



Tomasz D. Mames

Université de Strasbourg, France

ORCID 0000-0001-7218-5161

Values of the Fifth French Republic in the Recruitment of Teachers for Public Elementary Schools in France

Wartości V Republiki w rekrutacji na stanowiska nauczycielskie w państwowych szkołach elementarnych we Francji

Abstract: In an era of various crises faced by modern France, the attention of policymakers shaping the ideological policy of the state has focused primarily on the intersection of education and religion. The programmatic secularism of education, inscribed in the essence of the concept of the Republic as a space for the realisation of liberty, equality, fraternity, has become an arena of clashing opposing discourses. The aim of this article is to attempt to understand the place of the values of the Fifth French Republic in the recruitment process of current and future early childhood education teachers in public schools in France in the deontological, praxeological and didactic dimensions. Textbooks for candidates are the primary source for this study. Using the hermeneutic method, the starting point was the course of the recruitment competition in the context of the legislator's expectations of candidates. Next, the focus was on the exegesis of republican values, with particular emphasis on secularism (*laïcité*). The issues of teachers' duties and the place of these values in the teaching-learning process were also addressed. The study closes with a summary that also refers to the broader cultural context of contemporary France.

Keywords: education in France, teaching deontology, recruitment of pre-school and primary school teachers, educational policy, pedagogy of religion.

Introduction

For some time now, there has been a lively debate in France around the values that form the foundation of the Fifth Republic. *Liberty, equality, fraternity*, and above all the associated secularism and tolerance, are at the forefront of the ongoing discussion. Particularly in relation to education, these slogans, which are the principles of French political, social and national identity, have become the subject of interesting reflection by scientists, politicians, and people influencing public opinion, including the media. The terrorist attacks of 2015, or the murders of teachers Samuel Paty (2020) and Dominique Bernard (2023), have become emblematic examples of social shock, also in the pedagogical dimension (e.g., Hartmann, 2021, pp. 93-113). This resonated with a wave of protests and demonstrations, both against terrorism and Islamisation, as well as expressing support for secular schools, or drawing attention to Islamophobia. Of course, the authorities had already noticed earlier the problem of the lack of respect in public space, including educational space, of the fundamental ideas of the Fifth Republic, a telling example of which was the case from the Gabriel-Havez middle school in Creil in 1989 (Anceau, 2022, pp. 253-273). One of the most disturbing manifestations of contestation were signals coming from educational institutions, which are tasked with educating and bringing up future generations of citizens. The most noticeable tensions concerned respect for the idea of secularism in schools, where competing or even mutually exclusive discourses met. Attention was also drawn to the need to articulate the ideological and religious neutrality of schools, which was to be served by the reform of education and subsequent legal acts, including in 2004 the ban on ostentatious wearing of religious symbols in state schools, or the introduction of the *Secularism Charter* in 2013 (Colas and Degenne, 2015, pp. 65-68). Other actions were also taken to better understand the increasingly religiously and ethnically diverse educational space¹.

In Polish-language literature, we find studies devoted to the idea of secularism in the politics of the Fifth Republic, or the French education system along with its ideological foundation (e.g., Szewczyk, 2016, pp. 115-130; Dziewulak, 2022, pp. 39-72). There is a lack of Polish-language analyses devoted to the recruitment of teaching staff responsible for implementing the ideological premises underlying the teaching-learning process postulated by the authorities. The aim of this text is to attempt to understand the place

¹ See, for example, issue no. 159 of the quarterly *Fraternité d'Abraham. Juifs – Chrétiens – Musulmans* (2013), devoted entirely to the religious education of French society.

