What Are Catholic Schools Teaching to Make a Difference? A Literature Review of Curriculum Studies in Catholic Schools in the U.S. and the U.K. since 1993

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This literature review sketches a landscape of scholarly debates about the curriculum in Catholic primary and secondary schools in the United States and the United Kingdom since 1993. This landscape has three main characteristics. First, scholarly debates about the curriculum in Catholic schools have been few, particularly empirically based discussions. Second, these debates have been led by U.S. scholars with theoretical approaches to the curriculum that tend to ignore the effect of current cultural and economic forces on Catholic schooling through competitiveness and effectiveness criteria. Third, there has been a disconnect between conversations about excellence and innovation, proposed mainly by U.S. scholars, and discussions about the distinctiveness of Catholic curricula, suggested primarily by scholars from the United Kingdom. This landscape poses questions about who is thinking in-depth about what is currently taught in Catholic schools, and the extent to which they offer spiritual depth or educate social-justice-oriented bridge-builders. It is suggested that approaches to these questions that only look at how teachers teach underestimate the socializing power of the curriculum. After mapping the landscape, and discussing its evolution over the last decades, its limitations, and its major silences, the review concludes by outlining five major challenges for the field.

Keywords: Catholic schools, curriculum, curriculum integration, curriculum studies, philosophy of education

What have Catholic education scholars written about curricula during the last two decades? In 1996, McLaughlin stated that "no distinctively Catholic systematic account of the nature and role of education has yet emerged to sit alongside those derived from other sources" (p. 139). Three years later, R. Davis (1999) published *Can There Be a Catholic Curriculum?* pointing out that

> The nearly total abandonment by Catholic curriculum theorists of … 'integral humanism' is reflected in many recent … defenses of the

merits of Catholic education. These for the most part either pass over the curriculum in silence or else make reassuring statements about the normative content of all that is taught in Catholic schools. (p. 224)

This literature review aims to respond to critiques like those noted above and to investigate the scholarly debates about curricula in Catholic schools from 1993 to 2015.

Concretely, the paper answers the question: What conversations have researchers been having about the curriculum in Catholic primary and secondary schools in the United States and the United Kingdom since 1993? What follows is a clarification of six key terms in this question:

- Conversations. Regarding genre, this paper is a landscape literature review. As such, its goal is not to summarize findings but to map the discussions in the field, drawing a picture of what has been researched and debated since 1993. Because of this genre, the guiding question refers metaphorically to the conversations among researchers about curriculum.
- Researchers. This review only includes research and scholarly debates published in peer reviewed journals or edited books, and official guidelines for Catholic curriculum written or endorsed by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), the U.S. National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA), the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (CBCEW), the Scottish Catholic Education Service (SCES), and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) of Northern Ireland. The paper does not include unpublished dissertations or non-peer-reviewed work.
- Curriculum. The concept of curriculum underlying this review is "the plans made for guiding learning in the schools…and the actualization of those plans in the classroom" (Glatthorn, Boschee, & Whitehead, 2009, p. 3). Consequently, this review studies what has been researched and discussed about the content being taught in Catholic schools and expected outcomes, which is much broader than the subject of Religious Education. Because of this approach, the review does not focus on specific discussions on Religious Education unless they are part of larger curricular discussions.
- Primary and secondary schools. In the United States, these schools are also referred to as K-12 schools, or elementary, middle, and high schools. These terms are not used in the United Kingdom.

