) has acknowledged that for a certain time period he had excluded pork from the public school canteens of this community in order to prevent talks about sectarianism/communitarianism in school canteens. However, later the pork came back to the menus; also, the menus of substitution were established: 'If we do not listen to parents, they threaten to put their children to private schools which are not under the contract (with the state) and generate exclusion in the name of *laïcité*' (Simon, 2014; Ouest-France, 2014; Tesson & Cotta, 2015). In these cases, the mayors based their decisions on the idea that not serving differentiated menus would further produce stigmatisation or exclusion of certain groups of the Republican-secularist project of France.

However, the other set of examples show the cases when differentiated menus were perceived rather as a problem and were banned in the name of *laïcité*. In October 2014, Didier Doucet (party of Divers Droite), the mayor of Lagny-le-Sec, banned the diversity of the school menus in this municipality. At the similar time, the decision to not serve alternative menus and pork substitutions was also taken in the municipality of Sargé-lès-le-Mans, in Sarthe. These decisions were based on the argument that the canteen is a place submissive to the principle of *laïcité* and, therefore, the meals with religious connotations should not be served (Bastié, 2014).

In 2011 the mayor of one town of the municipality of Castanet-Tolosan took the decision to no longer offer differentiated menus (without pork or vegetarian) in the schools of this municipality. The mayor explained that this decision was made also in the name of *laïcité* because, 'it violates some of my values' he said, 'that I attempt to defend at the municipal level: first that concerning the idea of the Republic (*école de la République*) which seeks to integrate, assimilate and form future citizens' (laïcité-republique, 2011).

Gilles Platret (UMP), the mayor of Chalon-sur-Saône and in charge of a work group on *laïcité* in the Association of Mayors of France (*Association des Maires de France*, AMF), has removed the alternative menus (menus of substitution) in the canteens of his governed city and initiated the debate on the eve of the departmental elections. He invoked

the principle of *laïcité* and *vivre-ensemble* to not ban pork from children's food menu while the kind of alternative menu existed in his municipality for over thirty years. 'Offering an alternative menu when pork is served is to discriminate between children' he claimed (Beyer, 2015).

It is interesting that taking into account children's religious beliefs and serving differentiated menus was a practice for a long time in these and other municipalities that have removed the substitute menus. It shows that something that has been a continuous practice has suddenly become a sensitive issue. The former President of the Republic and the head of the party of UMP, Nicolas Sarkozy, reaffirmed on the day of the departmental elections on 24th March 2015 that he supported the removal of alternative menus in school canteens for children who do not eat pork. Sarkozy explained his position by arguing that today France is in a 'serious republican crisis […] The Republic is *laïcité* and *laïcité* should not suffer from exceptions' (Collas, 2015). This suffering of exceptions could be interpreted as a fear of a drift to sectarianism/communitarianism that makes *laïcité* 'seem rather as a closure than an openness or neutrality in its exercise' (Interview, J, 06/16/2015) as one of my interviewees explained.

While discussing this issue, the sociologist Pierre Merle speaks of *la fausse laïcité à la française*. He argues that the model of secularism in France is experiencing a double crisis. It did not bring the expected peace at schools where tensions still remain, and secondly it remains a source of controversy that also concerns the suppression of alternative menus in school canteens and ban on headscarves in universities. What is more, Merle as well as some other philosophers and public figures argue that *la laïcité de liberté* in practice reminds them more of *la laïcité d'exclusion* (Merle, 2015). This brings us back to a question of the evolution of the concept of *laïcité* discussed in the first chapter.

It could be argued that offering menus of substitution in terms of *laïcité,* which allows diversity, or refusing menus of substitution in terms of *laïcité,* which seeks to avoid stigmatisation and drift to communitarianism, in some ways reflect the tensions between assertive and passive secularists in France (Kuru, 2007). The assertive secularists claim that even though secularism is based on a plurality of principles such as liberty of conscience, equality of rights and general interest, secularism is a monolithic principle. However, if not applied correctly, these components of *laïcité* might enter into conflict with one another.

What is seen in these debates is that exercise of liberty of conscience, level of

neutrality and equality of rights are being challenged or constrained by the interpretations of these principles, by the fear of drift to sectarianism/communitarianism, and different understandings of how to reinforce the functioning of the Republican school as a place of integrating, assimilating and forming future citizens. On the other hand, the defenders of pluralistic or passive secularism criticize this claim about secularism as a monolithic principle because thinking of secularism as monolithic makes it look barred to change. As the examples might have shown, the political elite is not entirely sure how to react to changes and new demands, and that results in rejecting certain requirements in relation to food.

During my placement in the association of CEMEA (Paris, France) we organized an interview with Francine Best[4], the Honorary President of CEMEA, and former vice-president of the Committee of Human Rights of the French Commission of UNESCO. As an author of many books concerning how to enact *laïcité* in school, she explained what *la laïcité* means for her: it is the liberty of conscience, that has to be fully ensured and protected, and also the liberty of expression. What is more, today *laïcité* is one of the most important principles of organization of the society and she called it 'false *laïcité*' (fausse *laïcité*) that is being debated in clothes and food. *Laïcité* rather than being a definite finality that could be reached is a path, an ideal consisting of principles such as liberty of conscience, equality of rights and general interest that should be implemented by adapting to the changing social context. However, that this evolution is challenging and it even seems frightening was implied by the interviewees as well: '[…] there is a good base but it remains blocked at the base and we have not managed to find an evolution in relation to the changing population, cultures and so forth' (Interview, M2, 18/06/2015).

This section has shown that as usual, when the Republic is perceived to be under threat, it is the republican school that appears in the centre of the debates. Since the attacks on Charlie Hebdo in January 2015 the emphasis is being put on school, which is perceived as the 'secular sanctuary' of the Republic. The idea to remove alternative menus that have been practice for decades before, but now is being put in terms of 'discrimination' that should not be accepted in a secular Republic. It seems that the conflict lies in a question of

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[4] Interview with Francine Best in the headquarters of CEMEA of France on the 5th of June 2015. Interview was later used for the Biennale of Education, Training and Professional Practice that took place from 30 June to 3 July 2015, conference on: 'Laïcité, Cooperation and Educational Practices' of July 2, 2015, at the National Conservatory of Arts and Crafts.

how to ensure respect of differences, an idea of *laïcité,* but at the same time not to have *laïcité* that seems to oppose religions and be *laïcité* of exclusion. In the following sub-chapter I focus on how *laïcité* might have started to be perceived as *laïcité* of exclusion because of the difficulties to break free of the French Catholic past despite the insistence of the separation between State and Church.

3.4. Difficulties of breaking free with the Catholic past

In its report (2003) the Stasi Commission declared that neutrality is the essential condition of secularism. This neutrality implies that public servants should treat everyone equally. However, while it is hard to ensure absolute neutrality in relation to one's confessional particularities, the report states that everyone should be able to exercise their religious freedom in accordance to the principle of 'reasonable accommodations.' The principle of 'reasonable accommodation' in the report is explained as 'agreeing to adapt the public expression of their confessional particularities and setting limits to the affirmation of their identity' (Stasi, 2003:23). As such, this condition of 'reasonable accommodation' should limit the public religious expression and ensure the level of neutrality that 'allows everyone to come together in public space' particularly in schools (Stasi, 2003:23).

Although the main attention in the report was given to the place of conspicuous religious symbols in French public schools, the Stasi Commission also briefly discussed the issue of religious requirements in relation to food. Based on the principle of 'reasonable accommodation' the report anticipates that substitutes for pork and fish on Fridays should be available in the public catering institutions such as schools, prisons, hospitals and businesses (Stasi, 2003:64). It is curious that while substitutes for pork do not mention that it could be replaced by food in accordance to Islamic and Jewish dietary laws, the fish on Friday clearly refers to the French Catholic past. The Catholic practice of abstaining from eating meat on Fridays and replacing it by fish comes from the tradition of commemorating the crucifixion of Jesus Christ that took place on Good Friday (Fagan, 2008). It could be argued that this practice referring to Christian religion has in some way become a part of a common secularized French culture.

In the previous two chapters I have discussed that one of the effects of the French Revolution of 1789 was gradual secularization of the French society, which has also

reflected in the shift of the French culinary tradition of Christian-Latin origin to the culinary tradition that could be defined as secular (Mathé, Tavoularis, Pilorin, 2009; Ferguson, 1998). These changes in the culinary culture to some extent mirrored the social processes in the society. The processes of urbanization and industrialization and the laws of Jules Ferry of 1881-1886 later followed the exclusion of Catholicism from the public domain (Mathe, Siounandan & Tavoularis, 2012).

These laws established secular public schools and reinforced the separation between Church and State that resulted in the law of 1905. During the nineteenth century the food taboos were abolished and the sacrificial rites of the Mass remained the only sacred ritual food in the believer's life, according to the research of CREDOC (Mathe, Siounandan & Tavoularis, 2012). However, the debates on religious food practices in public sphere seem to have brought to surface the traces of Catholicism left within the French educational system, especially the practice of serving fish on Fridays that looks to have been reaffirmed by the Stasi report. There are few key points to be noted.

Despite the insistence of the separation of Church and State, and despite the so-called 'democratization of taste' that took place in the nineteenth century, France is still experiencing difficulties to break with its Catholic cultural past. The French state accommodates Christian groups by serving fish on Fridays in Republican canteens. Additionally, traces of Catholicism include that even the school calendar is organized around Catholic holy days. Also, it is recommended by the state to avoid tests and exams during non-Catholic religious holy days, for example, the state ensures that there would be no exams on Saturdays to respect Jewish Sabbath (Beaman, 2012; Day & Lovheim, 2015).

This relation to the Catholic past was questioned more critically once the issue of serving halal in the canteens of Republican schools became a subject of discussions. Sociologists of religion and authors of the book *Modernities, Memory and Mutations* (2015), Abby Day and Mia Lovheim argued that such debates are similar to a game of mirrors and 'this game of mirrors is particularly visible in the dynamics of *laïcité*, which duplicates, in a secular way, the Roman Catholic model whose influence it claims to contain' (Day & Lovheim, 2015). The fact that these debates about serving halal and kosher food meat in Republican schools mirrors the inherited features of the Catholic culture of France, which seems paradoxically to be incorporated in a common secularized culture, appears to be disconnected from the realities and the idea of a shared culture promoted by *laïcité*.

It could also be argued that the problem with the idea of secularism in France today is that it functions to maintain a symbolic value of Christian culture in French society, and hence to oppose the Muslim population. This link with the Catholic past was often mentioned by the interviewees as an element that is complicating the application of the principle of *laïcité:* 'The difficulty we have is to manage the French Catholic tradition and culture, well, I do not know how to explain, but it [*laïcité*] means not to assert any religion, however, we have a religious tradition that recalls the past' (Interview, M1, 18/06/2015). The example of continuing to serve fish on Fridays in the school canteens was often perceived critically by the interviewees as practice that is not being challenged enough for its place in the Republican-secularist project of France.

It is curious that most of the participants made a distinction between religion and tradition while talking about the French Catholic past. According to one interviewee, the fish on Friday does not only illustrate France's Catholic history but as such is something untouchable: 'Fish on Friday, we do not touch it, that's in our history. But then…we come from the Catholic tradition, so, it is not only a religion but also a tradition' (Interview, M1, 18/06/2015). While tradition could be seen as a set of practices, customary patterns of thoughts, behaviours delivered from generation to generation, religion is rather an institutionalized system of religious beliefs and practices. Tradition could either be exclusive to religion or could be a subset of it.

According to sociologist Didier Raoult, *laïcité* and traditions should be able to coexist, and the rejection of traditions just because they are associated with religion could destabilize the foundations of the Republic. Culture and religion have become inseparable, and destroying traditional holidays because they are associated with religions is dangerous as the French Revolution has shown. Raoult argues that even though the French society is secularized, it cannot reject its cultural elements related to religion and in this manner to try to break up with its history, because this move could definitely disorientate the French. He gives the examples of Easter that is the spring equinox, All Saints' Day celebrated as Halloween or Christmas that is winter solstice. Even Sunday, the seventh day of the week when mostly everything is closed in France because it is a day of rest, that refers to the Hebrew rest on the seventh day of Genesis. This kind of rejection of cultural elements Raoult calls hyper-*laïcité* (Raoult, 2014). Therefore, while being not 'a bastion but rather a house' (Interview, T, 12/06/2015), France should 'make place for other traditions from different cultures, French culture is multicultural …' (Interview, M2, 18/06/2015).

To summarize this section, France has difficulties of breaking with its cultural Catholic past. This in today's context of debates about religious food requirements in the public spaces also calls into question the traces of Catholicism in the French educational system. Certain religious traditions in France seem to be incorporated into the common secular culture, because their removal could challenge the foundations of the society. However, today it also raises a question as to whether or not this is being used to oppose the Muslim population while not allowing serving halal food in the Republican canteens.

3.5. Different voices in France: French culinary culture in the eyes of the interviewees

Talal Asad (2003; 2006) argues that today religion continues to affect politics in France and *laïcité* could be seen as functioning as any other modern form of political rule; a certain understanding of religion and politics is imposed upon the citizens by the sovereign state with an objective to create particular collective subjects. In the context of headscarf debate, the religious symbols were defined as a threat to the public order and security of the state, whereas in the context of debates over food with religious symbolism the cultural dimension is more strongly accentuated. Therefore, the sections above suggest that the French state defines certain cultural rules that a citizen must follow and it also outlines certain food practices as a threat to its culture and unity. However, without generalizing interview results to the entire population it could still be contended that there exists a gap between attitudes of public institutions and a part of French society, which is represented by my interviewees, towards food practices foreign to the French food model. It allows the argument that France is not monolithic and other voices, other than public institutions, could be heard.

A question about the inclusion of the French gastronomic meal in the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List was designed to study how the French perceive this decision, reasons, and what does it represent for France. The dominant answer was that the inclusion of the French gastronomic meal in the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage was not necessary and it could have certain undesirable effects: '[…] in relation to UNESCO, I think it was really not necessary, however, it's not negative neither…but it could be negative in the sense why it was the French gastronomy and why not any other

…' (Interview, M2, 18/06/2015) or 'it adds more clichés and I find it really unwelcome' (Interview, S, 18/06/2015).

More importantly, the inclusion of the French gastronomic meal in the UNESCO's heritage was perceived as a political step and a way to reaffirm French position on the international level: 'France has an enormous power on the level of international decisions, thus, I don't know if it was necessary to add the cuisine just to reaffirm the position, I think that has been done in the spirit, you know, in the spirit of Francophonie in general' (Interview, S, 10/06/2015). Some of the interviewees also mentioned that this decision not only brings international recognition but also it might produce some kind of sacralisation of the French gastronomy: 'I agree that we have this love to eat […] but the idea that this would be typically French that's interesting but I'm not necessarily against it […] However, this sacralises enormously' (Interview, T, 12/06/2015). That this move to enlist French *cuisine* as cultural heritage is rather a political step and reflects French political strategy to reinforce this heritage as the sovereign core of collective identity and self-respect, is well explained by David Lowenthal in his book on cultural heritage with an expressive title *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (1998).

In his book David Lowenthal (1998) argues that existing obsessions with the past and patrimonial heritage have become a major popular crusade in the last decades and it is always political. Lowenthal claims that heritage is essentially possessive and the growing value of heritage can intensify conflicts over whose it is and how to use it. As such heritage plays a role in collective identity construction by building collective pride and purpose, and it highlights distinction between 'us' and 'them'. In addition, according to Lowenthal, it is necessary to distinguish heritage and history because heritage is 'not an inquire into the past but a celebration of it, not an effort to know what actually happened but a profession of faith in a past tailored to present-day purposes' (Lowenthal, 1998:10). To embrace heritage as history, claims Lowenthal, is to disguise authority as authenticity. What is interesting and explains why one of my interviewees perceive the inclusion of French culinary heritage in UNESCO list as an act of sacralisation is that, according to Lowenthal, today heritage had become a quasireligious cult: 'Sacredness secures fealty, enhances community, and exalts purpose as long as heritage is a creed not to be queried' (Lowenthal, 1998:250).

It can be contended that because of these references to identity politics and disguising authority as authenticity my interviewees did not find the UNESCO recognition valuable or necessary, some were even opposed to it. Moreover and in relation to Lowenthal, the analysis of the push to list French cuisine as cultural heritage relates to DeSoucey (2010) discussed politics of gastro-nationalism.

Gastro-nationalism suggests that certain food practices could be interpreted as an assault on a nation's cultural heritage and the state could intervene as an ideological agent in order to protect collective identity. The debates about the importance of the French food culture and the reactions towards eating practices foreign to the French culinary culture, which were discussed in previous sections, illustrate that this cultural element was included in the political agendas. Moreover, it was mobilized in identity politics in such a way that it is not only destined to strengthen collective identity but also to draw boundaries with other food cultures and cultural groups. That this is the case is reaffirmed by certain informants who perceive the lobbying campaign of the French state and decision of UNESCO as a mean to use the French culinary culture for politics of inclusion/exclusion of certain citizens:

> Culinary culture makes me think of culinary identity and then…I am thinking of the current context, especially, you know, there are all these stories, debates on national identity, who is French and who is foreigner…and actually, I do not think that this is new today, but we can see an appearing tendency to distinguish 'our' *cuisine* and to say 'that's not my *cuisine.*' (Interview, T, 12/06/2015)

This refers to the government-initiated debate about French national identity that coincided with the two years of lobbying campaign in 2008-2010 by Nicolas Sarkozy to persuade the United Nations to include French gastronomy in UNESCO's list of Intangible Cultural Heritage, a designation that signifies global promotion and protection.