of the values of the Fifth Republic in the recruitment process of early childhood education teachers. This issue seems to be important because it reveals the expected *modus operandi* of future teachers-educators in a multicultural, multi-religious and at the same time secular environment. The research field has been limited to three planes, namely secularism, teaching deontology and educational policy. The study uses the hermeneutic method (Nowak, 1993; Ablewicz, 2010, pp. 104-111). The source base consists of selected textbooks preparing for the recruitment competition for teachers of public preschools and primary schools (*Concours de recrutement de professeurs des écoles*, CRPE), which essentially fulfil four functions: informational, descriptive, evaluative and prognostic. Their informational function is carried out in the description of the course of the competition, while the descriptive function is fulfilled through an explanation of its subject. The proposed control tests, which the reader can fill in and check on their own, fit into the evaluation function, while the recommendations of individual inspectorates, included in the textbooks, have a prognostic function. The sources are complemented by guides to the French education system (see *References*). The authors of these publications are practising educators, also involved in preparing CRPE applicants (e.g., Michèle Guillemint), or academic teachers (e.g., Dominique Catteau).

The Recruitment Process within the CRPE

In terms of the informational function, the textbooks describe the individual stages of the CRPE, whose new rules came into force in 2021. The competition procedure is addressed to future primary and preschool teachers responsible for the didactic and educational process of children aged 3-5 years (preschool) or 6-10 years (primary school). At the preschool level, they will implement the initial education cycle (in younger, middle and older departments). In primary school, they will be entrusted with the implementation of the basic education cycle (preparatory class, 1st elementary, 2nd elementary) and teaching in the classes introducing the consolidating education cycle (1st middle, 2nd middle), continued in lower secondary school. The selection committee is chaired by the rector of the education inspectorate or his representative. Its members are employees of inspectorates, management staff, school and academic teachers, but also people selected on the basis of their specific competences and qualifications, e.g. administrative employees (due to their experience in human resource management) (Loison, 2021, p. 7).

Due to the diversity of candidates' professional qualifications, the competition is carried out in six types. The first is dedicated to second-year master's students and those with a master's degree. The second CRPE is organised

for candidates with the same qualifications as the above, but additionally includes a regional language exam. The third type of CRPE is dedicated to candidates with at least five years of professional experience acquired on the basis of a private law contract, without the need for a diploma. The fourth type of CRPE is addressed to civil servants and some part-time employees who can document three years of public service and have a bachelor's degree. Another variation is a competition aimed at candidates meeting the above requirements and wanting to additionally take a regional language exam. There is also a CRPE intended for full-time teachers who can document three years of work in the profession. The last type is a competition that can be taken by civil servants with a diploma at level five of the National Directory of Vocational Certification and with a documented 18-month internship in teaching institutions² (*Devenir enseignant*, 2023).

The CRPE consists of two compulsory parts, qualifying and admitting, and an optional one. The qualifying part includes three written tests in the scope of the French language curriculum, mathematics and, optionally, two subject blocks (science and technology or history with geography, moral and civic education, or art). In the admissions part, candidates take three oral exams. The first covers the French language and mathematics, while the second covers physical and sports education along with knowledge of child psychology and development. The last stage is an exam concerning the candidate's motivation to work in a school, including public service and sharing the values of the Fifth Republic. This means that the committee focuses on two areas: teaching and its relationship to school life (including the rights and duties of the official, neutrality, combating discrimination and stereotypes, promoting equality). An optional supplement may be an oral exam in a modern foreign language - German, English, Spanish or Italian. Additionally, candidates may take a regional language exam (Loison, 2021, pp. 7-11).

Based on the decree of April 19, 2013, apprentices are expected to have the ability to explain precisely and clearly, to reflect on scientific, didactic, epistemological and cultural problems that are part of the subject of the CRPE. In addition, candidates must demonstrate a willingness to accept the commitment that the nation has entrusted to the school. Perhaps this wording is somewhat emphatic, but in the future they are to teach, educate,

² It essentially applies to holders of two-year post-secondary education diplomas, e.g., technical diplomas (*Brevet de technicien supérieur*, BTS), or the no longer awarded diploma of completion of general university studies (*Diplôme d'études universitaires générales*, DEUG).

and prepare for the complete and utter fulfilment of civic ideas. In a word, they are to convey and make students share the values of the Fifth Republic, in a spirit of responsibility, seeking the common good, excluding any discrimination (Herreman, Boyer and Ghrenassia, 2017, pp. 3, 5).