- United States and United Kingdom. The work focuses on these two nations because of the shared language, the common research networks built through *Journal of Catholic Education*[1] and *International Studies in Catholic Education*, and similar neoliberal educational policies during the last decades. In this sense, governments of both the United States and the United Kingdom initiated market-driven educational reforms during the 1980s, which developed fully during the 1990s and 2000s. These reforms have had to do with curriculum standardization, high-stakes testing, accountability policies, and the promotion of school choice. The contexts for Catholic education are different in both countries: In the United States, Catholic schools do not get public funding, and are therefore not tied to public curriculum standards or accountability; in the United Kingdom Catholic schools can get public funding under conditions that vary across England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. Despite these differences, however, Catholic schools in both countries have had to compete in the educational market. Canada and Australia share some of the aforementioned characteristics, but they were not included in this review due to historical and contextual differences beyond the scope of this article.
- Since 1993. The reason for choosing 1993 as the starting point for this review is the groundbreaking effect that *Catholic Schools and the Common Good* (Bryk, Lee & Holland, 1993) has had in both countries. Although the book was not chiefly about curricula, it highlighted that Catholic schools had a stronger academic core than public schools, and pointed out that, even though Catholic schools explored curricular innovations during the 1970s, they did not institutionalize them (opting for moving students as far as possible through a traditional academic program instead of public schools' option for more electives). In the United States, this book is considered a milestone of Catholic education research (McLaughlin, O'Keefe & O'Keeffe, 1996). In England, Grace (2002) wrote: "I was so impressed with the scholarly excellence of this study and so dismayed at the relatively undeveloped state of Catholic education research in the U.K. at the time that I felt impelled…to do something about it" (p. vii). Thus, he established the Center for Research and Development in Catholic Education at the University College of London.

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1   Until 2014, the *Journal of Catholic Education* was entitled *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice.*

In the interest of documenting my positionality, I would like to share that I am a curriculum scholar who feels passionate about Jesus's message of joy and justice. As such, I believe that secularization and neoliberal socio-economic policies are slowly undermining Catholic schools' distinctiveness, with far reaching consequences for both religious practice and social justice commitments. I also believe that many Catholic education scholars' analyses of this situation lack the depth and global perspective that is needed to face these challenges. An explanation for these circumstances could be the disconnection between philosophers and theologians reflecting about individualism, solidarity, and faith (e.g., Taylor, 2007), and educational debates. I believe that this situation has resulted in theological and social theories that are distant from schools, precisely when it is urgent that they work side by side.

The remainder of this article consists of five sections. The first one is methodological; it explains how the reviewed literature was found and analyzed. The second section is the actual presentation of the literature, which offers a map of the discussions about the curriculum in Catholic schools in the United States and the United Kingdom since 1993. The third section discusses the mapped landscape, suggesting connections that go beyond what was highlighted in the presentation of the literature. The fourth section proposes implications based on the literature review, and the final section consists of some concluding remarks.

Methods

Literature Retrieval

Google Scholar, Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC), and Education Research Complete (ERC) indicated more than 200 peer-reviewed papers and chapters in edited books when a search was conducted with the terms "curriculum," "Catholic," and "schools." The number of works narrowed to 46 after filtering the list with all the descriptors of the guiding question. Additionally, a purposive search was conducted through all of the issues of the *Journal of Catholic Education* and *International Studies in Catholic Education*, the two journals that publish research on Catholic education in the United States and the United Kingdom. This second search yielded four additional articles. Finally, a last search was made in my university's library database and the websites of the five organizations mentioned when clarifying the terms in the guiding question, which added 11 works to the list. The final body of retrieved documents consisted of 61 books, book chapters, peer-reviewed articles, and official guidelines for curriculum development.

It is probable that there are documents and studies about curriculum in Catholic primary and secondary schools that did not come up in these searches. In particular, resources from the United Kingdom may have been missed, since the search was conducted using U.S. search engines. However, the search method assured that the final body of literature is comprehensive. This was necessary to make grounded conclusions about the landscape of the conversations in the field.

Organizational Framework: Situated Documents and Studies

The 61 retrieved works were reviewed according to five features: (a) the main issue that was addressed; (b) the assumptions underlying how the research problem was framed; (c) the guiding question; (d) the method used to address the guiding question; and (e) the main findings. This exercise suggested that, in order to best map the landscape of the conversations in the field, the literature review should be organized according to three categories: First, the types of documents or studies that were retrieved; second, the perspectives on Catholic curricula underlying the documents (i.e., how they understood the relationship between academic subjects, achievement, and Catholic identity); and third, the countries from which the works came: the United States or the United Kingdom. What follows is a description of the types of documents identified in the literature and the perspectives regarding curricula that underlie them. Later, these categories are used to map the field.

Types of documents and studies. There were six types of documents or studies among the reviewed body of literature:

1. Empirical studies. These works tried to answer a research question based upon quantitative or qualitative data (test scores, surveys, interviews, observations, or document analyses.)