In 2009-2010 then President Nicolas Sarkozy launched the debate concerning French nationality, the influence of Muslim culture and religious practices, general immigration policy. While using this strategy to attract the supporters of the National Front, Sarkozy actually started controversial debates on French national identity that became connected to immigration and integration and associated with anxiety or uncertainty about the situation of France (Cosgrove, 2010; Erlanger, 2009; Marquand, 2010; Simon, 2012). The gastronomic meal of the French which by UNESCO is described as playing 'an active social role within its community and is transmitted from generation to

generation as part of its identity' (UNESCO, 2010), could be seen as part of the broader French debate on national identity.

The question concerning UNESCO also allowed us to see if in the eyes of the interviewees the acknowledgment of the French gastronomy by UNESCO is perceived as a fear that the famous French food model and culinary identity is in danger because of globalization, homogenization and migration. The answers suggest the contrary – one part of the French society, which is being represented by the interviewees, French gastronomy is presented as needing to be more open and accept other gastronomic cultures and eating practices: 'It evolves, it grows richer, it's like culture […] it's not a loss but it's rather positive […] that's evolution of the French gastronomy' (Interview, M2, 18/06/2015) or:

> If we talk about the homogenization of taste, I don't find it at all as a homogenization, on the contrary […] I think it's good to discover other food cultures […] this could appear as openness and not necessarily as homogenization […] (Interview, J, 16/06/2015)

The other curious thing that came up during the interviews was that almost all the interviewees talked about two dimensions of French culinary tradition: the regional and what could be called the 'national'. The strong regional differences were always emphasized while speaking of French culinary tradition: '[…] The French love to talk about their *cuisine* and not of a *cuisine* as a French *cuisine* but rather as a citizen of a region with its own specialties' (Interview, T, 12/06/2015). Other participants accentuated the strong regional culinary identities as well:

> When someone asks me to present my culture through typical dishes I always choose Mediterranean dishes because, as I said, culturally in my region there are more Mediterranean dishes and, therefore, I choose very often a dish such as *ratatouille*, that's rather regional in fact. […] We have a pretty strong regional culinary identity.' (Interview, J, 16/06/2015)

After trying to specify what could be called 'national,' it was described as a 'gigantic whole' and only with foreigners is it presented in terms of being French (Interview, T, 12/06/2015). The national cuisine does and does not exist at the same time: 'Yes, because there are things that you can find everywhere in France and also you have regional differences, when you are in the south or in the north you have an impression of being in many countries' (Interview, M2, 18/06/2015). Another interviewee specified that it could be the name of the city added next to the name of the dish that shows how well the dish is

diffused in France and whether it could be concerned as representing France: 'Not all of the regional dishes are well exported… the dish with the name of the city, these are the dishes you can find anywhere' (Interview, S, 18/06/2015).

The other intriguing aspect was that the discussion about openness of French gastronomy to accept changes was always put in the broader discussion about the openness of French culture in general:

> It is important that the French gastronomy survives as it is but while accepting that there are other gastronomies […] I think that the French cuisine can open herself to other things and needs to open for other dishes, for other cultures because… we are a democracy! […] I think the fact that we are a democratic state means to appropriate its own culture but also to recognize and accept other cultures that could live with us. (Interview, T, 12/06/2015)

It is curious that some answers concerning the accessibility to French gastronomy and its adaptability to other culinary cultures in its content were reminiscent of the debates about *laïcité* and *le vivre-ensemble*: 'Anyone can share French culture and have his own culture' (Interview, T, 12/06/2015), similar in many ways to the idea of living together in the secular environment but exercising one's religious beliefs in private. Moreover, French culinary culture was seen as representing a French society that is changing and that must adapt to new socio-cultural landscape:

> I think that, in fact, the French gastronomy is…in fact, it is like French society, it incorporates certain elements that come from other countries and for me that's rewarding, because it is being enriched by people who are coming from everywhere, and it is not endangered by that, on the contrary, we should enjoy it instead of transforming it to a threat. (Interview, J, 10/06/2015)

To summarize this final section, the interviews have confirmed that French culinary tradition is a significant element, a profane rite, and reinforces a shared French culture. Moreover, transmission of this shared culture through generations does not only happen in the family environment, but also at school. This was supported by UNESCO, which among the arguments to include French gastronomy in the UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage, stated that meals 'will be regularly prepared and consumed in primary schools' because 'such meals will seek to highlight the meaning given to the gastronomic meal by the French, namely togetherness and sharing the pleasure of taste, and to teach the rites of the gastronomic meal […]' (UNESCO, 2010). The attention-grabbing detail is

that this argument uses 'will', a verb of future tense, as if gastronomic meal – or French cultural identity that is reflected through it - today does not function correctly and needs reinforcing.

This reinforcing might also explain the debates over national identity concerned with immigration and integration that took place during the same time as UNESCO's lobbying campaign. As it could be noticed, my informants have rather critical opinions towards debates over food habits or they perceive it as an exclusion mechanism especially of Muslim populations. This might also be a reason they preferred to point out regional *cuisines* than talking about a French 'national' *cuisine*. Use of the term 'national' has acquired rather negative meaning in recent years, as I experienced myself, on arriving in France to do my fieldwork. Each time I presented my research, I was criticized for using the term 'national' and was advised to use the term 'cultural' instead, because of the debates that France has about its identity since 2009-2010. 'Cultural' is perceived to have more positive connotations, since cultures change and adapt.

Paradoxical enough is that after the French Revolution of 1789 and the emergence of the principle of secularism and French modern and secular culinary culture, the regional cuisines have coincided to a *whole* that allowed having a national representation of *cuisine*. It became a fraternizing element (Ferguson, 1998; Clark, 1975). The current tendancy to identify oneself with different regional identities could also be interpreted as fragmentation in the French society on culinary-cultural grounds. Yet, based on the interviews I would argue that this impression of fragmentation that one could have actually represents the increasing self-awareness of the cultural diversity and the emphasis on necessity to respect cultural singularities of everyone. The fact that all of my interviewees have higher level of education (two are still pursuing their studies in Master's degree while the other six have already completed their Master's degrees) and have travelled abroad might explain their openness for accepting other cultures as enrichment. As such, for my interviewees the representation of the French *cuisine* through different regional *cuisines* does not loose its fraternal aspect but transforms it to being 'fraternal' not only among the French but rather to being 'fraternal' with other cultures.

It could be disputed that because of this reason the campaigns such as national identity debate and the promotion of the French gastronomic meal that were initiated by the government as reinforcing unity and fraternity within the French society, have actually been perceived by part of the French nationals as representing a new form of exclusion on

culinary grounds. The example of the cultural localization of riz in the Solomon Islands by Jourdan (2010) has shown that when the symbolic and the economic conditions satisfy the locals, the previously foreign food product can be easily integrated in the local food repertoire alongside other local food items. The interviews have revealed that my informants have no psychological or symbolic constraints of buying and eating meat prepared according to religious laws, moreover, they claim that it is sold for affordable price or even cheaper than the regular meat. However, religiously prepared food is being rejected on the political level because symbolically it represents a contact with Islam and thereby challenges the Republican-secularist project. This might also explain the discordance noticeable between the discourses of the public institutions and the voices of certain segments of the French society.

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In this chapter I have investigated the views on food practices & regulations of immigrants in relation to *laïcité* & French cultural-national identity through French culinary culture. The research consisted of the analysis of the events that could be identified as constructed distinctions between different foodways – a foodway representing France and a foodway culturally foreign to the French one. This analysis was also enriched by the data collected during the interviews with eight French youth. The investigation of the debates over food with religious symbolism, especially food with respect to halal dietary requirements, appearing in the public sphere of France allowed me to make the following observations.

Firstly, the disputes over 'foreign' to the traditional French culinary model eating practices and the discourse of protecting French culinary heritage that are being placed in terms of *laïcité* contest the understanding of the secular public sphere in France. Whereas the headscarf affair was mostly discussed in terms of private and public spheres, the research suggests that current discussions surrounding alimentary requirements of religious groups are being less examined in these terms, or at least the link seems weaker. Today the debates about food with religious symbolism discuss not as much its place in the public sphere, but a dilemma of how to manage diversity by avoiding communitarianism, and ensure equality and *vivre-ensemble*.

The Republican sanctuary, which is school, once again has appeared in the heart of the public debates and it also supports the observation that the dimension of private-public spheres concerning the religious food practices is less obvious. The research has revealed

that terms such as 'discrimination', 'communitarianism', 'stigmatisation', 'values', 'Republic', 'citizen' and 'identity' are most often used while justifying the decisions in different municipalities concerning the type of menu to offer in the canteen. In the context of school the discussions concern questions whether differentiated menus should be proposed in the name of *laïcité* as a diversity or, on contrary, a single menu should be offered in the name of *laïcité* as a mean to avoid stigmatisation and drift to communitarianism. In the latter case, offering differentiated menus is often interpreted as an aspect that would lead to the separation of ethno-religious groups eating in the same canteen and opposing the idea of *vivre-ensemble* embodied by the principle of *laïcité.*

Weaker distinction between the private and the public spheres might have been influenced by the fact that religious food requirements appear to be in opposition with the French cultural values represented by both, *laïcité* and French modern and secular culinary tradition. In the second chapter on food and identity I have shown that eating practices due to their social and symbolic powers are an extremely intimate and sensitive subject. Food embodies associations with nation, ethnicity, family, religion and cultural 'other', and as such it plays a significant role in cultural identity formation. The research suggests that the discourses surrounding food prepared according to halal dietary laws seem to construct and exclude 'other' that is not acceptable in the French culture. Moreover, such events as 'Pork Sausage and Wine Party' that include pork meat and wine (that are presented as traditional elements of the French culinary tradition) could be seen as an instrument to separate individuals and put them in antagonistic positions towards each other. Therefore, the blurring distinction between public-private might have been affected due to the fact that this issue concerns not only menus in public catering institutions, notably the schools, but also a way to protect the French (culinary) culture in general.

Secondly, the analysis of the Republican slogan - *liberté, egalité, fraternité* – in the first chapter has shown that all the Republican principles originated in times of confrontation and in search of compromise. The current debates over food requirements have also challenged the perception of *laïcité* in such a way that while before *laïcité* was more presented in opposition to public religious expression, today it is rather being confronted by different positions towards multiculturalism and dilemmas over what degree of cultural–religious diversity to allow within the French society. These different positions result in diverse visions of *laïcité* in its exercise: *laïcité du combat, laïcité plurielle,* 'positive' *laïcité* in Sarkozy's terms, 'positive' *laïcité* in Henri Pena-Ruiz terms, *laïcité de*

la liberté, laïcité d'exclusion, and false *laïcité.* In France *laïcité* in its practice to some extent could even remind of *laïcité* that is antireligious or atheist: '[…] we say that *laïcité* is the separation of church and state, in fact, one can be religious and secular at the same time, but the problem is that […] we have opposed them […]' (Interview, J, 10/06/2015).

This lack of clearness in the vision of *laïcité* represents the tensions between combative or assertive and pluralistic secularists. While the combative secularists in France emphasize the need of a neutral public sphere free from all religious symbols and discourses, the defenders of pluralistic secularists suggest the need to liberalize secularism in France with a new emphasis on individualism and multiculturalism (Kuru, 2007, 2009).

Speaking of multiculturalism, in the first chapter on Secularist-Republican project of France I have presented Yolande Jansen's reflections on the deepening crisis of multiculturalism in France where she demonstrates how in French public debates *laïcité* is often used in opposition to communitarianism. Most importantly for my argument, according to Jansen's research communitarianism in its broad sense of recognition of ethnic and religious boundaries in practices of citizenship could be seen as a synonym for multiculturalism (Jansen, 2013). Moreover, based on the Jansen's considered 'paradoxes of assimilation' experienced by the French Jews in the end of the nineteenth century, in this chapter I have particularly focused on the place of Islam in today's French society.

The research on food practices & regulations of immigrants in relation to *laïcité* & French national identity through French culinary culture could allow one to argue that accepting or rejecting certain food requirements of the Muslim religious group represents the pressures to assimilate. In terms of avoiding drift to communitarianism and thereby suggesting certain limits for expression of diversity, this pressure to assimilate is put in terms of French culinary culture and *laïcité* and in its practice seems more as a closure. That the prevention of fundamentalism and radicalisation has even become violent to the level where it stigmatizes certain segments of the population as it happened with Jews in the nineteenth century was well defined by one of my interviewees and could be used to summarize this observation:

> […] Halal meat in the 70s and 90s, no one cared about it, there was no problem. […] It became an issue recently, especially between 2000 and 2010 […] The debate about school canteens illustrates this story […] it has become a problem since we have entered the new millinaire, since 2000, there is a fear of fundamentalism, there is a fear of insecurity, insecurity of…. Actually this is a problem, since the Presidential elections of 2002 we started to think that we needed

an enemy […] everything comes back to Arabs because we need to stigmatize someone […] in addition, the fact that it stigmatizes, it is dangerous, it risks to do the same as with the Jews during the Dreyfus affaire […] I think that Islam does not threaten the French culture the way that it threatens the French mentality in the sense that all you see about Islam in the media is never positive. (Interview, T, 12/06/2015)

The fourth observation is that the practice of serving fish on Fridays, a practice that is of Christian origin, in school canteens interrogates not only the place of non-Christian religious groups in the secularist project, but this alimentary issue has also restored the debates about the place of the French Catholic tradition and Catholic history in the French secularist project. The analysis has shown that since (Christian) 'religion' has been replaced by terms such as 'tradition' and 'cultural heritage' it gained place to exist and to be incorporated into the secular project of the Republic. Nevertheless, the arguments of incorporating the Catholic tradition in the secular project because of the Catholic origins of France and the contribution of Christianity to the development of the French state seem arguable since Islam has also played a relevant role in French history. The French colonies in North Africa whose population is of Islam confession have also contributed to the development of the French state during centuries, and most importantly, to the liberation of France during the Second World War (Jansen, 2013). However, the French colonial history that plays a major role in shaping present-day French society and collective memory of interactions between non-Muslims and Muslims since colonial era, is still looking for its place in the ideal of the French Republican model.

In the context of migration and in relation to this historical dimension of legitimizing certain religious traditions as cultural heritage, moving to a new place migrants not only bring with them their own memories and histories but they also enter a particular field of memories of the nation-state they moved to. While examining 'paradoxes of assimilation' in France Jansen (2013) discusses that state and what could be called public culture are never neutral due to the way that national histories are constructed. Consequently, public culture will always tend to exclude some groups and recent immigrants in particular as they do not share this public culture and national history (Jansen, 2013). This was also supported by French Marxist socio-historian Gérard Noiriel who argued that the 'lack of openness of France's national history to the memories of immigration' is 'one of the markers of the assimilationist Republican tradition' (Noiriel,

1996, in Jansen, 2013:101). That history of minorities tend to be considered separately from what could be perceived as public history has become evident, according to Noiriel, during the debates on French 'national identity' (Noiriel, 2007, in Jansen, 2013).

Therefore, although judging from the the examples provided in this chapter it seems that the notions of 'integration' and 'cultural diversity' have been adopted in French official discourse, in practice third generation Muslim in public culture seems to still be perceived as a 'Muslim = immigrant' who has been born into a society which asks him to keep earning his belonging to it. Additionally, while accommodating Christian history as a tradition, French public culture serves to set certain relations between immigrant population of non-Catholic origin (Muslims) and the broader French population.

Moreover, the debates over fish in school canteens on Fridays confronts the idea of *laïcité* as a principle of not favouring one particular religion, it questions the place of Catholicism in today's French Republican project, and also allows testing what kind of civil religion exists in France today. In the first chapter I have discussed the two representations of the French secularism proposed by Baubérot – the conception of secularism close to republican civil religion during the period 1989-2004 and the representation of the French secularism as American-style civil religion since 2007 (Baubérot, 2011). The research supports this argument to the extent that Sarkozy in his Lateran discourse in 2007 began the debate about the place of Catholicism in French history and suggested the need to reconcile the 'two France'. It could also be argued based on the research that today *laïcité* might not be perceived as laicism but *laïcité* of Judeo-Christian speaking in terms of Shakman-Hurd. This distinction between the civil religions might have appeared because the civil society became aware of the diversity of the French society while maintaining mistrust towards certain religions, especially Islam.