The observations of individual inspectorates, based on the observations of selection committees, are valuable. For example, the inspectorate in Lille noted that candidates were unable to explain the specificity of French secularism (Loison and Catteau, 2019, p. 14). Another supervisory centre indicated that while candidates were generally familiar with the functioning of the primary school, issues related to educational policy were a problem for them. For example, the question about the context of the adoption of specific educational regulations often remained unanswered. A deficit of historical knowledge in relation to the evolution of the education system was also noted. The observation that apprentices had a problem with explaining secularism appeared again (Loison, Dubois, Bouquillon and Pasquier, 2021, p. 27).

The knowledge deficits reported by the inspectorates are the subject of special attention by the authors of textbooks, which is reflected in the content, indicating, for example, important dates to remember, such as the introduction of a compulsory and free school in each commune (February 29, 1816), the introduction of a secular school (Ferry's law of March 28, 1882), or the replacement of religious staff with secular staff in first-degree schools (Goblet's law of October 30, 1886) (e.g. Loison 2021, p. 31-36). For the same reason, the analysed textbooks devote a lot of attention to the values of the Fifth Republic, and in particular to the issue of secularism and teaching deontology, referring to them in various parts of the text (e.g. Herreman et al., 2017, pp. 26-57, pp. 132-139, pp. 246-247).

Interpretation of the Essence of the Values of the Fifth French Republic

The textbooks indicate that the source of the values of the Fifth French Republic is its constitution of 1958. Its first article states that "France shall be an indivisible, secular, democratic and social Republic. It shall ensure the equality of all citizens before the law, without distinction of origin, race or religion. It shall respect all beliefs". These principles are contained in the motto, which denotes at the same time three values - *liberty, equality, and fraternity* - derived from the *Declaration of Human Rights* (1789). Freedom is understood as the realisation of freedom of thought, expression and movement, but also the provision of security. Equality means the same rights for all citizens (active and passive voting rights), economic and social rights (education, health, work). From this idea flows the imperative to reject any

social, racial, gender or religious discrimination. Fraternity is understood as a sense of belonging to one national (national fraternity) or world (universal) family. From these, further values are derived, namely solidarity, secularism and coeducation. The directive of the fundamental law includes the idea of funding *the School of the Republic* as a free, compulsory and secular institution. Its triple mission is pointed out: teaching, educating and formation (Herreman et al., 2017, pp. 27, 29, 31; Loison et al., 2021, pp. 61-62).

The perspective of teacher deontology focuses on the rights and obligations that belong to a teacher. Their civic duties are defined by respecting the law, showing respect for others, valuing people's opinions, and respecting property. As a public official, they are entitled to a salary for their work, the right to strike, pensions, membership in unions, and legal protection. Due to their educational and didactic activities, they have the right to freedom and pedagogical responsibility as well as the right to respect from parents and superiors. Nevertheless, they are obliged to obey superiors in the interest of the common good. With regard to students, they are obliged to show authority, meticulousness, ensure their safety, and demonstrate respect for the child, their student status, and their private life. This also includes setting a good example and being available to students with special educational needs. In relation to parents, their duty is to explain the adopted work methods and maintain confidentiality. In their relationship with superiors, they should be characterized by obedience and restraint (Loison and Catteau, 2017, p. 78).

Importantly, the teacher is obliged to comply with the principle of secularism because they are an official of a specific state institution, performing their entrusted work in the public service. This is both a moral and legal responsibility (Guilleminot, 2015, p. 323). The legislator prohibits the use of the teaching profession as a tool for any kind of propaganda. As an official, they are also obliged to fulfill the government's policies. Of course, every teacher has their own opinions, beliefs, ideas, and their own way of functioning, but these cannot influence their activities stemming from their service to education. This also means not expressing their own political or social views to students or their parents (Herreman et al., 2017, pp. 120-121).