2. Program evaluations. These studies were a specific type of empirical research concerned with the assessment of the impact of particular educational interventions.

3. Conceptual studies. These works did not rely on empirical data but on rigorous reflections about a topic. They developed the theoretical underpinnings of the topic through analysis and argumentation. Most of them were historical, philosophical, or theological.

4. Opinion articles. These papers proposed or commented ideas related to the curriculum but without the rigor of conceptual or empirical studies. They opened new dialogues or suggested interesting perspectives but did not give concluding argumentation on the matter.

5. Literature reviews. Like the present work, these documents relied on others' investigations. They described what has been researched about a curriculum-related issue.
6. Curricular guidelines. These documents presented official guidelines for curriculum development from the USCCB, the NCEA, the CB-CEW, the SCES, and the CCMS.

Perspectives on Catholic curricula. As previously mentioned, the documents' underlying assumptions revealed relationships between academic subjects, achievement, and Catholic identity, which related to different conceptions of the relationship between Catholicism and contemporary schooling. There were four different perspectives or stances underlying the literature. They were explicit in some studies, but implicit in most of them. These perspectives were:

1. Identity-focused. This stance assumed that Catholic schools' main goal was the preservation of Catholicism, based upon the idea that modernity is undermining Catholic faith and culture. The most important curricular subject for this stance was Religious Education, and academic achievement was secondary to explicit religious outcome
2. Dialogical. This perspective supposed that Catholic schools were part of the Church's cultural and religious dialogue within the world, so they should both have an explicit Catholic identity and be open to share and learn from other traditions. This stance stressed that Catholic identity should permeate the whole curriculum as a principle of curriculum integration, which did not necessarily depend upon Religious Education as a subject. From this perspective, academic excellence expressed Catholic identity, but there was also a tension between the Catholic and the secular-market rationales for academic excellence.
3. Open. This standpoint also assumed that Catholic schools were part of the Church's cultural and religious dialogue within the world, so they should be open to share and learn from other traditions. However, there was less clarity about the tensions between Catholic values and beliefs, and the current secular, capitalist economic forces. Regarding the curriculum, this meant emphasizing that Catholic schools should foster academic excellence without further analysis of the tensions that this entails in the present cultural and socioeconomic conditions.

4. Secular. This stance presumed that Catholic identity was mostly a private matter. Thus, Catholic schools were understood as if they were public schools with Religious Education as an added subject, having two largely-disconnected curriculum goals: being excellent in secular matters, and giving solid Religious Education.

Although these four perspectives emerged from my own review of the literature, they relate to Pollefeyt and Bouwens's (2010) four types of Catholic schools. The identity-focused perspective would be the curriculum stance in monologue schools (which have strong Catholic identity, and little openness to other worldviews). The dialogical perspective would be the curriculum stance in dialogical schools (strong identity, and full openness to others). The open perspective would be the curriculum stance in colorful schools (full openness to others, but a watered-down Catholic identity). And the secular perspective would be the curriculum stance in colorless schools (with little identity, and a general avoidance of religious issues).

Findings

In this section, I first present literature organized according to the six document categories listed above. Within each category, I identify literature that reflects the four perspectives on curriculum (see Table 1). I then offer a summary of the findings by sketching a landscape of discussions related to curriculum in Catholic primary and secondary schools in the United States and United Kingdom.

Table 1

Documents Retrieved

| Perspective | Types of documents and studies | | | | | | Total |
	Empirical studies	Program evaluations	Conceptual studies	Opinion articles	Literature reviews	Curricular guidelines	
Identity-focused	0	0	4	1	0	1	6
Dialogical	3	2	6	4	0	4	19
Open	3	1	2	10	2	3	21
Secular	6	2	0	2	4	1	15
Total	12	5	12	17	6	9	61

Empirical Studies

The literature search identified 12 empirical studies, 10 from the United States and 2 from the United Kingdom. This means that since 1993 there was an average of about one empirical study conducted every two years, most from the United States. The predominant perspective on Catholic curricula underlying these studies was secular (6 of the 12 studies), and there were no empirical studies conducted from an identity-focused stance.