While discussing Europe's encounter with Islam the International Relations scholar Luca Mavelli (2013) argued that those are the isoliationist of 'immunitary' features of the European secular condition that prevents Europe to perceive Islam as an opportunity to construct culturally richer society and that today results in a new form of isolation from the Muslim *other*. This new form could be characterized by re-evaluation of the role of the Christian history in the construction of European, or in my case French, identity and in the attempts of the Catholic Church to re-christianize Europe (Mavelli, 2013). This approach might explain why French *laïcité* in some ways is now resembling Judeo-Christian secularism, and one complementary example can be given to illustrate that the divide

between the religious (Judeo-Christian tradition in particular) and the secular as it is usually essentialized in laicism is arguable in nowaday's French policies.

On April 27, 2015, the French Prime Minister Manuel Valls (PS) attended the canonization of former popes John XXIII and John Paul II in Vatican as a representative of France. A similar situation occurred in 2011 when then the Prime Minister François Fillon of the right-wing UMP attended the beatification of John Paul II. As a response to Vall's visit in Rome the philosopher Henri Pena-Ruiz published an article entitled 'Manuel Valls, do you remember Clemenceau?' to remind of the essence of *laïcité* and that based on the law of the separation of church and state of 1905 French officials may not favour one religion over any other.

George Clemenceau, the Prime Minister of France in 1906-1909 and in 1917-1920 (also a minister of War) was presented as an exemplary secular representative of France. On November 11, 1918, Clemenceau was invited by the Archibishop of Paris to attend the ceremony in Notre-Dame-de-Paris to honor those who fought and died in the First World War. Clemenceau discouraged the President of the Republic, Raymond Poincaré, of attending this ceremony in Notre-Dame and published an official statement defending this position. In this statement Clemenceau claimed that 'following the law on the separation of church and state [1905], the government does not attend the Te Deum in Notre-Dame. Mrs. Poincaré (wife of the President of the Republic) and Mrs. Deschanel (wife of the President of the Chamber of Deputies) are not members of the government and will attend it.' (Pena-Ruiz, 2014).

Visits of Fillon and Valls to Vatican for canonization and beatification were not acts of diplomatic relation as these procedures represent acts of belief inside the Catholic Church. The attendance of the beatification and canonization appears to please the French people of Catholic faith but in conflict with the Republican principles (France24, 2014; Pena-Ruiz, 2014). Hence, it seems that the model of secularism in France is experiencing a crisis while the French Republic is in transition, and the place of Judeo-Christian tradition in the French secularist project is also being reinterrogated during the debates over the food with religious symbolism.

Moreover, 'in the context of Europe's encounter with Islam', argues Mavelli, the 'immunitory' feature of the European secular condition 'has contributed to amplifying the exclusionary character of collective forms of identification such as culture, religion or

civilization' (Mavelli, 2013:12). The research has confirmed that in France certain food practices are rejected not because they are new or because they are incomprehensible, but rather because they started not to fit today's Secularist project of the Republic. This seems to support my argument why French state felt empowered to defend its secular identity throught its culinary heritage that both seek to limit the visibility of Muslim *other*. Therefore, because of its isolutionist character in his study Mavelli (2013) problematizes and seeks to deconstruct the secular by focusing on the political secular instead of political secularism.

While political secularism supposes that certain categories such as state, religion, minority/majority can be found in a specific regime, political secular refers to a political-philosophical outcome of the discursive construction of European secularity. Mavelli argues that while before the boundary between reason and faith may have been a necessary limitation for critical autonomy, today it could be perceived as a constraint to allow the European subject to connect with the Muslim *other*. Hence, it seems essential to re-evaluate the long-established boundary between reason and faith that prevents the European secular subject to be capable of engaging with such forms of alterity as Muslim *other* and reduce the isoliationist feature of the European, or French in this case, secular condition (Mavelli, 2013). Hopefully, this can facilitate the struggles to deal with its diversity that we witness in France today and would assure that France is not 'a bastion but rather a house' (Interview, T, 12/06/2015) that finds a way to accommodate the needs of different ethno-religious communities with deeply intertwined histories.

Conclusion

In this Master's Thesis I attempted to analyse the discourse and attitudes surrounding religious dietary practices and food requirements of religious minorities within the narratives of secularization in contemporary France. The research focused not only on the food requirements in collective catering institutions, notably in public schools that is always in the center of debates concerning *laïcité*, but on a much broader aspect such as French cultural (national) identity reflected by French gastronomy and its link to French secularism. The overall research question was: *in what ways do the food habits and eating practices of the immigrants in France (1) challenge French (national) cultural identity constructed through its culinary culture and (2) contest the Secularist-Republican project, i.e. the understanding of the secular public sphere?* I relied on interviews with 8 French and analysis of relevant events in France as reported in French newspapers.

In the first chapter I have presented the development of the narrative on *laïcité* in three historical periods proposed by Jean Baubérot: 1789-1905, 1905-1989, 1989-2004. The French secular policies were analysed as a product of the ideological struggles between the defenders of assertive secularism and the supporters of passive or pluralistic secularism since the eighteenth century. The assertive secularists have always dominated the secular policies despite the resistance of passive secularists, but this dominance has gained new shades due to the rising Muslim population in the late 1980s. The so-called affair of Islamic headscarves, and the processes related to globalization such as fear of terrorist threat connected to Islam (especially after 9/11) marked the emergence of debates surrounding Muslim religious group in France. As the study on Islamic scarf controversy in France by Bowen (2007) has shown, the lack of clearness or the 'misplaced concreteness' concerning term *laïcité* not only allowed to combine the anxieties over domestic and international threats but also to make this concept convenient in the political debates. As the chapter has shown, the concept of *laïcité* remains one of the most contested concepts in the French political landscape.

In the second chapter food cultures were presented as historically and culturally developed constructs holding together an 'imaginary community' through the reinforcement of a certain collective memory. Moreover, I have introduced and used the term 'foodways' to stress the connection between food and culture, and that specific food

cultures should be understood as a result of historical, political and social processes. Additionally, the food taboos and foodways have been explained as tools to reinforce solidarity within a group or as playing a role in drawing boundaries among different cultural groups. Finally, as every tradition varies according to places and times, so the foodways do differ depending on the context.

The studies in the second and the third chapters have shown that diverse food practices opposed to traditional French culinary values are entering the public sphere due to various inter-related processes such as globalization, homogenization, and migration that are challenging the traditional French foodscape. In the religion & *laïcité* context the new food practices primarily concern food prepared according to halal and kosher dietary requirements. In recent years the number of markets of halal or kosher food products and other so-called *communautaire* food markets has increased significantly in France. It draws attention to the important transformations in the demand and supply, and progression of the public religious expressions (issue of recognition of cultural identities) in the French society. Based on research, it looks like the contemporary France is in uncertainty about what should be the relation between religious food and secularism principle, or, how to combine religious groups' religious dietary practices with central cultural values of France.

The research revealed that this uncertainty is a result of rapidly changing local and global contexts, tensions between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization, difficulties of breaking free with the Catholic past, unclear notion of *laïcité* and its ambiguous application. Moreover, the debates about food with religious symbolism are rather being discussed in terms of how to manage diversity by avoiding communitarianism, and ensure equality and *vivre-ensemble*, than in terms of public and private spheres. Furthermore, this difference contributes to the changing perception of *laïcité*: whereas before it seemed to be more presented in opposition to public religious expression, today it is rather being confronted by different positions towards multiculturalism, limits of diversity, respect of others and differences. Finally, according to research, today religious food practices are being discussed in opposition of communitarianism-*laïcité*, and these debates are in some way placed in a broader debate on French cultural and culinary values.

Besides, the research has shown that in the eyes of the interviewees the interaction of different cultures and foodways reminds more of openness and enrichment, 'culinary acculturation', and peaceful changes in cultural identity. However, on the political level the debates about various food requirements and different food practices appearing in the

public sphere are rather presented as a collision between different alimentary cultures. That results in increasing social political debates that have not existed before such as the debates on French national identity linked not only to immigration, integration but also French gastronomy and its role in transmission of the French cultural identity.

Moreover the promotion of the French gastronomic culture through its inclusion in UNESCO's World Heritage List and *laïcité* might also represent a paradoxical wish of reintroducing some degree of holism into France's highly individualistic society, though, on different levels. Similarly as *laïcité,* which is the idea to ensure the equal treatment of all convictions, respect of differences and reinforce solidarity (*vivre-ensemble*), so could the French culinary culture be perceived evoking certain collective memory and the sense of belonging to the 'imaginary community'. However, while *laïcité* rather pushes the differences to the private sphere, the support of the French culinary tradition and rejection of certain culinary practices could be interpreted as a tool to support national feelings and impose a national dimension on certain issues towards certain cultural groups.

Confronted by rising cultural-religious diversity within the society and the growing sense of individuality, state seems to force group's identity by legitimizing certain secular order and cultural ideas that creates a particular secular cultural subject that shows his loyalty to the state and its cultural heritage, and thereby results in exclusion of those who do not accept to follow these cultural and secular ideas. What is more, the research revealed that France has difficulties of breaking free with its cultural Catholic past and in its practice *laïcité* might no longer be perceived as laicism but rather as *laïcité* of Judeo-Christian speaking in terms of Shakman-Hurd. Christian religion has in some way become a part of a common secularized French culture because its removal might challenge the foundations of the society, it could be used a tool of opposition to the Muslim population, and because of the 'immunitory' feature of the secular condition that prevents to see Islam as an opportunity and not only as a threat.

Yet, I would argue that the combination of *laïcité* with French culinary culture only seems as an exclusion mechanism from the first sight. Similarly as it was in the beginning of the twentieth century, today France is in transition. Therefore, the ambiguous application of *laïcité* suggests that France is searching how to avoid the tensions between the founding principles of the *laïcité* – liberty of conscience, equality of rights and general interest*, -* and to adapt to contemporary French socio-cultural landscape and to the context of globalization.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1. Food, Identity and Culture: theoretical approaches to food studies

Food studies present an interdisciplinary approach to food-related issues and in recent decades the food studies and anthropology of food gained a lot of attention as an important field of study that illuminates relevant societal processes, cultural and historical development of societies and explains human behaviour. Historically food-based identities could be linked with a whole set of issues such as gender politics, identity politics, ethnic formation, labour issues, contemporary processes of industrialization, globalization and its counter-force localization. Thus, it should not be surprising that food studies and contemporary food politics become the themes that increasingly attract the attention of scholars of various fields of study. However, it also remains a much-contested area of study.

Jennifer Ruark in one of her articles in the Chronicle of Higher Education (1999) defined food studies as 'hot commodity' which is a 'new' academic field, however, it is regarded with suspicion by some scholars who accuse it of being 'scholarship-lite' because of 'its supposed lack of disciplinary rigor and its associations with food enthusiasts and popular historians rather than more serious-minded academics' (Jennifer Ruark, 1999, in Jackson, 2013:1). Moreover, this still 'new' academic field remains surrounded with concerns which aspects of food should included in this field of study. Jan Ellen Spiegel (2012), an awarded journalist on energy, environment and food and agriculture, defined the emergence of the contemporary food studies in this way:

> […] in an era of widespread interest, if not downright concern, about how that ear of corn, destined for a pot of boiling water on a perfect summer evening is grown, processed, marketed, distributed and used — and what it means for health, commerce, the economy and even the ecological state of the planet — colleges and universities have come to realize that the classic food disciplines simply will not do anymore. And so food studies were born. This new academic field, taking shape in an expanding number of colleges and universities, coordinates the food-related instruction sprinkled throughout academia in recognition that food is not just relevant, but critical to dozens of

disciplines. It's agriculture; it's business; it's health; it's the economy; it's the environment; it's international relations; it's war and peace. (Spiegel, 2012)

Food is 'critical to dozens of disciplines', moreover, new aspects of these disciplines such as genetically modified food, cloned food, food history and other contemporary food controversies demand to talk about food in itself with all of its different dimensions (Spiegel, 2012). Therefore, it is worth discussing the history of the emergence of this study area and the main sociological perspectives.

According to Mennell, Murcott and Vat Otterloo (1992) studies of food and eating could be analysed from three perspectives: functional, structural, and developmental. In the beginning food anthropology was dominated by the functionalist ideas. Two main anthropologists were Bronislaw Malinowski and Edward Evans-Pritchard who explored food by its functions and practical necessities. Gradually the functionalist approach was replaced by structuralist theory, concerned with ideas about the principles of cultural representation that emphasized the symbolic meaning of food. Claude Lévi-Strauss who is famous for his 'culinary triangle' and attempts to show the connection between culture and nature in human thought represented this trend. These three anthropologists significantly contributed to the emergence of food studies as a new discipline (Albala, 2013).

Functionalist approach is based on the analogy between society and an organic system, like a living body. Functionalism sees society as made of different features that are responsible for coherent and continuous functioning of the social system. Whereas the functionalist theory understands culture as adaptive mechanism, that allows people to survive and reproduce, for structuralists culture is a complex network of symbols. Therefore, the structuralists emphasize the importance of interpreting and explaining these meanings. The more individuals see themselves as different from each other because of profound cultural differences, the more they engage in analysing the meanings and experiences. Hence, whereas functionalism theorizes the way that different components of the system are interrelated and form a coherent whole, structuralism looks deeper in the structures of human thought (Albala, 2013; Anderson, 2014:5-8; Goody, 1982:17).

The Polish anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942), one of the most important anthropologists of the twentieth century, did an ethnographic work of food production and allocation systems in the Trobriand Islands, and explored the complex patterns of belief, which articulated these systems. Later, one of Malinowski students,

Audrey Richards, did a functional study of nutrition among the Southern Bantu (1932) and analysed from the functionalist perspective the connection between the production, the preparation and the consumption of food with the life cycle, group structures and social linkages within them. Symbolic significance of food and of nutritional practices was a recurring subject in Richard's works (Richards, 1932, Malinowski, 1935, in Beardsworth & Keil, 2002:59).

French ethnologist and anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908-2009), who is often mentioned as the inventor or 'father' of Food Studies, proposed a structuralist approach to the analysis of food cultures. He emphasized the importance of exploring the symbolic meanings of food. In his fundamental work *Les mythologiques: Le cru et le cuit* (1965) Lévi-Strauss seeks to show that food vary from culture to culture, and that allows to speak of food cultures. What is more, he observed that the way of cooking in different societies could be interpreted as a language through which a community 'unconsciously translates its structure' or also unconsciously reveals its contradictions – food culture reveals the truths about the community. He proposed a structuralist conception of food system and defined it as 'culinary triangle' (Lévi-Strauss, 1965, in Goody, 1982:24).

'Culinary triangle' consists of three ways of cooking - boiling, roasting and smoking. The preparation processes, cooking methods and the end-product reflect the relationships between nature and culture as well as the social relationships that are often binary oppositions forming community. The process of roasting belongs to nature because of minimal contact with human agent but the product is considered as culturally transformed; because of the fire it also is associated with men and symbolizes destruction or loss. Smoking is also a natural process but its end-product belongs to culture. Boiling is associated with women and family environment, and belongs to nature. By this model of 'culinary triangle' Lévi-Strauss attempted to demonstrate that food preparation and the cooking vocabulary associated with cooking is everywhere structured, and that universal principles underlie these structures (Lévi-Strauss, 1965, in Goody, 1982).

Mennell (1996) proposed a developmental approach due to the limits of the structuralist approach. Mennell criticizes the dominant structuralist theory to food preferences as it 'does not have much to offer in understanding their origins, formation and processes of change over time', thereby structuralism is accused of being too static (Mennell, 1996:15). According to Good (1982) this approach could be understood not as

an explicit perspective and theory as functionalism and structuralism are. It should rather be seen as a separate residual category where one can place different approaches that show signs of common characteristics.

The most fundamental characteristic is that assumption that any attempt to comprehend contemporary cultural forms needs to take into account the way that these contemporary forms relate to the past forms: '[…] the social forces which shape the taste of one generation are themselves the product of long-term processes of social development running back many generations' (Mennell, 1996:15). To see the social change one should not only focus on history constituted of different episodes which have some effect, but too look beneath and see the 'sequential order constituting structured processes of change' (Mennell, 1996:15).

Mennell's own personal contribution to the sociology of food was his comparative study of eating and taste in England and France (Mennell, 1985). This work, based on Elias's work that traces civilizing processes in Western societies for centuries, shows how the external constraints upon individual shifted toward the internalized constraints that individual exercise upon himself. This shift from external to internal constraints influences various areas of social life and also eating patterns.

French sociologist Émile Durkheim (1858-1917) has contributed to the development of structural functionalism.   French sociologist Emile Durkheim explored the functional aspect of food within the terms of religion and argued that food is central to religion, and it serves as a marker of sharing and separation within the group. According to Durkheim, religion is a 'collective representation' of the social group, derives from society and acts as an element reinforcing solidarity within the group. To achieve their goals, the group participate in emotional activities, and ritual ceremonies often include food (Durkheim, 2012).