Observance of the values of the Fifth Republic, and in particular secularism, is therefore a special task for future teachers-educators. The problems that in the 1990s were at the centre of the battle to respect them in the school space (e.g. against the wearing of headscarves by Muslim schoolgirls or the demand by Jewish communities for a Saturday free of school, e.g. in Lille, Goussainville, Mantes-la-Jolie, Strasbourg), found their legal regulations, although it is difficult to consider them a past that has been fully put behind

(Auduc and Bayard-Pierlot, 2001, p. 21). For this reason, textbooks sensitise CRPE apprentices even to situations that might seem natural, but which in reality would violate the principle of secularism. An example of this could be the preparation in school canteens of meals that take into account orders or prohibitions imposed by religion or worldview (kosher, halal, vegetarian products). It is also not permissible to offer a special menu on religious holidays, e.g. Christmas, Chanukah, or at the end of Ramadan (Auduc, 2018, p. 11, cf. Lévy, 2002, pp. 189-225).

Since school is meant to educate and shape individuals, it is worth examining the proposed explanation of the concepts of education and citizen from the chapter *Éduquer le futur citoyen* (Educating the Future Citizen) (Catteau, 2017, pp. 119-221). The term education is contrasted with wildness and barbarism. Its synonymous concepts are considered to be upbringing (nurturing), instruction (awareness), and culture. The terms found in the context universe are parents and teachers. By interpreting them, one can conclude that a person deprived of education is someone unrestrained, displaying barbarism. Teachers and parents, who are in the educational space, are predestined to bring up and raise awareness, and thus to introduce children and youth to the world of culture. This is manifested in three dimensions of introduction: to civilization (by identifying with its values, defining French and European identity, learning the language, etc.), to civic-community life, and to social life. Moreover, the French idiom *manquer d'éducation* - to lack good manners (literally education/ upbringing) - corresponds quite well with the adopted path of interpretation (cf. A. Rey, 1991, p. 335).

The term *citizen* is also associated with the above concepts. The concepts of *slave* and *object* are contrasted with it, while *responsible* and *solidarity* are indicated as synonymous. In the context of the civic universe, the words *republic* and *democracy* are placed (Catteau, 2017, p. 119). The civic universe is also associated with belonging to a wider cultural circle than that defined by the borders of the state. This refers primarily to European identity. It means identifying with the heritage of “Jews - with their concept of freedom of choice, illustrated for the first time by the Adamic myth; Greeks, from whom rationality is derived as the foundation of every scientific pursuit; Christians - who taught us about the equality of all people; Arabs, who showed us an example of community solidarity” (Catteau, 2017, pp. 121-122; trans.). This example is interesting insofar as it provides a reference to ancient Greek culture (integrally related to the religion of the citizens of the then poleis), to two religions, and to one ethnic group. It seems that the cited thesis concerning the Arab world is given in *grano salis*, as it could just as well be applied to

the culture of Christians or Jews. Nevertheless, as one might suppose, the goal was to assign a positive attribute to an ethnic group, not to the religion that dominates among them, i.e., Islam.

Secularism as a Special Value

A similarly value-laden narrative is illustrated by an example from the chapter *Laïcité et liberté de penser* (*Secularism and Freedom of Thought*) (Catteau, 2017, p. 142). It recalls the words of a young Afghan who studied in France. Commenting on the Taliban's departure from Kabul following the U.S. armed intervention, he said that pressuring women to stop wearing burkas would make them martyrs: "it's better to send them to school, and maybe one day they will take them off themselves". This statement highlights the transformative power of education, fitting into a broader project of understanding and interpreting cultural heritage, both of the Western and Eastern worlds (see Protoyerides, 2010, pp. 69-70). Thus, the question concerns the potential that the citizens of European Union countries can unleash in the form of European civilization as an "international social reality and democratic dynamics, pacifying human relations and state relations" (Klossa, 2022, p. 45; trans.). The desired value is seen in the idea of dual citizenship identity - both French and European. However, it also involves anticipating students' engagement with their own cultural heritage, which in the realities of contemporary France goes far beyond the European context (Schmidt, 2010, pp. 57-58).