Three empirical works used data from large national databases to study outcomes of U.S. Catholic high schools (Bryk et al., 1993; Lee, Chow-Hoy, Burkam, Geverdt, & Smerdon, 1998; Sikkink, 2004). Combining these data with interviews and observations, Bryk et al. (1993) pointed out that Catholic high schools had a strong common academic core with fewer electives than public high schools. Concomitantly, Lee et al. (1998) found that Catholic high schools students moved further in the Math curriculum than public high schools students. Both works hypothesized that these findings were due to a Catholic educational belief that a traditional humanist college-bound curriculum was the most appropriate for all students. Sikkink (2004) found that because of the curricular structure and their emphasis on community, Catholic high schools scored higher than public high schools in various school climate measures.

Three empirical studies were based upon researcher-designed questionnaires. All were from the United States and had a secular perspective on Catholic curricula. Schintzel (2000) examined the Advanced Placement (AP) Science program in Catholic high schools, and concluded that these schools provided adequate AP Science courses. His evidence for this conclusion, though, was administrators' and Science teachers' opinions on school offerings. On another topic, Chandler (2000) and Kelly (2010) arrived at contradictory findings. Chandler presented evidence to suggest that Catholic schools' curriculum was more student-centered than public schools' curriculum (i.e., it gave more attention to individual differences in the ways students learn). However, Kelly found evidence to claim exactly the opposite.

Five empirical studies were based on analysis of interviews. Three were from the United States (Fuller & Johnson, 2014; Meidl & Meidl, 2013; Scanlan, 2008), and two were from the United Kingdom (Grace, 2002; Walbank, 2012). Grace (2002) interviewed 60 principals to study how they were dealing with the expansion of "market-based curricula." His findings indicated that curricula were, in fact, becoming influenced by the content of standardized testing, yet most of the interviewees believed that Catholic expressions

of faith and service were still alive due to protected time for reflection and prayer, as well as a creative and participative liturgical culture. Nonetheless, Grace (2002) also found that Catholic practices were maintained by the commitment of an older generation of educators, so there was a risk that new educators "may find a greater sense of confidence…and public recognition by concentrating their energies in the market curriculum rather than in the relatively invisible outcomes of their spiritual and moral curriculum" (p. 51). In the same sense, Fuller and Johnson (2014) studied the processes of change in a Catholic high school and found that core Catholic features such as opportunities for service had been affected by pressure for academic achievement.

Finally, one study by Schuttloffel (1998) examined the written primary school curricula of 19 U.S. dioceses. This work found that the documents were consistent with the idea that Catholic faith should permeate the whole curriculum. However, questions regarding the actualization of those written plans in schools and classrooms were not addressed.

In sum, empirically-based curricular conversations were scarce and led by U.S. researchers emphasizing a secular perspective on Catholic curricula. In other words, most of these discussions emphasized an idea of academic excellence that did not consider the tensions between pursuing academic achievement and the spiritual and moral goals of Catholic education. The exceptions to this general trend were the qualitative studies by Fuller and Johnson (2014), Grace (2002), and Schuttloffel (1998).

Program Evaluations

There were five program evaluations: four from the United States and one from the United Kingdom. The lack of published program evaluations indicates that either there were few curricular interventions taking place in Catholic schools, or that the existing programs have not been studied by scholars who published the results. The predominant perspectives on Catholic curricula underlying these works were dialogical and secular.

Four program evaluations assessed curricular interventions using questionnaires and interviews (Proehl, Douglas, Elias, Johnson, & Westsmith, 2013; Ryan, 2004; Stanley, Jones, & Murphy, 2012; Starratt, 2000). Three of them assessed curriculum integration efforts. The first examined the process of a U.S. high school toward a universal end-of-high-school portfolio assessment (Ryan, 2004). The second examined the implementation of a curriculum integration project at a U.K. secondary school (Stanley et al., 2012). The third studied a liturgical initiative at a U.S. high school related to academic subject

integration (Starratt, 2000). Each evaluation found that curricular integration processes were highly valued by students, who enjoyed school more as a result of the integration. Most teachers valued curriculum integration as well, except for some who expressed that it demanded too much effort (Stanley et al., 2012). The shift to portfolio assessment implied curricular integration because teachers had to agree on shared learning expectations and collaborate to achieve them (Ryan, 2004). Similarly, the liturgical initiative showed that, in Catholic schools, "liturgies can become…culminating expressions of disparate learnings developed in separate academic areas" (Starratt, 2000, p. 61). Although the reasons for these interventions were diverse, Stanley et al. (2012) reported that the Catholic philosophy of education was key for the success of curricular integration.