Annex 2. Presentation of the research for the interviewees

A la recherche du lien entre la gastronomie française et la laïcité

Dans cette recherche j'analyse deux processus importants dans le contexte socio-culturel et politique français qui se sont développés au cours des deux derniers siècles. Le premier processus concerne le développement de la culture culinaire française moderne

depuis la Révolution française de 1789; et le second processus se réfère à l'évolution de la société et de la politique laïque française. J'étudie le lien entre ces deux aspects – *laïcité* et la culture culinaire française – à partir des débats actuels concernant les différentes pratiques alimentaires et les habitudes alimentaires, en particulier celles des minorités religieuses en France (par exemple, la nourriture halal et casher) qui apparaissent dans la sphère publique. Par conséquent, j'analyse le discours public et les attitudes à propos de l'importance du patrimoine culinaire français, pratiques alimentaires provenant de l'étranger et son lien avec la *laïcité*.

La principale question de la recherche: dans quelles façons les habitudes alimentaires et les pratiques alimentaires des immigrés en France contestent l'identité culturelle française construite à travers sa culture culinaire et contestent le projet républicain-laïque, et la compréhension de la sphère publique laïque?

Cette recherche a trois objectifs:

1. Prenant en considération les liens étroits entre la culture culinaire française et la construction de l'identité culturelle française, l'objectif de la thèse c'est d'analyser pour quelles raisons certaines habitudes alimentaires provenant d'autres cultures alimentaires sont intégrées dans la culture culinaire française, et pourquoi certaines habitudes alimentaires pourraient éprouver la résistance. L'objectif est également d'explorer la façon dont l'identité culinaire peut tenir compte des changements et à quel degré « authenticité » peut répondre aux demandes de nouveaux publics.

2. En outre, à travers le cadre du principe de *laïcité* et les débats actuels sur les pratiques alimentaires religieuses des minorités religieuses en France, je cherche à repenser la division entre la sphère privée-intime et la sphère laïque public.

3. En plus, en se concentrant sur les débats actuels sur les pratiques alimentaires, je cherche à enquêter sur ce qui est la perception actuelle du principe de *laïcité* et comment il affecte les relations entre les différents membres de la société.

Les questions de l'interview sont basées sur ces trois objectifs:
- La culture française culinaire et l'identité culturelle, l'authenticité et les transformations.
- Pratiques alimentaires religieuses des minorités religieuses en termes de religion-*laïcité*.
- Perception du principe de la *laïcité*.

Annex 3: transcripts of the interviews

Interview 10/06/2015
Transcript

Sofiane (S)
Jeanne (J)

(Recording 09_02)

I: est-ce que vous pouvez vous présenter, prénom, âge?

J: alors, Jeanne, j'ai 25 ans, je suis en service civique aux Cemea, information jeune public et le festival des films d'éducation.
S: je suis Sofiane, je suis français…
J: haheheheh…
S: heee…je suis en stage au pole Europe et International a l'association nationale des Cemea. J'ai 22 ans.

 (Recording 18_06)

I: Si je dis « culture culinaire », a quoi ca vous associe?

S: bah, par l'association du coup je dirais l'ensemble de….c'est bizarre quand même de dire comme ca….voila, c'est un ensemble des valeurs ou principes parce que du coup tu parles de cuisine, mais je pense qu'il y a plein choses qui complètent la façon de cuisiner, je pense c'est la manière de cuisiner, la manière dont tu utilises les aliments parce que dans, j'sais pas… par exemple, telle ou telle culture je dirais tu ferais plutôt cuire tel aliment alors que dans une autre tu ferais plutôt bouillir, fin, des choses comme ca. Donc, plutôt la manière d'appréhender la nourriture et la façon de cuisiner, et comment alors, en quoi peut-être même plus loin au niveau, j'sais pas quoi, en science, mais l'impact sur la manière de vivre parce que quand tu vois la relation a la nourriture au fonction de….bah oui, voila, la relation a la nourriture. Je veux dire que quand t'as la nourriture en abondance t'as pas la même appréciation que dans l'endroit ou tu a moins…

J: bah oui, je pense que c'est, bah, je pense que c'est une construction sociale qui détermine comment on fait la cuisine, quel rapport on a a la cuisine et a la nourriture quoi, je pense….et, comment a dit Sofiane, a la fois c'est comment on aborde les aliments, comment on les cuisine, c'est ca aussi. Et en suite je pense qu'il y a la question du fait de comment on mange même en termes de visualité ou pas, de beaucoup a manger, de manger avec les doigts ou avec les couverts, avec la baguette…cuisine a plusieurs ou est-ce que c'est … bah, aujourd'hui aussi on peut poser la question si c'est toujours réservé a la femme et voila…

S: oui, ca reflète un peu la société au finale…

J: oui c'est ca, c'est vrai.

I : la gastronomie française en trois mots pour vous?

J: Je dirais…hmm…c'est trop réducteur…non, je rigole. Je dirais…complexe…après j'ai des mots comme conviviale, raffinée.

S: moi je dirais régionale, hmmm simple, mais du coup c'est par rapport a notre vision ? Régionale, et je dirais simple. Vraiment trop dur quoi…bah oui complexe quoi.

J: Simple et complexe a la foi?

S: Simple dans sa construction et complexe dans sa variété, régionale parce que je la trouve hyper varie…

I : En France apparaît les efforts d'allier le raffinement de la gastronomie française avec la nouvelle tendance du « consommer halal » (des restos traditionnel gastronomiques entièrement halal s'ouvrent, la production de foie gras halal etc.). Comment percevez-vous ces transformations de modèle alimentaire français?

S : il y a la hiérarchisation des convictions, si tu manges pas….je veux dire que si tu as des convictions qu'elles soient les convictions religieuses, personnelles, ce sont quand-même les convictions, c'est ce qui fait que tu adaptes ton régime alimentaire. Apres je pense ce qui gêne c'est du coup que ce soit religieux et après je voir la différence entre l'espace public et l'espace privée, en restaurant bon, je m'en fou, halal pas halal, ok, après dans l'espace publique c'est un peu plus diffèrent je pense, on a parle hier en plus…

J : cantine et truc comme ca…

S : une des questions aussi c'est évoquer le vivre-ensemble, tu vois, mais faire de halal a la cantine, faire de halal dans la formation et tout c'est un peu genre, tu achètes l'effet social, tu dis vas-y c'est bon…en fait t'es dans un groupe, donc, t'es censé de ne pas faire de différence entre personnes et tout….mais tu dis eux mangent halal, ils mangent kasher, ils mangent vegan …mais elle-est ou la cote communautaire, mais ban dans mauvaise sens comme on entend souvent en France….il y a plus de communauté, il y a que des 'individualités' genre… était moeuf hier qui venait d'alsace-lorraine ou le régime est diffèrent, le concordat, et en gros les gamins ils mangent halal, tu vois, il y a les parties de la journée quand les cathos va la ba, les protestants vont la bas, les musulmans vont la bas et ils font leurs moments tous seuls, tu vois, je veux dire elle nous a raconte qu'a la cantine c'est comme ca : qui mange de halal, et il y a des gamins ils lèvent leurs mains…je sais pas quoi, quand t'es dans l'espace publique c'est diffèrent et en plus j'entends beaucoup beaucoup d'histoire sur la marchandisation de halal, halal aujourd'hui c'est le business…..ca même perd sa sens, je veux dire, halal c'est propre a consommation mais tu tout mettre halal quoi….j'ai vu une photo sur mon portable et j'ai tombe sur la vinaigrait halal, ca veut dire quoi….ca veut dire que c'est propre a la consommation…du coup, c'est ridicule.

I : le repas gastronomique français est classé depuis 2010 au patrimoine mondial immatériel de l'UNESCO. Ca vous faire sentir comment ?

S1: … je trouve que , bah, il y a beaucoup de stéréotypes et cliches et tout autour de la gastronomie française, surtout vécus a l'étranger et en fait je pense pas que … je pense pas que c'est la cuisine qui vaut plus qu'une autre, du coup, le fait d'inscrire une cuisine en particulier au patrimoine mondial de l'Unesco immatériel c'est un peu……pour ce qui font de la cuisine au niveau professionnel j'imagine que ca devrait être bien pour eux pour se

dire voila, notre travail est reconnu, mais a même temps est-ce qu'ils ont vraiment besoin de ca pour que leur travail soit reconnu, je dis il y a déjà tellement des cliches de la gastronomie française a l'étranger, les gens qui voient ca comme un type de malade, alors que…. qu'en fait y a, fin, comme tu disais, la gastronomie s'est tellement lie a l'histoire d'un pays, a son parcours et du coup…

I: est-ce que ca représente la politique de pays? Est-ce que ca représente un peu la peur que la gastronomie française est menacée?

J: forcement oui, il y a des campagnes, alors….d'un cote je pense qu'en effet que réaffirmer la culture culinaire française, la gastronomie française, c'est forcement pour certaines personnes, j'imagine, réaffirmer, se protéger peut-être de fait que, justement, la culture française est bien au niveau…en fait, elle est partiellement influencée autant par les autres gastronomies qu'elle coûtait tous les jours quoi, et donc, forcement, les grands chefs cherchent des choses d'inspiration dans l'asiatique les choses comme ca, voila, mais est-ce que justement on a vraiment besoin de….parce que la cuisine c'est justement quelque chose qui évolue, parce que sinon, on serait toujours en train de bouffer…quatre coqs au vin etc.

S: c'est comme culture, tu vois, c'est pas figée…

J: c'est ca, exactement, c'est que … alors, est-ce que pour reconnaitre finalement la gastronomie française en tant qu'elle est dans le sens ou la France est un pays qui attache beaucoup d'importance a la façon dont tu manges, a ce que tu manges, comment on cuisine, est-ce qu'on entend ca comme ca, ou est-ce que c'est vraiment quelque chose beaucoup plus restrictive qui va être des plats précis, et les menus de cuisine précises, des aliments, de les cuisiner de certaine façon, est-ce que dans ce cas la oui…je sais pas….comme tu dis, on sacralise pas, on n'est pas au piédestal… cuisine c'est un des rares choses, c'est quelque chose qui est partagée vraiment par tout le monde tu vois dans un sens, la je te parle pas de la gastronomie des restos gastronomiques, je parle de la cuisine que tout le monde peut faire, j'sais pas, j'en sais rien en fait…

S: moi, je pense que c'est….j'ai l'impression que c'est un peu des manœuvres, en fait je pense que le truc qui a été fait pas juste pour dire 'la cuisine française c'est bien' mais plutôt pour réaffirmer un peu la position de la France de la manière générale au niveau géopolitique, je vois ca plus comme quelque chose politique et pas d'autre chose de dire 'tiens, les français on est encore la, et on a la bonne cuisine, et nous on est toujours au top quoi'…il y a pas mal des choses qui sont inscrits dans le patrimoine de l'Unesco et je veux dire que la France a quand-même un pois énorme au niveau des décision internationales, donc, je sais pas si on a vraiment besoin d'ajouter la cuisine juste pour affirmer leur position, je pense que c'est un peu a l'esprit, tu sais, de la francophonie en général quoi…genre t'as des instances internationales, on a le droit de parler français, et tous les français le savent, après je comprends que ca peut devenir une forme de résister que l'anglais devienne utiliser partout au monde mais tous les pays francophones c'est un peu comme néo-colonialisme pour la francophonie….et la gastronomie, elle change pas la vie quotidienne…

J: oui, l'image qu'elle est au monde elle va pas changer juste parce que c'est inscrite au patrimoine d'Unesco…

J: oui, je pense qu'elle est influencée par les autres cultures étrangères, mais après c'est la logique…en fait c'est déjà un discours tellement ridicule de résumer la transformation de la gastronomie justement aux kebabs, déjà, c'est ultra-réducteur et ca réduit déjà le fait que …au immigrées…les immigrées, il y a que des mecs qui font des kebabs, que des mecs qui viennent d'Orient quoi, il n'y a pas d'autres immigres tu vois….quand on sait bien que , en fait ce qui est paradoxal c'est que la France a toujours été un pays d'immigration mais ca a jamais été reconnu, que du coup dans le sens collective les 'immigrés' bah ces ont juste les gens qui viennent des pays du sud, je fais ca avec mes doigts entre guihmets… hehehe….et du coup, c'est ridicule, je sais même pas si … oui, elle est influencée c'est certain mais quand tu vois les plats de coq au vin je pense de quelque chose qui se transforme, tu sais, les français n'ont pas pris d'habitude d'abandonner leurs recettes pour manger les kebabs tous les jours…

J: je pense qu'en effet la gastronomie française elle est….en fait la gastronomie elle est comme la société française, elle intègre des éléments qui viennent d'autres pays et pour moi ils sont enrichissantes de manière qu'elle s'enrichi par des jeunes qui viennent de partout et justement elle est pas mis en danger par ca, au contraire, elle devrait profiter de tous et de tout la plutôt que transformer ca en menace ou mis en danger…

I: donc, elle est pas menace mais elle plutôt évolue?

S: oui…mais après je crois que c'est la vision…

J: en fait je pense qu'on peut pas nier le fait qu'elle évolue et qu'il y a d'autres gastronomies qui sont la…

S: est-ce que c'est vraiment la menace…

J: est-ce que c'est vraiment la menace….fin, pour moi, personnellement je pense pas de tout que ce soit une menace, je pense que …

S: la culture on dit s'est pas figée quoi…

J: bah oui, et toutes les gastronomies sont des mélanges, les influences viennent de partout, et c'est comme ca que se construit le monde, donc, dire qu'on est en danger c'est justement d'avoir peur de quelque chose…

S: c'est comme j'ai dit au début, c'est réducteur de dire qu'il y a que des kebabs….tu vois, en Alsace et Lorraine t'as plein de bouffe qui est influencée par l'Allemagne, dans le nord c'est la Belgique, même tout Benelux de manière générale, après pareil dans le sud avec l'Italie et l'Espagne, fin, du coup… C'est un peu réducteur, je pense que ce qu'on essaie de faire encore une fois c'est de stigmatiser l'immigration qui est seulement de dehors de l'Europe même quand la plupart de migration elle vient … elle est quand même originaire de l'Europe

(rec5)

I : L'idée de laïcité et l'application de ce principe sont toujours très débattues par différents chercheurs, philosophes, hommes politiques (laïcité positive, ouverte, fermée, plurielle, du combat etc.). Alors, c'est quoi pour vous la laïcité?

S1: en fait le truc c'est que, ce qui m'est paradoxal c'est qu'on bassine avec la laïcité depuis qu'on est tout petit avec les cours de citoyenneté et tout, mais qu'au finale on sais pas vraiment quoi c'est parce que la laïcité c'est un concept tellement abstrait que même maintenant te dire qu'est-ce que c'est la laïcité pour moi, bah, je dirais qu'en fait qu'on souvent entend ramène au fait religieux, ce qui est normal tu vois, a la base la laïcité c'est la séparation de l'église et de l'état parce que , bah, du coup, l'église était quand même assez…elle avait beaucoup de pouvoir et on avait envie que la religion plus influence l'état mais avec l'apparition entre guimmets….bah, il y a certaines religions qui sont la depuis longtemps quoi, même l'islam depuis le début des colonies, on sait qu'il y a des gens musulmans dans les colonies. Du coup, il y a une nouvelle dimension attachée au vivre-ensemble, fin, voila, la laïcité c'est ca, c'est vivre-ensemble dans le respect des convictions des unes des l'autres, mais en France c'est aussi la connotation, bah, du coup, de ne pas montrer sa conviction. Donc, en fait c'est qui est bizarre c'est que la laïcité a la base c'est quand même la séparation des églises et l'état, sauf en Alsace et Lorraine, mais qui du coup, en fait c'est devenu super privatif quoi, je dis que si quelqu'un porte voile ou si quelqu'un …on s'en fout en fait et si quelqu'un a tel ou tel type d'appartenance a telle conviction ou quoi, bah, on s'en tape en fait, c'est juste faire un point avec …en fait je pense que surtout maintenant quand on parle de la laïcité on pense de l'islam, tu vois, mais c'est juste par rapport a l'actualité, parce que même hier on a fait la journée sur la laïcité c'était quoi le truc, manger halal, le porte de voile, le ramadan, bah, fin, il n'y avait aucune truc qui était a traverse d'autres religions que l'islam quoi. Du coup, c'est juste des excuses et tout, en fait c'est super complexe, on peut parler des problèmes d'immigration et tout, j'ai envie de parler du fait que les gens commencent a se rendre compte qu'ils ont empêche leur politique d'immigration et du coup maintenant ils essaient de parler de laïcité parce qu'ils veulent pas que les gens se radicalisent et tout, mais il faut comprendre qu'il y a un contexte a traverse de tout ca, et il qu'il y a eu un cheminement quoi, ca c'est pas fait dans coup… je pense que la laïcité c'est un concept tellement vague ….

J1: oui, mais quand tu dis que la laïcité c'est la séparation des églises et de l'état, tu peux tout a fait être religieux et laïque en fait, mais problème c'est que … en attenance on a oppose les deux quand en fait….

S : est-ce que être laïque c'est égal d'être athée…

J : pas du tout quoi….normalement, c'est vraie que la laïcité ce l'empêche de…de fait que des décisions publiques, que le fonctionnement de l'état ne soient pas lies a des principes religieux, du coup de respecter toutes les religions qui peuvent agir dans cette espace public, ca veut dire que, de ne pas faire distinction, de ne pas favoriser plus l'une ou l'autre, mais en fait est-ce que c'est autoriser tout le monde a faire… après c'est la question de la liberté, la liberté individuelle, ca veut dire….