The indicated examples, touching on the issue of secularism and its French specificity, show that it primarily means neutrality. Since the school is meant to serve all citizens, it must be above particular or religious interests, whether of individuals or social groups. Thus, secularism is a political means for realizing the two higher values of the Fifth Republic: freedom (e.g., in expressing opinions at work, in public school, without being constrained by beliefs or religion) and equality (Herreman et al., 2017, p. 30). It is directly stated that secularism is *the cornerstone of the Fifth Republic's pact*, as it is a value and simultaneously a principle enshrined in the constitution. It is also a guarantor of freedom of conscience, equal rights to express religious and spiritual opinions, and political power neutrality. This, in turn, guarantees a triple freedom: personal freedom of individuals, freedom of religion, and freedom of the state itself. Thus, the school is to be a secular space for acquiring knowledge and citizenship skills, where the future citizen will grow. It is also a common project for peaceful coexistence (Auduc, 2018, pp. 7, 9).

Opposing the idea of secularism are terms like *religion*, *clergy*, and *cleric*. Synonymous terms include *natural* and *public*. *Tolerance* and the concept of *agnosticism* are situated within the context of the *secular* universe (Catteau, 2017, p. 139). It is noted that historically, the idea of secularism has been understood differently – religious, enlightened, radical, and, in the period of the Fifth Republic, recognized. It means the secularism of the school, teachers, education, and students, respecting the discreet wearing of religious symbols in public space. Secularism and freedom of thought are interconnected in such a way that the former guarantees the latter. Free thinking means true thinking, which is unrestrained, also concerning external authority. It should be an individual's own act, free from the pressure of religion, meaning theses based on non-scientific premises. This approach also means respecting believers while respecting the truth, which is, in essence, verifiable (Loison et al., 2021, pp. 89-91).

The *Secularism Charter*, placed in every state school building, reminds that the school has been entrusted with the mission of creating conditions in which students will adopt the values of the Fifth Republic. The keywords of this document are significant: “citizenship, faith, culture, duty, [non-]discrimination, law, equality, secularism, freedom, religion, Republic” (Guilleminot, 2015, p. 50; trans.). Although they encompass a full range of republican principles and their opposites, the focal point and reference are secularism. *The Charter* clearly and comprehensibly explains its importance as “[to] live together around common values and for freedom of expression [...]; it guarantees each student free access to all intellectual and cultural resources necessary to build and develop an integrated and autonomous personality” and refers to *the Declaration of the Rights of the Child* of 1959 (Guilleminot, 2015, p. 50; trans.). Therefore, future teachers are advised to treat the issue of secularism in an interdisciplinary manner and use every opportunity to refer to the *Charter*. Debate and reflection by students are desirable methods in this matter, while also paying attention to the undesirable phenomenon of religious, ideological, and economic proselytism (Loison et al., 2021, p. 93).