Krebbs (2000) studied a program aiming to familiarize teachers from Catholic schools within the Archdiocese of New York with concrete ways to infuse Catholic values and faith into the curriculum. Her research was based upon observations of the development of the program. The conclusion was that, although teachers were asked to infuse Catholic values and beliefs into the whole curriculum, few of them really did it because this task "presumes a fairly sophisticated knowledge of Catholic theology, history, and culture" (Krebbs, 2000, p. 308).

In sum, this document category showed a small conversation led by U.S. program evaluators. The main theme was the study of curricular innovation as curriculum integration. Since this requires a principle of curricular integration, these works gave more attention than empirical studies to how –and if– Catholic faith and values permeated the curriculum as a whole.

Conceptual Studies

The conceptual studies were 12: Four from the United States and eight from the United Kingdom. As with the empirical studies, this meant an average of about one conceptual study every two years. Regarding the underlying perspectives on Catholic curricula, the predominant stance was dialogical (in 6 of the 12 studies), and there were no conceptual studies from a secular stance.

Three conceptual works had a historical approach. They examined the evolution of Catholic curricula over multiple centuries. Two of these studies came from the United Kingdom (Arthur, 1995; Davis, R., 1999), and one came from the United States (Olsen, 2010). Arthur (1995) examined the extent to which English legislation had eroded the Church's influence over

its schools. He found that, with time, Catholic schools concentrated on the subject of Religious Education instead of the broader underpinnings of the whole curriculum, and tension between Religious Education and the rest of the curriculum increased. Similarly, R. Davis (1999) studied the evolution of Catholic curricula from the late medieval period to today, and found that the Catholic worldview was marginalized in the formation of modern curricula due to tensions between Catholicism and expanding modernity. Hence, the Catholic elements of the curriculum were localized in specific curricular areas such as Religious Education. For R. Davis, Catholics worldwide have had to accept this change, losing their principle of curricular integration. Both Arthur and R. Davis suggested that this problem was theological in nature, so "the initial staff development priority would be renewing the covenant between Catholic teachers and the theology of their faith; a restoration of the bond between the subject areas and the integrated mission of the Catholic school" (Davis, R., 1999, p. 226). Olsen (2010) studied a mid-20th century Catholic philosopher and concluded that Catholic curricula should be centered in Christian culture rather than in philosophy or theology. His rationale was that, without their cultural embodiment, philosophical and theological inquiries lack the Catholic narrative grounding that was key for Catholic thinkers in past centuries.

Five conceptual studies had a directly philosophical or theological approach. One of them came from the United States (Porath, 2000), and four came from the United Kingdom (Haldane, 1996; McLaughlin, 1996; Williams, K., 2010; Whittle, 2014). Porath (2000) emphasized that the main difference between Catholic and public schools cannot be Religious Education but a Catholic vision of knowledge unifying the educational experience. From this viewpoint, academic achievement is essential for Catholic schooling because it expresses human flourishing. For McLaughlin (1996), cited in the paper's introduction, there was an urgent need for a distinctive philosophy of education that gave coherence to the curriculum in Catholic schools beyond edu-babble phrases such as "Catholic schools are inspired in the Gospel." Like Arthur (1995) and R. Davis (1999), Whittle (2014) claimed that this philosophy or theory for Catholic education was only tenable on theological grounds. He suggested that Rahner's (1978) theology could fruitfully frame a Catholic curricular theory centered on students' flourishing and their experiences of mystery and human limits. Kevin Williams (2010) claimed that a contemporary theory of Catholic education has to answer the question: How should Catholic schools teach Religious Education to students who are not

Catholic or do not share their parents' Catholic beliefs?