S: je pensais des espaces publiques et privées…

J1: mais c'est–a-dire que, par exemple, on autorise tout le monde a pouvoir choisir qu'est-ce qu'ils vont bouffer a la cantine sous le prétexte de sa religion…tu vois, a partir de la on repart…est-ce qu'on fait pas de distinction et on ne propose pas des menus alternatifs a la cantine mais a même temps est-ce que ca favorise… voila, ce genre des questions quoi…est-ce que….moi, personnellement j'ai pas de réponse…

S : mais comme tu disais, maintenant le truc c'est que maintenant le terme est un peu devoile quoi, on a plus cette notion de séparation d'état et des églises, et le fait que tu puisses être religieux et laïque a même temps, je sens que cette question la elle est lie au politique d'immigration et je pense que c'est super, en fait, c'est bizarre qu'on est parti du concept de séparation des églises et de l'état et le respect au vivre-ensemble et on est arrive a ce qui est la laïcité maintenant en France, j'ai l'impression c'est limite de la tolérance institutionnalisé quoi, après la question de parler de la cantine c'est-a-dire, c'est l'état qui paye la bouffe a la cantine, est-ce que l'état et prêt a payer pour acheter la viande sacre quoi, c'est ca la question…moi, c'est mon avis, et je veux dire que les gamins peuvent amener leurs gamelles et bouffent ce que leurs parents ils préparé a manger et basta, sauf que maintenant tout le monde veut son petite reconnaissance personnelle et tout et ca je pense aussi est lie a l'immigration parce qu'on a tellement stigmatise les gens que du coup les gens se forcent plus sur leurs convictions qui sont même peu religieuses j'ai l'impression, tu vois, manger de halal, ci et ca, c'est plus des besoins de reconnaissance identitaire en fait, plus que besoin de reconnaissance religieuse et…..tant que tu fais pas de prosélytisme, je vois pas ou est le problème, je pense qu'on se trouve un peu en ce moment autour de la question de la laïcité….et je pense que la plupart des gens pense comme moi…mes les acteurs sont tellement déconnecté de ce comment les gens vivent au quotidien, tu vois, ils ne se rendent compte de la réalité des choses…

Interview No 2 : 11/06/2015
Transcript

Tristan (T)

 (Recording Tristan 1):

I: Pouvez-vous présenter brièvement? Votre nom, âge, de quelle région venez-vous?

T: Je m'appelle Tristan Rozellec, j'ai 22 ans. Je viens d'Auvergne…tu connais l'Auvergne en plus, vraiment d'un village au milieu de la France et je suis a Paris….depuis 4 ans je vis ici.

(Recording Tristan 2)

I: Si je dis « culture culinaire », a quoi ca vous associe ?

T: mhm…ca me fait penser à l'identité culinaire et après…

I: c'est quoi l'identité culinaire?

T: justement…je sais pas si on peut dire ….je suis en train de penser au …un peu au climat actuel, surtout, tu vois, il y a tous ces histoires, débats sur l'identité nationale, genre qui est français qui est étranger et tout. Et du coup je pense pas que ce soit nouveau aujourd'hui mais il y a tendance avoir souvent...ou dire c'est la cuisine 'bien chez nous' ou ca c'est pas ma cuisine. Par exemple, t'as des familles qui sont très françaises et c'est pas leur truc de manger un kebab ou je sais pas quoi…

La culture culinaire en général je pense que la culture culinaire comme ca avant une identité c'est un héritage, c'est-a-dire que …ahmm… beaucoup beaucoup de peuple et même des civilisations se sont développées, comment dire, autour d'un certain rythme de vie. Du coup, a traverse un rythme de vie il y a l'idée qui a apparu, apparemment, l'idée du début du monde que tu manges ce que tu produis et après tu nourris… tu nourris…tu nourris une culture et une manière de vivre avec ce que tu manges. Et après c'est plus ou moins mis partout, par exemple, quasiment partout dans le monde (je prends pas la France)…mais je sais qu'on a souvent l'idée de globaliser une culture culinaire d'un pays mais dans le pays il-même il y a énormément des cultures culinaires différentes…

(Recording Tristan 3)

I: Maintenant, on précise la question et on se concentre sur la culture culinaire en France et la gastronomie française. La gastronomie française est extraordinairement réputée dans le monde, cependant, à l'étranger, la gastronomie française est aussi très souvent réduite aux baguettes, aux cuisses de grenouille et au camembert. Mais quoi représentent la culture culinaire française et la gastronomie française pour vous? …Trois cliches, est-ce que c'est vraiment tout?

T: non…non justement….ca c'est… les français sont très attaches a celle-là parce qu'il y a l'idée de richesse …la culture culinaire française et tellement riche de partout ….le… c'est important ….en fait, tu trouveras au niveau culturelle c'est tellement importante que tu trouves pas une seule ville ou un seul village en France ou ce serait pas attache …ancrée dans le territoire. Par exemple, il y a même des régions plus réputées… par exemple, je viens d'Auvergne, et en Auvergne chaque village va avoir son fromage ou si tu descends au sud dans Languedoc chaque un des villages a son propre vin. Et en fait, c'est…c'est difficile a résumer parce que c'est extrement riche…

I: tu penses qu'il y a une cuisine nationale française ou qu'il y a beaucoup de petites cuisines régionales?

T: non, je pense que c'est un gigantesque ensemble.

I: et alors pourquoi on dit 'cuisine française nationale'?

T: c'est plus facile. C'est plus facile a résumer je pense…le… c'est…c'est extrement riche, par exemple, si tu voulais… je sais pas comment ….il y a énormément des plats, il y a énormément de produits, et du coup, si tu veux, si tu trouves, si tu demandes, par exemple, si tu rends dans une conversation française et tu demandes aux français qu'il est, quels sont les plats principaux ils vont te sortir avec cinquantaine. Et peut-être même pas les mêmes parce qu'il y en a beaucoup. Ca change que le, hmmm….la France elle-même en

entité c'est juste pas très peu français sauf auprès des étrangers on dit nous on est français. Par contre, les français entre-deux se sera plutôt au niveau régional …chaque français a la tendance de privilégier sa région, on dit chez nous on fait ca, chez nous on fait ca…et c'est déjà tellement riche en soi dans les régions que prendre une cuisine nationale en soi se serait beaucoup trop énorme en fait. Donc, je pense que, plutôt, l'intérêt en français adora parler de sa cuisine et pas de sa cuisine en tant que français… cuisine en tant que citoyen d'une région et qui a déjà sa spécialité. Et ca c'est très… très bon.

I : Imaginez que vous êtes à l'étranger (dans un pays européen). Pendant votre séjour vous êtes demande de présenter la culture alimentaire française à un group des étrangers mais sans avoir possibilité d'apporter des produits locaux ou cuisiner des plates typiques. Comment vous la présenterez alors ?

Je pense que je présenterais…je pense que je situerais sur toutes les spécialités régionales parce que tous les français sont comme ca de manière générale…mais …que …il y a idée en savoir-faire…le…en France, ca jeu un peu…l'héritage c'est très très importante… en France on est très attache a faire un plat comme… comme on faisait avant, comme nous l'a appris, ou alors comme a la normande, a la basque…quelque chose …mais il y a idée dans le savoir-faire et cette idée se colle un peu avec l'image qu'on un peu les cliches autour du monde… quand tu vois un chef français tu imagines un chef très élégant qui manipule et tout…parce que on est très attache a bien faire la cuisine, ca c'est très important. Il y a des plats mais ca demande toujours certaine maitrise, quand on fait la cuisine française on essaie de faire quelque chose de très bien.

I: le pays de bien manger, de bien vivre et de bien boire…?

T: oui, c'est ca!

(Recording Tristan 4)

I: Le repas gastronomique français est classé depuis 2010 au patrimoine mondial immatériel de l'UNESCO. Ca vous faire sentir comment ? Qu'est-ce que cela représente pour la France ? Pensez-vous que c'était nécessaire de l'inclure au patrimoine de l'UNESCO?

T: il y a énormément des choses qui entrent, les églises, les ponts et des traditions. Je sais qu'il y a des danses traditionnelles qui sont entrées dans le patrimoine immatériel Unesco mais le repas gastronomique je le savais pas….et qu'est-ce que … oui... sauf que…au niveau de repas gastronomique je sais pas sur quelle modalité particulière on est… je veux dire, ca a été le repas gastronomique qui a été inscrite en tant qu'un évènement particulier..?

I: en tant qu'un évènement familial et convivial…

T: …donc, c'est vraiment l'idée dans le repas autour d'un plat typiquement français? C'est pas sur le plat lui-même, ca c'est intéressant parce que je ne le voyais pas ca comme, bah, j'ai pas trop réfléchi… mais pas typiquement français…le fait que qu'il y a un amour a bien manger a table, ca d'accord, le fait que ca soit typiquement français c'est intéressant

mais je suis pas forcement contre… après ca se sacralise énormément ca c'est sur…genre…

I: la gastronomie en France?

T: ah oui, l'idée que ca entre dans l'Unesco ca vraiment montre que….bah, dans l'idée d'un français moyen ca place la cuisine française sur un piédestal. Ce qui est super intéressant c'est que ce soit repas qui soit entre a travers le patrimoine Unesco mais pas le plat en lui-même…ca veut dire que ce soit les comportements des français a table qui sont plutôt notes en fait. Dans ce sens la, j'ai jamais … j'ai jamais dit par rapport aux autres pays, par exemple, est-ce que les anglais, est-ce que les irlandais, est-ce que les allemands , est-ce que les italiens ont un amour pour la nourriture …je sais qu'il y a des pays ou il y a un amour de bien manger et d'être a table…par exemple, en Italie et en Espagne je sais qu'ils adorent ca, et il y a un amour certain, être a table et de bien manger…mais en France c'est assez particulier …

I: pourquoi?

T: parce que la France a….au moins dans l'univers que ca partage il y a idée que ce soit assez raffinée, pas dans le sens tout est chic et tout, mais dans l'idée que … si je passe en bon….bah voila, le repas gastronomique entre a l'Unesco, ok, qu'est-ce que c'est gastronomique…c'est que tu repose a la table et que t'as pas que l'idée de bien manger mais ce qu'on appelle la 'bonne-chère', 'bonne-chère' c'est très très français...c'est le terme qui revient très très souvent…

I: tu peux expliquer un peu plus?

T: la bonne chère? C'est …en fait, c'est un terme médiéval, ca date du moyen âge et il y a un auteur français qui est extrement important, est-ce qui est François Rabelais…Rabelais est un des plus grands auteurs français…et surtout, et c'est important que quand tu lis les récites des aventures de Pantagruel et de Gargantua tu as un espèce d'amour d'un repas, et c'est de repas énorme… si tu veux, c'est vraiment la bonne bouffe qui s'installe et justement….et justement le terme 'RABLE PLAISIR' ca existe…en gros c'est quand tu prends le nom de Rabelais et tu ajoute un adjectif, Rabelais-plaisir…et quand tu parle de quelque chose de Rabelais-plaisir tu parle en général de quelque chose qui tourne autour de la bouffe et ca parle d'un plaisir de bien manger….un espèce de plaisir comme ca. Par exemple, on peut dire qu'Obélix est vraiment quelqu'un de Rabelais-plaisir surement… en gros c'est ca…

.Je pense que le repas gastronomique français a deux choses, ca jeu vraiment dans le deux mots…déjà t'as le repas… du repas ca veut dire que tu as beaucoup de nourriture et de quelque chose qu'on appelle la bonne bouffe…une bonne bouffe c'est quand tu vraiment a des plats assez riches…c'est quelque chose de très lourde et de très riche…en général quand tu sors d'un bon repas français c'est que tu as vraiment bien mange, ca c'est rabelais-plaisir. Mais c'est aussi gastronomique, et gastronomique c'est l'idée que tu ne manges pas n'importe quoi et que c'est assez raffine, que même si tu manges ce qu'on appelle un plat en sauce c'est quelque chose de gras, par exemple, le pot-au-feu, la blanquette de veau ca marche aussi, c'est que tu as …tu mange quelque chose d'assez consistant et d'assez lourde mais a même temps tu savoures vraiment…et pour ca que j'ai

jamais réfléchi si on a …si le repas gastronomique français se différencie de tout du reste, mais si oui, je crois que ca se ferait par l'idée d'associer ces deux aspects: les fait de bien manger et beaucoup, et le fait de savourer chaque chose que tu manges de façon assez raffinée…

La décolonisation …je crois qu'a partir de la que tout a été lance…tout les soucis de, de… comment dire, d'intégration, de racisme, de laïcité, fin, de la mise en cause de la laïcité, qu'a partir de moment …évidement, ce qui a lance le truc c'est la fin de guerre d'Algérie qui a été vraiment une date forte…qu'est que s'est passe a ce moment ou… comme l'Algérie était colonisée c'était pas le rapport entre les français et les musulmans, c'était le rapport entre les français en Algérie, les pied-noir, et les musulmans…le problème c'est qu'une fois l'Algérie n'était plus musulman et bien beaucoup de musulmans sont arrivées en France, et a partir de la….le problème…une partie musulman est en France. Beaucoup des musulmans et arabes sont venus en France et beaucoup ca a choque…ca a choque parce qu'on a jamais vu si beaucoup des arabes et des musulmans chez nous, et de la tout a été lance…

Et au niveau de la culture culinaire française et la culture culinaire du Maghreb…par exemple la question de la viande halal dans les années 70-90, tout le monde s'en foutais…ca c'était pas le soucis….c'était un niveau culturelle mais au niveau culinaire s'est touche plus tard…

I: quand?

T: aaaaa….et bon, s'est venu plus récemment, c'est surtout dans les années 2000 et même 2010 d'ailleurs...

I: 2010 c'est l'année que j'avais dans ma tête aussi…

T: et voila...par exemple…. c'est le problème des cantines qui illustre le mieux cette histoire, parce qu'avant on s'est jamais pose la question, on a eu la peur de l'intégrisme, c'est-a-dire, il y a des gens qui sont des musulmans chez nous…mais on a commence a se pose la question de plein choses, les questions au niveau de la vie quotidienne, des gens qui portent la burqa dans les rues ca a commence a faire peur qu'avant on s'en foutait…ca devient un problème parce que…depuis qu'on est entre dans le nouveau millénaire, a partir de 2000 il y a une peur de l'intégrisme, il y a une peur d'insécurité….d'insécurité de…en fait ca c'est un vrai problème…a partir des élections présidentielles de 2002 ou on a commence a penser qu'il fallait un ennemi…

I: pourquoi?

T: parce qu'on est sous besoin d'ennemi, on en France! Merde… il y a toujours quelqu'un avec qui ca ne va pas….toujours! Et, en fait, je sais pas si c'est en France particulièrement mais il y a une stigmatisation et l'idée que le…il y a beaucoup problèmes avec, simplement, les arabes. En fait en France si tu veux parler du racisme, tu parles des arabes en général. Les arabes c'est pratique parce que ca parle de cas général, ca parle de problème d'une burqa dans la rue, ca parle d'un problème des jeunes au banlieue qui en général sont des musulmans….tu parles des arabes et tu parles des problèmes et tous qui se passe au monde, par exemple, l'état islamique, les attentats de septembre…en fait, l'islam

est devenu en France un bouque en misère… tout reviens aux arabes parce qu'on a besoin de stigmatiser quelque chose. Je que c'est une connerie, c'est l'idée d'un français moyen, le français moyen c'est le français de base, c'est pas valorisant…ca explique les résultats de front national…en plus, le fait que ca stigmatise, c'est dangereux, ca risque de faire pareil comme avec les juifs pendant l'affaire Dreyfus. C'est qu'on va avoir une communauté particulière qu'il faut mettre en dehors, qu'il faut stigmatiser….et la media elle joue énormément aussi, les français imaginent l'islam comment ils le voient a la télé. Je pense que l'islam ne menace pas la culture française en tant qu'elle mais il menace la mentalité française….dans le sens que tous que tu vois de l'islam a travers la media c'est jamais positive.

(Recording Tristan 5)

I: Selon certains chercheurs et sociologues, la mondialisation de l'alimentation, les nouvelles habitudes alimentaires qui viennent et l'homogénéisation du goût semble représenter l'inverse des valeurs culinaires françaises. Donc, croyez-vous qu'une des motivations pour inclure le repas gastronomique dans l'héritage de l'UNESCO, c'est aussi la peur que la fameuse gastronomie française et l'identité alimentaire française en en danger a cause de la mondialisation ou du fast-food, et que cuisine française pourrait disparaitre parmi des cuisines étrangères? Pourquoi ?

T: Non, je pense pas que la cuisine française soit menacée en que ce soit. Parce que….tout simplement parce que, justement, enfin…C'est très vielle héritage et ce soit pas quelque chose qui risque d'être touche. Je sais que…simplement, la partie comme ca il faut sortir d'utopie…bah, ou de la distopie….qu'il y a villes entières constituées des kebabs, ou des macdos et qu'il y a aucun restaurant français. Je pense que c'est quelque chose qui n'arriverait jamais , parce que …même si beaucoup des français disent un jour ne pas prenez la cuisine française avant tout, il y aura toujours une ville avec un restaurant, une brasserie avec la cuisine, on dira, plus traditionnelle. Plus traditionnel ca rien a dire. Ca veut dire, un resto qui peut proposer de couscous, de blanquette, et n'importe quoi. C'est importante que la gastronomie française survit en tant qu'elle est mais en acceptant qu'il a d'autres gastronomies qui vivent.