Values of the Fifth Republic in the Context of Educational Praxis

A certain shortcoming of the analysed texts is the insufficient attention paid to the inconsistency of the state's secular policy. An example is the fact that the elementary education curriculum includes references to the religious sphere. Nonetheless, religious and ideological proselytism, or catechesis in public schools, is prohibited. However, religious holidays (especially Christian ones) are present in the school space as cultural phenomena and belong

to the teaching of religious facts. They are elements of culture, i.e., national and universal heritage, and therefore do not belong to the confessional domain. For this reason, it is possible to celebrate, for example, Christmas in school, provided that strictly religious symbols (e.g., the baby Jesus, nativity scenes) are removed. Each year, the Ministry of Education issues a circular reminding of the major Muslim and Jewish holidays, allowing for the possibility of student absences due to these holidays (Herreman et al., 2017, pp. 34-35). This circular does not need to refer to the Christian calendar, which is associated with public holidays and the nomenclature of school vacations (All Saints' Day, Christmas, Easter, Pentecost Monday, or Ascension Day celebrated on a Thursday)³. Additionally, in public schools, one day, Sunday (linked to the Christian holy day), is excluded from school activities. Religious education, if desired by parents, takes place outside the school space, e.g., on Wednesdays, a day designated for extracurricular activities. In private schools, religious education can be treated as non-mandatory extracurricular activities, while in public institutions, it cannot be organized during the time allotted for students to be present at school. Furthermore, in state elementary schools, teaching is entrusted only to secular staff (Loison et al., 2021, p. 61). Supporting this assertion is the 2004 law prohibiting staff and students from ostentatiously wearing religious symbols in school, which also applies to Alsace and Lorraine, where the 1801 concordat is still in effect (Herreman et al., 2017, pp. 33-34).

The presence of values derived from the republican motto is also emphasized in the recommendations for responses during the CRPE. This means that questions concerning each of the taught subjects are in some way linked to these values. For example, candidates who chose Physical and Sports Education (*Éducation physique et sportive*) may be asked by the committee about the expected learning outcomes of dance in kindergarten. One of the textbooks suggests a response that includes the following phrases: accepting participation in group creativity, in group singing, or learning to swim or dance (Guilleminot, 2021, p. 31). Particularly concerning activities requiring the engagement of the body as a medium, these classes often violate religious or cultural taboos (Baliki, 2010, pp. 195-196). Moral and Civic Education (*Enseignement moral et civique*), introduced in the 2015/2016

³ It should be mentioned that the law on the separation of Church and State is not fully applied in the territories of Alsace and Lorraine (where the Concordat is still in force), as well as in French Guiana, French Polynesia, Saint Pierre and Miquelon, and Mayotte, which are subject to separate legal provisions (Catteau, 2017, 132).

school year, also deserves attention. It aims to provide a formative foundation for the funding of the *School of the Republic* by conveying common values: dignity, freedom, equality, solidarity, secularism, the spirit of justice, respect for others, equality between women and men, tolerance, and rejection of all forms of discrimination. Moreover, the premise of this subject is living together in an indivisible, secular, democratic, and social Republic. It is based on four principles: autonomy, discipline, coexistence of freedoms, and civic community (Herreman et al., 2017, pp. 246-247). It is intended to equip students with social competencies that meet the legislator's expectations. For this reason, CRPE candidates are expected to have the knowledge and skills to transmit values and reinforce desired student attitudes.

Conclusions

The analysed textbooks convey to CRPE candidates the belief that secularism, stemming from the foundational principles and values of the Fifth Republic, will ensure the education and creation of a united (though not uniform) society that is just and pluralistic. In short, secularism, along with other values constitutive of the modern French state, is presented dogmatically. This is limited to the thesis that they guarantee the coexistence of citizens in a culturally and religiously diverse society. Consequently, the subtext of the message suggests that reflection on their validity or alternatives to them may not only be unexpected but even dangerous. On the other hand, this reflection is present in everyday media space and academic discussions (cf. Ferhart, 2017, pp. 245-266; Cock, 2020, pp. 17-19). Opposing them could be seen by CRPE committee members as undermining the foundations of the funding of *the School of the Republic*, and thus contrary to the legislator's expectations. The expected reflexivity of candidates is limited to didactic situations. It has a praxeological dimension since it should lead to solving a problem/conflict rather than discussing republican values and the principles derived from them. In short, these textbooks indicate that this reimbursement requires future teachers to comply with state policy. Recommendations for candidates are therefore not limited to theoretical knowledge. CRPE trainees are required to demonstrate the manifestation of republican values in the didactic process of each taught subject. This shows that republican values are embedded in the teaching deontology, the teaching-learning process, and the daily life of the school institution (exemplified by *the Secularism Charter*).