The other four conceptual studies analyzed contemporary curricular issues. Two of them came from the United States (Kallemeyn, 2009; White, 2012), and two came from the United Kingdom (Arthur, 2013; Davis, R., & Franchi, 2013). For Arthur (2013), the fact that English and Welsh Catholic school teachers learn fundamentally secular models of schooling meant a "de-Catholicising of the curriculum through a process of internal secularization" (p. 96). In a similar sense, Kallemeyn (2009) predicted that high-stakes testing would have a growing influence in U.S. Catholic schools because of parent pressures in the market educational environment. Robert Davis and Franchi (2013) proposed that societal changes due to globalization were also a possibility for Catholic curriculum theorists worldwide. They highlighted two trends. First, they emphasized that efforts for curricular integration have opened a possibility for developing a comprehensive Catholic curriculum that moves away from the focus on Religious Education. Second, they examined Pope Benedict XVI's (2007) call for a new humanism, which has meant a new impulse for dialogue with secular curricular traditions. In this direction, and since scientific discourse usually claims that faith-based schools are irrational and sectarian, R. Davis and Franchi proposed that Catholic schools should offer a strong scientific literacy along with addressing science's moral dimension. White's (2012) work examined the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IB) and proposed that it could help Catholic schools to deepen their identity through: (a) the recovery of the humanist tradition without giving up excellence in Math and Sciences; (b) a critical approach to knowledge through its course on Theory of Knowledge that fosters curricular integration; and (c) the goal of preparing students for participating in a globalized world.

Contrary to what happened within the empirically-based conversations, conceptual discussions about the curriculum in Catholic schools were led by scholars from the United Kingdom with dialogical and identity-focused perspectives. Their main concern was the lack of a principle of curricular integration in Catholic schools due to a lack of a contemporary theory for Catholic education. Although most of these scholars shared this diagnosis of the present situation, some of them held pessimistic views for the future, while others saw that some contemporary educational trends offer opportunities for a deep renewal of Catholic schools' curricula.

Opinion Articles

Opinion articles formed the largest group of works within the literature: 17 articles or chapters of edited books, 14 from the United States and 3 from the United Kingdom. This meant an average of almost one opinion article per year. Most of them had an open perspective on Catholic curricula (10 of the 17), yet one had an identity-focused stance, four had a dialogical stance, and two had a secular stance.

Nine of the 17 works had a theological approach. Seven of them were from the United States (Cook & Simonds, 2011; Groome, 1996, 2014; Gros, 1999; Lickona, 1997; O'Keefe, 1998; Shimabukuro, 2008), and two were from the United Kingdom (Jamison, 2013; Williams, K., 2013). As a group, these articles suggested diverse ideas that should underlie the curriculum in Catholic schools. For Groome (1996), "the distinctiveness of Catholic education is prompted by the distinctive characteristics of Catholicism itself" (p. 107). Thus, "Catholic schools must … give people ready and persuasive access to the legacy of scripture and tradition, which are the mediating symbols of Christian faith" (Groome, 2014, p. 119). For Jamison (2013), Catholic schools should pay attention to an important insight given by the IB: there can be a modern curriculum with a non-instrumentalist vision of humanity at its heart. Following the IB, Catholic schools should "create a curriculum with a Catholic heart" (Jamison, 2013, p. 15).

Four opinion articles were concerned with how Catholic curricula should educate for social justice, permeated by Catholic Social Teaching (CST). Three were from the United States (Elias 2005; Horan, 2005; Riley & Danner-McDonald, 2013), and one was from the United Kingdom (Grace, 2013). This group of articles stressed that Catholic education should be social justice oriented, and all academic subjects have to contribute to this orientation. However, Grace (2013) claimed that most Catholic schools have focused on pursuing academic results and ignored CST, so there was "an urgent need to strengthen the Catholic cultural content of the curriculum … to prevent a process of incorporation into a secularized and technicist educational culture" (p. 104).