I: Qu'elle évolue?

T: qu'elle évolue, oui, dans ce sens la… Du fait que … il n'y a pas de restos français que servent les mêmes plats français. Français….ca veut rien dire.
I: vraiment?

T: Oui, je pense que la cuisine française peut s'ouvrir a d'autres choses et justement doit s'ouvrir a d'autres plats, doit s'ouvrir a d'autres cultures du fait que….merde, on est un pays démocratique…

I: tu parles de la démocratisation de gout?

T: mhmm…par exemple, ce serait un autre débat. Mais je pense que le fait qu'on soit en démocratie ce serais simplement de réapproprier sa propre culture mais de reconnaitre les autres cultures, et d'accepter que d'autres cultures puissent s'installer chez nous…bah…

I: et ca concerne halal et cacher? Tous les débats d'aujourd'hui…

T: Par exemple, bien sur! N'importe qui peut partager la culture française et avoir sa culture en soi. Et ca c'est très importante. Le fait qu'on soit plutôt…
I: est-ce que et comment ca touche le débat autour de la laïcité et le vivre ensemble?

T: oui, je pense…on est pas non plus un bastion mais plutôt un foyer. Ou justement…la culture et la gastronomie françaises ne seront plus vivantes, plus efficaces que si on l'est pas rapport a d'autres gastronomies, d'autres cultures. Et pour ca que c'est importante que les autres cultures viennent chez nous pour expliquer ca. C'est pas la confrontation mais il y a des échanges. Confrontation ca peut être aspect qui apparaitra au premier lieu. Mais c'est faut parce qu'il faut juste plutôt voire les demandes différentes simplement... Nous avons demandes différentes et c'est pour ca que les échanges sont importantes….Ca peut être intéressant de vois ce que les autres civilisations, les autres mondes peuvent nous apporter…et justement, faire d'espace multiculturelle.

I: En France apparaît les efforts d'allier le raffinement de la gastronomie française avec la nouvelle tendance du « consommer halal » (des restos traditionnel gastronomiques entièrement halal s'ouvrent, la production de foie gras halal etc.). Comment percevez-vous ces transformations de modèle alimentaire français? (si c'est possible d'allier la tradition gastronomique française tout en pratiquant les religions différentes, qu'est-ce qu'il reste de la fameuse gastronomie française alors et surtout prenant en compte l'idée de laïcité ?

T: ca peut choquer dans l'esprit parce que déjà c'est très marketing, simplement le foie gras c'est un produit très français et de coup on peut le vendre aussi au gens des autres confessions religieuses aussi… Mais justement ca peut montrer l'ouverture et que la culture culinaire française n'est pas faite que pour les français. Ce servirait a quoi? La réputation internationale ou un cliche international….la culture n'est pas figée, la culture doit s'ouvrir a tout le monde. Pas tout le monde doit connaitre la culture culinaire française, mais par contre, tout le monde doit pouvoir la connaitre. Ce que fait que pour n'importe qui la culture culinaire puisse être accessible. Ca je comprends. Même s'il y a d'autres confessions religieuses, même s'il y a d'autres cultures … OK. Le fait que nous en tant que français on a envie détendre la culture gastronomique française, justement, est une double chance. Ca veut dire que nous aussi on peut recevoir….recevoir … on peut connaitre les autres cultures gastronomiques, d'autres civilisations, d'autres peuples et ca c'est intéressant…

I: est-ce que halal et cacher c'est compatible avec la gastronomie française qui est maintenant, on peut dire, un peu laïque..?

T: oui, c'est vrai …mais chacun est chez soi… fin je veux dire, de toute façon…voir la gastronomie française qu'elle soit laïque ou même chrétienne ou n'importe de quelle religion, ca changera peut-être pas grand chose en fait. Le fait que qu'elle soit… qu'on la rend plus accessible a d'autres est important. Je sais pas si on peut prétendre qu'on a une culture gastronomique laïque parce que par exemple, simplement, il y a énormément des plat traditionnels français qui… la question serait est-ce que tu penses qu'il y a des plats en France qui seront connoté religieux? …c'est sur que selon …la culture gastronomique française puisse s'ouvrir a d'autres cultures sans problème….Le problème, si l'on a, c'est que beaucoup des plats se compose de porc ou autre… mais je pense que c'est

principalement le porc qui pose le problème. Il y a des plats qui sont a base de porc et il y en a qui sont accessibles a tous, eh bien dans ce cas la ce seront les autres cultures qui pourront gouter aux plats accessibles a tous et autres choses. Je pense pas que la culture gastronomique française devrait se fermer en elle même ou d'être partagée que parmi les français, ca servira a rien. S'il y a des plats pas accessibles aux autres au niveau religieux ce serait malheureux mais …cuisiner halal ca change strictement rien au plat. Si ca changera rien au plat, ca changerait rien au convivialité, rien au plaisir qu'on a pour partager ce plat et dans ce cas la je vois pas ou est le problème.

(Recording Tristan 6)

I: L'idée de laïcité et l'application de ce principe sont toujours très débattues par différents chercheurs, philosophes, hommes politiques (laïcité positive, ouverte, fermée, plurielle, du combat etc.). Alors, c'est quoi pour vous la laïcité? (la laïcité dans votre histoire : certain exemple pour illustrer cette principe ?)

T: Je pense a beaucoup de choses…je réfléchi attends… la laïcité ne doit pas être imposée. Attends….dans certain sens que elle ne doit pas être imposée, le….comment dire, la laïcité doit être une idée générale. L'idée générale et pas un ordre. L'idée générale dans le sens que….dans le sens que la laïcité doit être une idée générale qui respecte la diversité. Si elle était un ordre ca sert a rien, supposons. Si la laïcité un jour de lendemains est imposée aux écoles comme un ordre, ca veut dire que tout le monde doit manger même plat qui serait très globalement équivalent a tout le monde. Ca veut dire qu'il respecterait la mentalité juive, musulmane, chrétienne, bouddhiste, ce que tu veux…et ca ne porterait a rien parce que se serait règlementée dans un ordre global… Et laïcité doit être l'idée générale dans le sens ou elle devrait respecter la diversité, c'est-a-dire, je peut être laïque et avoir ma propre culture…

I: donc, laïque et musulman, laïque et catholique…

T: exactement, oui….je peux être musulman et vivre dans une culture laïque. Evidement. N'importe quel élevé d'école primaire, de collège, de lycée doit dire je peux être moi-même musulman, juif, catholique ce que tu veux mais vivre dans un état laïque et heureusement, parce que c'est toute la scolarité de l'école c'est base au-dessous. La laïcité simplement…ce n'est pas imposé. Qu'est-ce que je veux dire… c'est une règle générale….mais je dois apprendre a évoluer dans le milieu laïque. Ca c'est fondamental. Milieu laïque ca serait par exemple l'école. Le milieu scolaire doit être laïque, ca c'est fondamental…Dans le milieu laïque scolaire je dois apprendre même inconsciemment qu'il y a d'autre cultes, il y a d'autres religions et qu'il a d'autres civilisation que les miennes. Et c'est a partir de la que, au milieu scolaire je dois comprendre que si je suis catholique, je suis juif, je suis musulman et il y en a d'autres qui ne partagent pas la même croyance que moi. Et ca se doit se comprendre partout. Et partout au milieu scolaire, c'est pratique….parce que, en fait, il y a peu de moments ou tu peux confronter ta religion a travers de l'autre. Sauf au niveau gastronomique. Globalement…comment un enfant qui est catholique, qui est juif et qui est musulman pourront se montrer l'une a l'autre, et globalement ce serait la cantine. La cantine ou un enfant catholique pourrait montrer qu'il mange de porc…l'école doit faire le pas a apprendre ce gendre des choses.

I: Un fait d'importance qui tourmente en ce moment-la actualité relative à la laïcité c'est des demandes spécifiques qui émergent dans la restauration collective (la nourriture halal et kasher dans les espaces publics, écoles, prisons). Comment y répondre, comment concilier le principe avec la prise en compte des impératifs alimentaires lies aux religions ?

T: C'est pour ca, par exemple, que quand j'étais gamin et quand je voyais que des enfants qui était peut-être juifs ou peut-être musulmans, je même me pose pas de question…..je savais que quand je passais au celf, c'est ou tout le monde choisis son repas et ce qu'il veut, je savais qu'il en avait certains qui prenait son plat principal et qu'il prenait un plat qui était sur la cote, parce que a l'époque était comme ca…tu prenais un plat sur la cote si tu étais, si tu voulais manger cacher ou halal, c'était quand j'étais a l'école primaire. Même collège…non, c'était plutôt collège. A l'école primaire ca se marquait pas parce que on était servi …collège et plutôt lycée…a l'école primaire il avait une madame qui passait avec son énorme chariot et qui servait la nourriture un par un a toutes les tables. S'il en avait qui devait manger cacher ou halal je faisais pas la différence, ca je ne l'ai pas vu…par contre, au collège comme on était au celf et on passait avec notre plateau, on prenait une assiette a la fin et je savais qu'il en avait certains qui passaient et qui demandaient un plat particulier et qui prenaient une barquette…je savais qu'ils mangeaient pas des plats comme nous…nous si tous qui se servaient normalement, tous les autres…

Pour la laïcité, au collège, ca peut être intéressant pour toi, il y avait toute l'histoire de ramadan. On savait qu'ils avaient ce qui faisaient le ramadan…des fois c'est en septembre. Je me souviens une année, peut être au sixième ou cinquième, c'est tombe en septembre et que pendant la rentrée il y avait qui faisaient le ramadan. Et du coup on a demande comment s'est allé et tout, et que au final …peut-être c'est la laïcité qui marche bien et c'est vraie que quand on était a l'école primaire ou au collège que certaines croyances…on s'en fichait…on s'en fichait globalement…on s'attendait jamais plus que ca. Je savais qu'il avait quelqu'un qui faisait le ramadan et ca me pose jamais dix milles questions pourquoi tu fais ca, pourquoi tu crois a ca. Non. C'était tout a fait accepte.

On était peut-être plus tolérants quand on avait 10 ans que qu'on a 25. Je me souviens une situation , on a demande a un camarade quand on avait 10-11 ans pourquoi ils faisaient le ramadan, et lui disait parce que c'est un choix spécifique de Mahomet et tout…on est pas allé loin parce qu'on était petit, et nous, on était plutôt curieux pas au niveau logique ou théorique, mais curieux au niveau pratique …le ramadan ca doit être dur, tu peux pas manger toute la journée, tu peux pas boire, c'est affreux, et il en fait nous a raconte que en fin journée il y avait un repas géant pour fêter la fin du ramadan tous les soirs (je comprenais a l'époque que ca se passait pas du tout)…et du coup ca se passait beaucoup mieux, on disait wow, ca doit être pas mal et des fois on était assez jaloux en disant qu'il y avait une fête tous les soirs…

Interview No 3 : 16/06/2015
Transcript

Jessica (J)

Marion (M)

I : pouvez-vous vous présenter brièvement ?

J: je m'appelle Jessica, je viens de Nîmes dans le Languedoc Roussillon, donc, dans ma région on a effectivement pas mal des plats traditionnels, surtout méditerranéen ...on est très influence pas la culture méditerranéen....Aussi l'influence espagnole, donc, l'influence espagnole et méditerranéen largement...

I : Si je dis « culture culinaire », a quoi ca vous associe, comment définissez-vous la « culture culinaire » ?

J: c'est quelque chose très socio-culturel du coup, ca dépends aussi des moyens dont tu disposes, il y a plein d'habitudes alimentaires qui sont lies au contexte social dans lequel on évolue et le contexte socio-culturel dans lequel on évolue comme par exemple manger de la viande ou de ne pas manger, le fait de manger des produits biologiques ou des produits sur marche locale. Voila, du coup, l'alimentation soulevé beaucoup de questions.

I : avez-vous déjà vécu une situation ou vous devez présenter la gastronomie française à un groupe des étrangers et comment vous l'avez fait? (2) Imaginez que vous êtes à l'étranger (dans un pays européen). Pendant votre séjour vous êtes demande de présenter la culture alimentaire française à un group des étrangers mais sans avoir possibilité d'apporter des produits locaux ou cuisiner des plates typiques. Comment vous la présenterez alors ?

J: mais en fait que quelqu'un demande de présenter ma culture a traverse des plats typiques je choisis toujours des plats méditerranéen en fait parce que comme je disait culturellement chez moi se sont plutôt des plats méditerranéen et donc je choisis très souvent des plat comme la ratatouille, c'est plutôt régional en fait. C'est vrai que la tradition culinaire française...bah moi personnellement je vois pas quelque chose très précis et on a la culture régionale assez forte, on mange pas de tout de la même façon et j'ai la tendance plutôt de présenter les plats de ma région en fait...on a l'identité culinaire régionale assez forte. C'est vraiment que la France ou on aime bien manger, bien boire...

I: mais pourquoi c'est dit surtout sur la France?

J: je sais pas pourquoi ca c'est dit, moi je trouve qu'il y a aussi même encore plus en Italie cette culture voila...je sais pas...mais évidement on a cette tradition de bien être et de bien vivre...si je devais comparer les pays dans lequel j'ai vécu, oui, effectivement si je compare la façon de manger en Italie je trouve ca pareil, si je compare avec la République Tchèque je trouve que ca c'est beaucoup moins présent en République Tchèque, il y a évidemment le bien manger et bien boire, mais c'est moins présent...mais je trouve énormément des cultures ou c'est le cas.

I : la gastronomie française en trois mots ?

J: pour moi un des mots c'est le vin, avant d'autres choses, plaisir et après le troisième mot, hmmmm...je sais pas comment dire, j'ai beaucoup mal a résumer, mais...la troisième idée ce serait 'prendre-du-temps'.

(Recording : Jess2)

I : Selon certains chercheurs et sociologues, la mondialisation de l'alimentation, les nouvelles habitudes alimentaires qui viennent et l'homogénéisation du goût semble représenter l'inverse des valeurs culinaires françaises. Donc, croyez-vous qu'une des motivations pour inclure le repas gastronomique dans l'héritage de l'UNESCO, c'est aussi la peur que la fameuse gastronomie française et l'identité alimentaire française en en danger a cause de la mondialisation ou du fast-food, et que cuisine française pourrait disparaitre parmi des cuisines étrangères? Pourquoi ?

J: si on parle d'homogénéisation du gout, je trouve pas du tout qu'il y a une homogénéisation, et du coup, au contraire, oui, effectivement il y a plus de gens qui vont au macdo ou manger un hamburger au Quick mais c'est pas….fin…c'est bien justement, je trouve, c'est bien de découvrir d'autres cultures alimentaires, ca pas forcement…c'est pas…ca peut paraître comme ouverture et pas forcement comme homogénéisation. On mange d'autres choses en fait…

I: on peut parler de démocratisation du gout?

J: par exemple. C'est exactement la thématique sur laquelle on a travaille quand j'étais dans la République Tchèque et on organisait un évènement, justement, on était de neuf nationalités, je vais pas tous citer, et on avait organise un évènement autour de table, chacun a cuisine quelque chose de son pays et il y avait un monsieur qui était anglais et qui avait fait venir …qui avait un pub irlandais transforme en népalais, et en République Tchèque…il a nous parle donc de cette ….de cette…il je trouve ca super intéressant en fait. Apres….justement il parlait du fait qu'il a adapte la nourriture en République Tchèque et il a jamais cuisine népalais comme ils cuisinent au Népal…et il y avait un intervenant sur la Chine et qui parlait justement de cette question et que les restaurants chinois en République Tchèque n'ont pas le même gout en fait… bah bref, c'est vrai que c'est une forme de démocratisation…et je pense que la culture française n'a jamais été menacée quoi…

M: c'est vrai que quand tu réfléchis a la cuisine française et qu'elle a été classée au patrimoine de l'Unesco…. a priori elle n'est pas trop menacée mais bon je trouve qu'il y a différentes tendances, il y a la cote de globalization et uniformisation qui…. fin , je pense que la c'est la question quand même d'écart social et des gens qui ont moins des compétences pour les gouts différents, bah, ils vont vers les choses plutôt normalises…et après, c'est la tendance sublime et qui vit vachement avec ma mitage des cultures donc il y a différentes tendances quoi…mais je pense pas que la culture culinaire française soit menacée.

I: donc, elle évolue?

M: c'est ca….Il y a certain mixage mais ca transforme surtout pas la base de la cuisine française.