It is interesting that in the 1960s and 1970s, in rural and small-town communities, there was a certain kind of stigmatization of teachers openly declaring religious engagement (e.g., calling them *les talas* = *ceux qui vont*

à la messe, that is those who go to mass), whereas the analysed textbooks and guides do not address the issue of a possible conflict between teachers' religious practices and their official duties⁴. On the other hand, they sensitize candidates to the connection between religion and the students' culture of origin and to teaching religious facts, which is meant to be poles apart from confessionalization or proselytism. Regarding candidates' personal opinions and beliefs (including political ones), during the recruitment process, they are expected to exercise restraint in their affirmation and skillfully distinguish between the public and private spheres. This skill, it seems, is at the heart of the assumed peaceful coexistence in a multicultural and multiethnic society.

It is worth noting that already at the stage of organizing the recruitment process, the legislator has incorporated the CRPE into the principle of equality, which is reflected in the equal recognition of the competencies of candidates with diplomas and the skills of those without academic training. Similarly, the composition of the commission, which is diverse in terms of competencies, illustrating the range of entities involved in educational processes at various levels, explicitly refers to the idea of pluralism and co-responsibility. It seems obvious that the consequence of this state of affairs is the need for candidates to meet substantive and ideological expectations.

The CRPE recruitment process highlights a broader problem faced by the Fifth Republic. Crisis situations, such as those mentioned in the *Introduction*, explain the tensions at the interface of cultures and civilizations, which, due to a combination of historical events and politics, have become an indispensable element of France's multicultural mosaic (cf. Stempin, 2011, pp. 40-57; Puaud, 2016, pp. 248-250). The values of the Fifth Republic are based not only on the conviction but even the belief that thanks to these values, France can become a home for communities that have never before experienced peaceful coexistence. This fits into the space of experiencing the *sacred* in education, in the sense that Olivier Reboul wrote about years ago (1994, p. 114): "education necessarily invites *sacrifice* and opposes *sacrilege*" (trans.). Thus, to *educate* sometimes means adopting an attitude of readiness for sacrifices and renunciations. It is not just about sharing common values, but also about the future teacher's commitment and willingness to make sacrifices in the name of these values, speaking in the language of Lucie-Anne Skittecate (2000, pp. 160-164) belonging to the space of secular sacredness

⁴ On the intertwining of political tendencies in French society at the time and the reformist tendencies in Catholicism, see, for example, Durand and Merrien (1991, pp. 167-177).

(*sacré laïque*), uniting humanity with the experience of the cosmos. Although it does not refer to the concept of atheistic spirituality, as understood by André Comte-Sponville (2011), it is nevertheless a contemporary echo of Jean Jacques Rousseau's idea of *civil religion*. Terms borrowed from the religious language sacralise the space (in this context, educational), and the idea of a secular school in the service of republicanisation appears as a *saviour* for modern France (cf. Willaime, 1985, pp. 10-29; Baubérot, 2007, p. 15), with teachers as its priests. It is worth adding in passing that this is why commentators on the Fifth Republic's idea of secularism point out a certain fragility of this concept, dependent on state policy (Obin et al., 2019, p. 11).

The above exegesis does not claim to be an exhaustive study. It is rather an invitation for further hermeneutic explorations. Pedagogical reflection on the place of the Fifth Republic's values in French education can be interesting and creative for researchers of the Polish school or those dealing with teaching deontology. It seems trite to say that although to a different extent and with different intensity, Polish schools are increasingly multicultural on the one hand, and on the other, they are becoming arenas of clashes between incompatible value systems.

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