The other four opinion articles touched upon contemporary curricular issues such as the use of standards (Manno, 1997; Ozar, 2012) and student-centered pedagogy (Boland, 2000; Zukowski, 1997). All of them were from the United States and had open or secular perspectives on Catholic curricula. Regarding the use of standards, Manno (1997) suggested that the idea of accountability could be interesting for Catholic schools because it means set-

ting clear standards of expected student learning, testing the achievement of that learning, and having real consequences for the failure to meet those standards. Fifteen years later, Ozar (2012) explained how the Center for Catholic School Effectiveness (CCSE) at Loyola University Chicago, in partnership with the Roche Center for Catholic Education (RCCE) at Boston College developed a set of standards that could inform curriculum development in Catholic schools. The standards themselves are reviewed later, in the curricular guidelines subsection of this article. Regarding the developments in the learning sciences, Boland (2000) and Zukowski (1997) suggested that 21st century education would be more individualized and student-centered. Therefore, they called for restructuring Catholic schools in this direction.

Opinion articles were the most frequent genre for conversations about Catholic curricula. They were led by U.S. scholars with an open stance, and focused on two main topics: ideas for principles of curricular integration (such as CST), and calls for restructuring Catholic schools along the lines of present movements for individualized instruction, standardization, and accountability. The lack of reflection about the tensions between these contemporary educational trends and the difficulty for a Catholic curricular integration shows the difference between the open perspective on Catholic curricula that predominates among opinion articles, and the dialogical stance of most conceptual studies.

Literature Reviews

There were six literature reviews, all from the United States. Four of them had a secular stance and two had an open stance.

Four literature reviews were mainly concerned with what U.S. Catholic education scholars have termed the "Catholic school effect[2]" (Ellison & Hallinan, 2004; Fusco, 2005; Jeynes, 2008; Meegan, Carroll, & Ciriello, 2002). Ellison and Hallinan (2004) found that U.S. Catholic schools were more

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2   On average, students from Catholic schools have repeatedly scored higher than students from public schools on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests. The question for researchers has been whether these higher scores are a result of factors that are intrinsic to Catholic schools, or are due to external factors such as parent income, parent education, or schools' selection processes. Coleman, Hoffer, & Kilgore (1982) were the first ones to claim concluding evidence for the "Catholic school effect" (i.e., the idea that the higher scores are due to intrinsic characteristics of Catholic schools). From then on, this thesis has been continuously debated by Catholic and non-Catholic education scholars.

successful than public schools in utilizing ability grouping to promote student learning due to their commitment to providing a humanist college-bound curriculum to the greatest number of students. Meegan et al. (2002) found that research from the United States on Catholic school outcomes was completely focused on academic outcomes. In response, they called for studies on Catholic schools' religious outcomes. Three years later, Fusco (2005) repeated that "little research has been done on the religious outcomes of Catholic schools" (p. 93).

Studying the doctoral dissertations on Catholic education in the United States between 1988 and 1997, R. Williams (2001) found that the number of dissertations on curriculum was small: only 6% of all the dissertations on Catholic education. Moreover, most of them assessed students' mastery of the curricular content through standardized tests. His explanatory hypothesis for this finding was that "curriculum may not be recognized as an issue of concern for Catholic schools" (Williams, R., 2001, p. 92). Miles, Bufkin, and Rule (2002) wrote a summary of the learning theories that have been developed in the educational field at large since the 1950s. They mentioned that this would be helpful for Catholic curricular development, but did not make any explicit connection with distinctive Catholic school issues.

The repeated conclusion that studies on U.S. Catholic schools' outcomes have focused almost completely on academic achievement is very important. However, most of these literature reviews neither mentioned the criteria used to retrieve or reject the studied literature nor the frameworks used to present it. This methodological weakness brings their results into question.

Curricular Guidelines

The final group of works was composed of nine documents containing guidelines for curriculum development written or endorsed by Catholic education organizations. Five of them were from the United States (CCSE-RCCE, 2012; Ozar, 1994; Shimabukuro, 2007; USCCB, 2005, 2014); and four were from the United Kingdom (CBCEW, 2014; CCMS, 2007; SCES, 2016; Stock, 2012).