J:…. par exemple le couscous est tellement approprie, en fait on s'est réapproprie….mais comme je disais au début, par exemple, dans ma région on mange de la paella comme si c'était le plat typique chez nous. Mais c'est un plat espagnol mais comme on est proche,

c'est. Et le couscous c'est pareil…c'est comme un plat français, toutes les familles françaises aiment le couscous, je sais pas voila, c'est logique, voila…j'ai un ami italien qui a découvert la merguez en France, quoi fin, c'est génial et c'est ca ce que je trouve drôle quoi, pour lui c'est merveilleuse qu'il a découvert la merguez en France…voila quoi. Et je trouve ca génial en fait ce mélange des racines.

I: et pourquoi il y a alors tous ces débats sur la cuisine française, halal et laïcité?

J: c'est pas qu'en France…j'étais dans un échange franco-allemand a Berlin dans un …c'était réunion de coopération Berlin et y avait un partenaire tunisien…donc, allemand, français, polonais, croate, et tunisien, et le partenaire au moment de la débriefé, l'organisateur a bien demande au niveau de la nourriture qu'est-ce qu'on a pense…au fils de mesure il y avait un partenaire tunisien, et bah, c'était bien qu'au dernier diner il avait la nourriture halal et voila…et on a tous commande, c'était libanais halal, voila, moi j'ai dit très bien….mais a cote de moi il y avait une vieille dame allemande qui venait me voir il disait 'mais il fallait me prévenir que tout était halal…', tu vois, comme si elle avait mange un truc…je sais pas, c'est fou, je m'en fou, je crois pas au dieu….mais pour celui qui croit ca a une importance et je le respecte mais moi je crois pas donc…du coup, ca me dérange pas, tu vois ce que je veux dire? On avait une réunion multiculturelle donc c'est normal que chacun doit être respecte et que personne qui mange halal…fin…

M: vraiment, ca me dérange pas et en tout cas…je trouve qu'il y a beaucoup de polémique autour de tout ca et que franchement c'est un faut débat quoi…
J: oui, ca sert a rien…

M: … et les boucheries halal, par exemple, elles sont vachement moins chères que les autres et donc il y a plein du monde qui sont pas du tout musulmans mais qui vont acheter de la viande halal dans une boucherie halal qui est moins chère en fait…donc, c'est possible qu'il y a des brassages comme ca quoi…

J: mais voila, ca dépend de personne …

(Recording : Jess4)

I : L'idée de laïcité et l'application de ce principe sont toujours très débattues par différents chercheurs, philosophes, hommes politiques (laïcité positive, ouverte, fermée, plurielle, du combat etc.). Alors, c'est quoi pour vous la laïcité? (la laïcité dans votre histoire : certain exemple pour illustrer cette principe ?)

M: en fait pour moi la laïcité c'est la question d'avoir sa croyance a chacun et le droit de ne pas croire mais…après c'est très grossièrement mais c'est ca, et donc, il y a plein théories ou ca reste prive ou ca commence le publique, et bon, c'est la …

I: est-ce que la laïcité c'est la finalité ou c'est le pas vers quelque chose?

J: Bah, j'ai souvent cette discussion avec les gens d'ailleurs ….la laïcité c'est vraiment quelque chose de ….je pense que déjà ca date d'une vielle loi , date de 1905 la loi de la laïcité, donc, c'est quand même lie a la base a l'anticléricalisme a l'époque comme une forme exceptionnellement dirigée contre les cléricales a l'époque…je pense que …je pense

que on se cache beaucoup derrière ….derrière un principe pour faire preuve de , comment dire, je sais pas, ca mérite un très longue développement et apparemment mes pensées ne sont pas du tout formulées clairement, mais moi je pense que c'est un principe qu'on s'est trouve et qui nous arrange bien, pour…et je trouve que ca laisse plus place a la fermeture, finalement, qu'a l'ouverture… après la…je pense que souvent, très souvent c'est…le FN a beaucoup approprie cette question…en soi, c'est pas un principe négative que je trouve pas négative, je vais un peu loin dans ce que je dis, mais je serais plus pour qu'il …pour moi la laïcité ce serait plus que religion, la religion fait partie de toutes nos cultures, et je serais pour que toutes les religions soient racontées a l'école, par exemple, expliquées.

M: en fait…la je vais faire un développement anti-Ivry mais il y a une différence entre savoir et croire. C'est-a-dire que connaitre une religion ca veut pas dire a y adhérer. Et je pense que c'est importante de connaitre des religions pour arriver un petit peu, voila, le patrimoine de l'humaniste, ca fait quand même une partie de grand histoire, comment étaient les hommes et comment ils faisaient leurs civilisations…je veux dire les frontières…bah, l'enseigner a l'école ca me paraîtra pas de prosélytisme….mais le prosélytisme c'est que est problématique…

J: oui, la on est d'accord…je trouve que notre préventionniste de prosélytisme est un peu violent quoi…

M: par exemple, si nos fonctionnaires qui représentent l'état et qui montrent a quelle religion ils appartiennent…

J: et alors? C'est pas du tout de prosélytisme, c'est mon identité, ca veut pas dire que je vais l'imposer…

M: oui, mais c'est la position dominante pour les enfants, t'as raison, et voila…ca peut de les râper quoi…

J: mais pas plus dans un sens que dans l'autre quoi, pas plus…

M: mais après la laïcité c'est la neutralité donc tu…

J: mais moi, justement, je trouve comme une bonne excuse d'empêcher une fille d'aller a l'école avec son voile…

M: mais après je crois que ca pourrait être pire si on n'était pas dans un état laïque…

I: mais pourquoi alors ca pose pas des problèmes en Angleterre?

M: parce que en fait ils n'ont pas de tout du même genre de veillete, de l'intégration comme nous en fait…

J: bah oui, mais du coup, et moi, justement, ce modèle d'intégration comme le notre, alors, je crois pas que le modèle anglo-saxonne il soit plus, bien meilleure, parce que ce sont un peu deux extrêmes mais le notre il n'es pas non plus …

M: oui, on est d'accord qu'il n'est pas trop révolutionnaire…bah révolutionnaire. Pas en pratique …

J: non, mais pour revenir… l'athéisme , l'agnosticisme, tous que tu veux en France, c'est plus au niveau historique et pas…bah, fin, je veux dire que pour moi c'est un truc qu'une loi peut vraiment pas empêcher, c'est l'évolution d'une idée en fait, et du coup la France est encore catho mais pas que ca, et la laïcité peut rien empêcher….je pense pas que la laïcité empêche en fait mais qu'elle évolue, et du coup, son exercice c'est plus…ca parait plus a la fermeture qu'a l'ouverture ou la neutralité dans son exercice parce qu'on a cette culture la en France, mais….voila. la laïcité existe depuis tellement longtemps en France et ca empêche pas que, l'évolution des idées, c'est pas lie a cette loi qui est pour moi plus …plus mefaste et ….

I : alimentation, quand est-ce que s'est devenu un sujet?

M: bah, je souviens pas de tout qu'on avait ca quand j'étais un gamin …

J: moi, j'étais dans l'école catho…donc voila. Je pense que …je sais pas quand s'est devenu un sujet…je pense a…Mumm…vielle connerie, les années 90…bah, fin…j'étais a l'établissement catho toute ma scolarité mais après s'est devenu un sujet quand j'étais assez adulte pour comprendre qui passaient dans la société..

M: t'as pris conscience de ce truc la…

J: oui, voila, c'est ca…

M: il y a un moment j'ai pris conscience de ce truc et je me suis dit 'ah oui, c'est un sujet' et la …bah, c'est difficile a juger du coup.

J: je me suis jamais rendue compte quand j'étais jeune, quand j'étais scolarisée, qu'effectivement a la cantine il y avait pas de jambon pour les musulmans, non mais c'est vrai, je souviens juste que quand j'étais au collège catholique il avait la célébration de chapelle, la célébration obligatoire, et dans ma classe il y avait un juif et un protestant , et ils étaient obliges d'y aller …ca nous a choque un peu les élevés… pourquoi vous les obliger d'aller a la célébration s'ils sont pas les catholiques. Mais après dans l'alimentation je sais pas, je crois que je même mange pas trop souvent a l'école…et après peut-être que j'avais pas de conscience…

M: oui, moi, je suis pas vraiment rendue compte du truc….ca m'a pas vraiment marque…

J: après au lycée, justement au lycée publique il y avait plus de la diversité, on peut dire, mais tu mange pas trop au lycée et tu vas manger plutôt au fast-food avec ses copains….donc, je me souviens pas de tout qu'est-ce que se passait a la cantine…

Interview No 4: 18/06/2015
Transcript

Sara (S)
Mikael (M1)
Marion (M2)
Gioia (G)

(Recording Essor 1:)

I : pouvez-vous vous présenter brièvement ?

M1: Mon prénom est Mikael Aroyo, 24 ans, et je viens d'ile de France, voila.
M2: Donc, je m'appelle Marion, 26 ans, je viens d'ile de France.
S: Sara, j'ai 27 ans, je viens d'ile de France.

I : avez-vous voyage en dehors de la France, en dehors d'Europe? Si oui : pendant vos voyages, essayez-vous profiter de la nourriture locale et gouter aux plats, boissons typiques? Pourquoi ? Est-ce que ca fait partie de vos expériences de voyages?

S: oui, bon, parce que je suis en voyage et je veux les choses d'autres qu'a la maison, donc, surement voir comment ils mangent, qu'est-ce qu'ils mangent, quelles sont les différences avec notre régime alimentaire , voila, c'est découvrir.

M2: oui, c'est un des principaux objectifs en voyage, je suis a l'étranger, et ca fait partie de la culture, et c'est pour la plaisir de manger les choses différents, voila.

M1: oui, bah pour découvrir comme les gens qui viennent ici pour partager la culture française, culture culinaire française, le même a l'étranger quoi…puis, j'aime bien manger! … je sais pas…bien boire…

I : Si je dis « culture culinaire », a quoi ca vous associe, comment définissez-vous la « culture culinaire »?

S: oui, c'est les habitudes alimentaires avec des outils, des ingrédients, des attitudes, voila, et c'est propre aux régions, et je pense t'as un pays globalement, puis t'as les régions, villes, compagnes qui peuvent aussi de ne pas avoir les mêmes habitudes alimentaires, voila quoi..
M2: oui, c'est ca, c'est l'attitude, c'est la tradition, ce qui persiste dans le temps, voila, donc, culture ca bouge aussi, donc, ca peux évoluer avec le temps, mais on peut dire qu'il y a cette cote traditionnelle que persistait dans un pays ou dans une région…oui.

I : Maintenant, on précise la question et on se concentre sur la culture culinaire en France et la gastronomie française. La gastronomie française est extraordinairement réputée dans le monde, cependant, à l'étranger, la gastronomie française est aussi très souvent réduite aux baguettes, aux cuisses de grenouille et au camembert. Mais quoi représentent la culture culinaire française et la gastronomie française pour vous?

…ou avez-vous déjà vécu une situation ou vous devez présenter la gastronomie française à un groupe des étrangers et comment vous l'avez fait? (2) Imaginez que vous êtes à l'étranger (dans un pays européen). Pendant votre séjour vous êtes demande de présenter la

culture alimentaire française à un group des étrangers mais sans avoir possibilité d'apporter des produits locaux ou cuisiner des plates typiques. Comment vous la présenterez alors ?

S: Je pense qu'on peut parler du repas comme d'un moment important parmi amis ou, mais on a grand table, on aime bien manger ensemble, …sais pas…même si aujourd'hui on est dans une culture ou on mange assez vite dans la rue, dans le métro, mais quand même traditionnellement on aime notre repas assis, on a du temps ensemble, ou il y a une entrée, il y a un plat et il y a un dessert. On peut poser comme ca…et que en général il y a des légumes, il y a de la viande, de poisson, et en fait en général on ajoute peu d'épices par rapport a d'autres pays, on peut ajouter quelque condiment, comme les herbes, du sel, du poivre, mais ca vient de Provence…mais quand même c'est assez neutre comme gout moi je le trouve par rapport a l'indienne ou … tu vois…on n'ajoute de curry ou truc équivalent…pour moi c'est la cuisine assez neutre en terme de gout.

I: et les trois cliches?

S: bah oui, fromage ca fait partie de presque tous les repas… après les grenouilles…la seule fois ou je les ai mange c'était un resto chinois, hehe…et le pain, oui, c'est important, il y en a l'entrée, il y a en au plat, juste pas au dessert, mais quoi…

I: quand tu es a l'étranger est-ce qu'il y a quelque chose qui te manque?

S: bah oui, pas de tout suite mais au bout de six sept mois c'est le pain, le fromage…et c'est tout.

M2: bah…par rapport aux cliches et aux stéréotypes, c'est les cliches certes mais a même temps c'est la réalité quoi, c'est ce qui est connu mais a même temps c'est vraiment, pratiquement on peut faire…plusieurs apéros sont a la base de fromage, vin, ou pain, c'est cliche mais c'est vrai. C'est pas que cliches, c'est cliches vraies. Et ensuite, je trouve pas que la cuisine française soit neutre. Bah, je suis d'accord avec toi qu'il n'y a pas de ..bah, que c'est beaucoup moins épicée des autres pays mais je la trouve pas neutre…

S: oui, mais je connais beaucoup des étrangers qui disent que la cuisine française est fade…
M2: ah, c'est marrant ca, je vois pas ca….c'est pas quittée, mas parce qu'elle est quittée ca veut pas dire qu'elle est fade…
S: et qu'est-ce qui te manque?
M2: ah bah pareil, quand je suis a l'étranger, ce serait du pain et du fromage… et croissants au bout de moment…
S: oui, les croissants!
M2: les croissants, les croissants…
S: ailleurs je les trouve hyper cher…
I: et les croissants a l'étranger sont vraiment différents?
M2: oui! C'est pas la même chose…
S: le beurre et tout, c'est en général du margarine, bon, c'est comme une crêpe, c'est pareil…ils sont très différents parce que la farine et pas la même…
M1: oui, l'histoire de fromage, de baguette…

(Recording Essor 2)

I: est-ce que la cuisine nationale ca existe vraiment?

S: oui, ca existe vraiment…

M2: bah, oui et non. Oui parce qu'il y a des choses que tu trouves partout en France et t'as forcement les différences régionales, quand t'es dans le sud ou dans le nord, t'as impression comme d'être dans pas mal des pays. T'as toujours des plats qui sont un peu partout et puis t'as les spécialités régionales.

S: Je pense que forcement ca porte le nom d'une ville, en fait ca montre que c'est bien diffusé, c'est ca qui est intéressant. Pas toutes les plats régionales sont bien exportées…le plat avec le nom d'une ville associe, ces ont des plats qu'on trouve partout. A Strasbourg, d'ou je viens, on mange beaucoup de choses qu'on trouve pas ici….mais par exemple le choucroute alsace et bien connu partout. je crois qu'on a des problèmes avec ces cliches, bien manger méchant…si, on aime bien manger mais je pense que c'est pareil pour beaucoup gens quoi…pas que des français quoi…

M2: oui, la gastronomie française c'est bonne, c'est variée, il y a plein choses, c'est la nourriture que j'aime bien, mais…mais je aussi crois qu'on doit s'est permis de chopper les trucs c'autres pays, il y a pas mal des aliments qui n'existaient en France qu'on a importes et qui sont entres dans la gastronomie française… par rapport a bien manger et bonne bouffe, c'est ce que tu disait avant, qu'on accorde l'importance au repas, faire un repas ensemble c'est une occasion se retrouver avec tes amis, avec ta famille, et dans les autres cultures c'est pas forcement le repas ou c'est pas le moment d'échanges, c'est pas pour parler, c'est pour manger quand pour nous c'est un prétexte pour se retrouver. Oui, c'est bien manger, bonne bouffe et méchant mais il y a toujours cette cote sociale je trouve. J'avais un ami anglais qui ont été invites par les bordelaises et ils pouvaient plus parce que le repas durais trois heures et pour lui c'était trop long…

I: Finalement, la gastronomie française en trois mots ?

M1: mais est-ce que c'est propre en France?

M2: mais on s'en fous, c'est qu'on pense…

S: grand-table, avine, festif…

G: gourmand, parce qu'il y a beaucoup des saveurs, beaucoup de crèmes, beurre par rapport a l'Italie par exemple, ou il y a plus d'huile d'olive, plus méditerranéen; … et soignée, parce qu'en fait en France on a les plus grand chefs Etoiles, du coup, c'est la cuisine tartrée, les plats jolies, bon, ca reste vraiment bien cadre; et…cher, parce que c'est très cher, en fait, par rapport aux autres restaurants italiens, je trouve que c'est hyper cher en France…on paye pour la qualité.

I: et la cuisine italienne, alors?

G: la meilleure du monde! Hehehe… non, c'est la qualité, légèreté, et convivialité.
M2: sociabilisant et diversifiée.

M1: multiculturelle alors… et …mais tous qui a été dit…

M2: il a le droit de dire ce qu'on a dit déjà…

S: convivial non?

M1: oui, mais… je pense pas que c'est typique pour la France, et c'est pas que français quoi…

(Recording Essor 3)

G: la gastronomie, quand tu dis gastronomie on pense tout de suite aux restaurants…

M1: pour moi c'est la tradition a laquelle je peux pas adhérer moi… donc, je me sens pas attache a certaine gastronomie française, quoi, donc, ou a la culture française…on peut plus piocher un peu partout…je sais pas moi…voila.

S: je trouve ca bien la bouffe et tout. On sait que ce soit la bouffe française…c'est tellement culturel et tout…

M2: moi pareil, je pense que…pourquoi pas, mais je vois pas d'utilité de l'inclure dans la liste immatérielle de l'Unesco, ces ont plutôt les choses qui sont en risque de se perdre et concrètement je pense pas que la gastronomie française soit quelque chose en disparition…

I : est-ce qu'elle est menace?

M2: non, elle évolue, elle s'enrichit, c'est comme la culture, c'est comme tout et c'est tant mieux. C'est pas la disparition, mais c'est plutôt positive…et par rapport a l'Unesco je pense que c'est vraiment pas nécessaire après c'est pas négative non plus….mais ca peut être négative dans le sens pourquoi la gastronomie française et pourquoi pas d'autres…

S: pourquoi pas d'italienne…en plus ca ajoute des cliches français, donc, je trouve ca vraiment mal venu….

M1: mais est-ce qu'on peux pas considéré ca comme conserver le savoir-faire, on sait faire tel ou tel truc…

M2: oui mais pour ca je suis d'accord, mais pourquoi du coup c'est la gastronomie française qui va être inscrite…

I : Connaissez-vous le plat préféré des Français ? Il y a quelques années c'était la traditionnelle blanquette de veau qui arrivait toujours en première place. Mais selon les récents sondages, maintenant c'est le couscous qui est en effet devenu au fil des années l'un des plats les plus populaires en France. La popularité de la cuisine maghrébine en France pose la question mais qu'est-ce qu'il y a la vraie cuisine française ?

M1: oui, parce que la blanquette de veau est un peu passe la mode…mais après je n'aime pas qu'on va attacher cette évolution a d'autres…

M2: oui c'est vrai, mais c'est pas négative…

M1: oui, mais tu vois tout de suit d'autre truc que tu justifie parce que t'as telle ou telle partie de la population, mais non, c'est pas vrai, mais je pense pas que ce soit forcement que ca…dans la ville ou j'habitais avant j'allais chercher du couscous une ou deux fois pas moi a 8 bals le dimanche, quoi... en lieu d'aller acheter la blanquette de veau quoi…

M2: moi, je mange très rarement du couscous mais j'aime beaucoup ca, c'est juste je vois pas en quoi c'est négative…oui, il y avait un changement au niveau gastronomique a cause de changement dans la population, et il y a plus de gens qui découvrent ca, qu'ils faisaient pas avant….je trouve ca pas négative..

M1:mais non non, j'ai pas dit que c'est négative…

S: moi je pense que c'est une plate qui rassemble énormément l'idée d'une plate française, parce que en fait c'est crée simple, c'est des légumes, c'est de viande et tout, et après juste un accompagnement. Et en fait je trouve que en tout cas celle qu'il est fait en France je pense qu'en sa forme et sa composition de plat français. Donc je me demande si c'est pas une des raisons pourquoi s'est devenu si consomme. Ca rassemble énormément la ratatouille. En fait pour moi c'est une sorte de ratatouille avec juste d'un accompagnement quoi…

M2: pour moi non, pas la ratatouille….c'est couscous… je trouve pas d'un plat a lequel il pourrait être compare. Je suis assez étonnée, ca m'a jamais pose la question qu'elle était le plat le plus consommé, je savais pas que c'était couscous…

I: est-ce que c'est intégré dans le modèle alimentaire français ou pas?

M2: bah, moi… je saurais pas associer, je dirais pas que couscous c'est la gastronomie française, je crois que c'est un apport et tant mieux. Mais c'est pas nous qui l'a invente…mais je le trouve intégré dans la gastronomie française. C'est l'évolution de la gastronomie française…

(Recording Essor 4)

I : L'idée de laïcité et l'application de ce principe sont toujours très débattues par différents chercheurs, philosophes, hommes politiques (laïcité positive, ouverte, fermée, plurielle, du combat etc.). Alors, c'est quoi pour vous la laïcité?

S: les débats, grands débats c'est toutes les religions ou aucune religion et c'est en France…

M2: oui, mais c'est quoi pour toi la laïcité?

S: c'est l'idée qu'on accepte tout, mais le problème est que derrière tu as tous les enjeux, que veut dire que ,en fait, quand tu dis on accepte tous mais dans l'état, et du coup la question c'est est-ce que l'état accepte toutes les confessions ou rien du tout. Logiquement on devrait tous financer mais en fait on se rend compte que non, on finance plutôt les

églises catholiques… l'exemple de la laïcité pour moi les cours de langue, les cours de français, hehe…mais on, j'en sais rien, mais bon…

M2: bah, la laïcité pour moi c'est la séparation de l'état et de religieux, et voila. Et après…c'est acceptation de toutes les religions mais dans l'espace privée…

M1: pareil, après il y a un truc, je sais pas si tu l'as aborde, c'est la difficulté qu'on a a gérer la tradition et la culture catholique françaises, et bah, je sais pas comment expliquer mais…de ne pas affirmer aucune religion, mais quand même avoir une tradition qui rappelle le passe…je crois que ca se discute et…

M2: ca pose des problèmes…

S: oui par exemple FN…

M2: mais pas que FN …

M1: tu parles d'aucune religion de l'état mais t'as plein de tradition qui te rattrape et qui…

M2: je pense on a pas mal de choses qu'on a mal a dissocier... mais ce que je comprends pas pourquoi on ne fait pas de place pour les traditions des cultures différentes, la culture française on est multiculturel…
I: on est loin de la laïcité?

M2: pas d'évolution, bah oui, il y a des choses qu'on n'a pas suivis…je pense qu'il y a des choses de bien en France, il y a une bonne base mais on reste bloque a la base et on n'a pas de tout réussi a trouver une évolution par rapport a l'évolution de la population, des cultures, plein choses, bah, c'est ca. Maintenant c'est la forme, mais c'est pas l'idée… les jours féries par exemple, qui sont de tradition religieuses et en France il y a beaucoup d'athées….ce serait intéressant si on les a parce qu'on veut avoir les jours fériés ou parce que ca vient de la tradition judéo-chrétienne…

M1: mais quand on parle aux gens ils savent pas pourquoi c'est férié…

(Recording Essor 5:)

I : En France apparaît les efforts d'allier le raffinement de la gastronomie française avec la nouvelle tendance du « consommer halal » (des restos traditionnel gastronomiques entièrement halal s'ouvrent, la production de foie gras halal etc.). **Comment percevez-vous ces transformations de modèle alimentaire français?**

S: pas de problème avec halal dans l'espace public. Déjà j'ai pas compris que c'était une mode…

I: c'est une tendance…

S: il y a des restaurants halal, et les trucs halal et je trouve ca bien.

I: et donc la gastronomie française c'est compatible avec halal? Foie gras devient halal…

S: mais pourquoi pas…on a les deux. On a cacher… ils mangent comme ils veulent.

M2: pareil, ca m'est égal mais je peux dire plus que ca parce que c'est complique…

I: Tu peux élaborer?

M2: bah… parce que ca touche religieux, et finalement… pour moi ca pose pas de problème mais de coup, mais pour ce qui mange de halal. Il y a deux cotes: pourquoi pas et ca me gène pas, mais dans la réalité je sais pas…et moi non plus je savais pas que c'était une tendance…la gastronomie halal.

M1: juste un truc avec la question… le raffinement de la gastronomie française et halal, ca met hypothèse qu'il y a un problème entre les deux. Je sais pas, c'est bizarre…mais après ca me pose pas de problème. Si quelqu'un mange halal il mange halal, il mange qu'il veut. Je sais pas…c'est personnel et c'est vrai qu'il apparais une tendance de surgit au-dessous…

S: moi j'achète halal parce qu'il y a un boucherie halal a cote de chez moi, qu'elle est la bonne viande, donc je la prends quoi et…je m'en fou tu vois. Pourquoi vous faites pas et halal, et normal et méchant…et oui, techniquement a même temps ca doit être complique faire les deux dans la même boucherie, donc, soit halal et puis tu te merdes quoi…mais, tu vois, au final la première clientèle ces ont les musulmans mais après ca peut arriver que pas que les musulmans viennent.

M1: c'est toujours pareil, c'est le discours de faire peur, et voila quoi. Apres qu'une entreprise propose certain produit pour certaine partie de population…

S: en fait moi que je trouve bizarre c'est l'histoire, et je comprends pas tout ce engoulement politique etc., mais c'est que avant Quick n'était pas halal et après il devient halal, ca fait bizarre tu vois. C'est une chaine, elle est pas qu'en France mais en Belgique, partout. C'est ca qui est étrange.

M2: mais non, c'est pas si étrange que ca, c'est pour toucher une grande partie de la population.

S: oui, mais tu vois, il faudrait a ce moment la qu'il aura au moins de halal, de cacher, et du méchant en plus…

M2: et c'est ca ou ca pourrait poser des problèmes. Moi je m'en fou mais que forcement comme c'est attache a la religion et quelque chose de religieux ca va forcement toucher… pas forcement, mais ca pose des questions…pourquoi halal et..

S: pourquoi halal et pas autre chose en fait…c'est justement la question de la laïcité quoi. Non, mais c'est ca. Pour moi c'est la mauvaise gestion de produit et tout, oui, je pense qu'ils voulaient faire de la pub et trompe.

M1: est ce sont des belges…

S: oui, belges…a mon école qui a été catholique il y avait des plats halal et cacher. Et ca posais pas de problèmes. Et végétariens…en fait, c'est une autre question, mais a l'école on avait au choix le catéchisme et culture religieuse. Moi, j'allais a la culture religieuse et c'était génial quoi.

M2: moi, je suis tout a fait d'accord, je trouve ca injuste qu'on a donne la même place pour toutes les religions, on a la tradition de poisson vendredi. Mais c'est vrai, et je même sais pas pourquoi c'est a l'école, je pense que c'est en lien avec la religion, et je trouve ca illogique, bah, parce que c'est comme les gens qui mangent pas de viande. Et l'école faite publique donc, et s'ils mangent a la cantine il faut bien manger en rapport avec la religion…

S: donc ils vont pas manger…

M2: oui, et en plus, c'est un gamin….ca crée un conflit la dessous et ca entraine les gamins d'entrer dans le débat que les concerne pas…ils sont trop jeunes pour avoir toutes les notions, je trouve ca excède. Et je savais pas que ca peut être dans les écoles catho…

S: oui, mais c'est pas partout que c'est comme ca…

M2: oui, mais ca montre que même dans l'école catho ca peut fonctionner…

I: et quand tu étais a l'école c'était comment?

M2: Bah j'ai pas beaucoup de souvenirs mais c'était poisson vendredi, c'est tout, et j'ai aucune souvenir de conflit la dessous. Il y avait le choix des enfants entre ce qui mangent a la cantine et qui rentraient chez eux le midi. La dessous je me suis jamais pose la question s'il y avait des amis qui rentraient chez eux et si c'était pour les raisons religieux, ca a jamais été un débat…mais c'est pas, je trouve ca dommage que ca n'a pas fait un débat. Et ca a changer, même les gens qui mangent pas de viande, c'est nouveau, végétariens il n'y avait pas autant avant et donc ca devrait être possible aussi…

M1: bah au lycée je souviens qu'il y avait plusieurs plat… mais je suis pas d'accord pour spécifier ca c'est halal, c'est cacher. Oui, il y a plusieurs plats, certaines avec la viande, autres sans…les petites structures peuvent pas se permettre de faire les plats halal, plats cacher…

S: en fin, ces ont les fournisseurs de l'Education Nationale et tout, et…

M1: oui, mais si c'est une petite cantine, il y a 30 gamins, tu peux pas faire 3 plats différents... dans les petites campagnes c'est comme ca….

M2: mais si c'est l'école publique se sont les parents qui paient pour la cantine…en tout cas, au moins végétarien, qui permet aux gens qui mangent halal de manger végétarien quoi… et aussi, tu peux pas séparer la laïcité de l'école, dans l'histoire la laïcité toujours touche l'école, c'est lieu des débats, beaucoup des débats passent par l'école, même les débats de la société, c'est centrale dans la question de la laïcité, donc, forcement c'est pas que la question de la gestion de cantine..

S: l'école c'est mini société quoi…donc, forcement elle reflète…

M2: et c'est obligatoire, bah… d'ailleurs je trouve ca essentiel de mettre au coeur le débat…

S: C'est aussi essentiel d'aborder avec les gamins c'est quoi la diversité, c'est quoi la laïcité, peu n'importe, mais c'est quand même les notions qui sont proches…

M2: … et doivent être abordées ensemble.

S: oui, et abordées ensemble et tout, c'est la théorie, les valeurs, mais c'est aussi pratique quoi et au quotidien quoi…

M2: et l'école justement c'est un des meilleures lieux de les aborder.

M1: mais tu peux pas partir et donner les cours des religion si c'est public…

M2: bah si, justement…

S: Je trouve ca hyper intéressant les cultures religieuses…

M2: C'est pas les cours, bah, on apprend pas a croyance…

M1: mais c'est ce que t'as déjà aborde au cours de l'histoire, est-ce que t'es oblige a avoir un truc appart pour…

M2: mais c'est très mal aborde…

S: bah moi ce que je trouve hyper intéressant c'est que, par exemple, on comparait les histoires qui sont dans les grand livres, la bible, la torah, le coran , et tu vois, pour transmettre les valeurs, les valeurs qui comptent, les truc qu'on vivent tout les jours, et on les a compares dans les trois bouquins et je trouve ca hyper intéressant.

M1: mais la religion c'est hyper personnel, tu peux aborder le débat pour savoir qu'est-ce que c'est…

M2: oui mais c'est ca…

M1:…mais après tu fais ca tout seul…

S: mais il faut quand même avoir les moyens…

M2: par exemple moi j'ai une connaissance de culture religieuse absolument terrible. Je crois que le malentendu culturel et en plus tout les débat actuels, je pense que c'est hyper important de mettre un truc vraiment autour de culture quoi, de l'histoire, de culture, de mieux connaitre, et éviter tout les malentendus…juste, que tu comprennes. Bah, la culture religieuse ca s'apprend pas toute seule. Je pense qu'on devrait consacrer un cours.

I: mais l'enseignement du fait religieux dans l'école, le rapport de Regis Debray…

S: … oui, mais pas dans l'école public; le cours de l'enseignent civique aborde quelques éléments mais très peu…c'est plus la société de manière générale, donc, du coup, l'histoire-géographie…non, franchement, je crois qu'il faut qu'il soit une heure par semaine, tu vois, on n'a pas besoin de plus, au collège t'as le cours d'une heure, voila quoi. On lit les trucs ensemble, on les discute avec les débats…

M2: en plus je pense que ca peut bien améliorer le dialogue et la compréhension…dans la compréhension il y a beaucoup de mal connaissances et c'est ca qui crée aussi les conflits ou les malentendus…donc, quelque chose ne fonctionne pas parce que tu le connait pas en fait…

C'est comme la gastronomie, tu vois que d'autres plats sont arrivées, ca évolue et ca change qu'on mange tout les jours pendant le repas, mais ca je pense pourquoi il faut les intégrer…donc, ce sont les problématiques qui sont tellement importantes pas nécessairement pour avoir un débat, mais pour pouvoir poser les questions, et quand t'es un enfant t'as le droit de poser les questions et être libre de ca…

Quand c'est devenu un débat de société?

M2: débats autour de Voile et halal, ah, c'est lie ….halal c'est international, bah, pour moi c'est le contexte international et c'est un peu partout, mais on a parti sur la partie un peu con…on entends de plus en plus parler des attentats, de terrorisme et les musulmans, la peur des juifs, tout ce truc qui se tourne en Israël, tout ca…
S: oui, c'est vrai, il y a pas mal des trucs arrière depuis dix ans….je souviens pas quand on a commence d'aborder cette question sous angle alimentaire…

M1: la cantine, mais ca entre dans la cantine parce que ca touche les enfants …c'est comme parler de voile pour toucher les parents…

S: et comme ca on est plus sur droit de l'état parce que la question de voile c'était quand même, y a de la place l'espace public, l'espace privée, tous les débats étaient au-dessous quoi et la je trouve moins ou on aborde moins comme ca, le liens est moins fait je trouve…

M2: bah il est moins évident, mais i lest quand même dans la question, c'est l'école public, alors halal et cacher ne parlent pas, ce qui disent contre disent ca, parce que c'est l'espace publique …

S: oui, mais je trouve que le lien est moins fort…

M2: non, mais c'est juste moins évident…

S: nos enfants, la gastronomie française…ce sont les arguments qu'ils sont partis.

M2: ..l'ecole c'est publique et religion n'a pas place dans l'école, donc, pas de halal, pas de cacher…

M1: mais la poisson vendredi…

S: mais c'est la question de la laïcité: on accepte tout ou on accepte rien.

M2: oui, et la poisson vendredi on la touche pas quoi… c'est dans notre histoire. Mais de coup…on viens de la tradition catholique, donc, c'est pas que la religion, c'est aussi la tradition…