Three of these documents, written by U.S. scholars for the NCEA, suggested concrete guidelines for curriculum development. Ozar (1994) stated that Catholic schools should focus on expected learning outcomes (i.e., learning standards). Almost two decades later, she chaired the task force that developed the U.S.-based *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools* (CCSE-RCCE, 2012). These stan-

dards are neither a curriculum nor curriculum standards but general "excellence standards" for Catholic schools that, among other things, can support curriculum development. Shimabukuro (2007) also suggested that Catholic schools' curricula should be built upon student learning outcomes, but emphasized that this development should start from a shared philosophy of education among teachers, which has to be aligned with documents from the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education (CCE, 1965, 1977, 1988, 1997). She stressed that this alignment is key because "individual teachers' philosophies that conflict with the school's philosophy constitute a *hidden curriculum*, a covert message that can undermine the functionality of the school" (Shimabukuro, 2007, p. 3). Although Shimabukuro highlighted the importance of the theoretical underpinnings, the focus of these three documents on outcomes and standards coincides with the social-efficiency vision of the curriculum that, according to Kliebard (1995), has dominated educational discussions in the United States since the 1950s.

The other six works were written directly by Bishops' Conferences or by the Education Services that depend on them (CBCEW, 2014; CCMS, 2007; SCES, 2016; Stock, 2012; USCCB, 2005, 2014). In the United States, the USCCB (2005) stated that "Catholic schools provide … a broad-based curriculum, where faith and culture are intertwined in all areas of a school's life" (p. 3). Recently, the USCCB applauded states' efforts to ensure academic excellence through the adoption of Common Core State Standards (CCSS, 2010), but expressed that the CCSS were "incomplete as it pertains to the Catholic school" (USCCB, 2014, p. 8). As such, the USCCB recommended that the CCSS "be neither adopted nor rejected without review, study, consultation, discussion and caution" (p. 5). In England and Wales, the CBCEW (2014) stated that "the whole curriculum of the school … is informed by and promotes Catholic teachings" (p. 5). In Northern Ireland, the CCMS (2007) declared that "the promotion of a purely or largely secular curriculum—as appears increasingly possible and, for some, desirable today—was foreign for the Classical-Christian tradition of schooling" (p. 4). The Catholic school,

> simultaneously engages with and embraces secular society, taking on its wide and varied curriculum but placing it in the even wider context of a social totality or community, hence providing the student and his or her community with the opportunity and means of investigating and experiencing ways of living beyond the purely secular. (CCMS, 2007, p. 5)

Most of these documents had a dialogical perspective and provided principles for how curricula in Catholic schools should look. However, they did not offer concrete guidelines for curriculum development, remaining at a conceptual or theoretical level.

In sum, this subsection showed two almost parallel conversations. On the one hand, the U.S. scholars who wrote officially endorsed curriculum guidelines –from open and secular perspectives– suggested concrete ways for developing curricula that emphasized the use of learning standards. On the other hand, Bishops and Catholic Education Services from both the United States and the United Kingdom offered principles for curriculum development mostly from a dialogical stance, while remaining at a theoretical level.

Summary of Findings: A Landscape of Catholic Curricular Conversations in the United States and the United Kingdom since 1993

Overall, what conversations have researchers been having about the curriculum in Catholic primary and secondary schools in the United States and the United Kingdom since 1993? The first finding of this review was that scholarly conversations about the curriculum in Catholic schools have been few. There were only 61 documents and studies since 1993—an average of two to three per year. In this sense, "one would think that with all the publicity given to Catholic schools since the 1980s, we would know much more about them…Yet…few details are available" (Fusco, 2005, p. 80).

Another finding had to do with the types of documents that were predominant or scarce. A large number of publications were opinion articles; empirical studies were few and there was a lack of studies focused on curricular interventions in Catholic primary and secondary schools. The latter absence is concerning because it means that there is no specific research base for curricular change in Catholic schools. The fact that existing research on the outcomes of Catholic schools was almost entirely focused on academic achievement is also concerning because it is difficult to assess how Catholic schools are fulfilling their mission of educating the whole person without empirical research on their moral and spiritual outcomes (Fusco, 2005; Meegan et al., 2002).

An additional finding came from the relationship between the underlying perspectives on Catholic curricula evident in the documents and the countries from which these documents came (see Tables 2 and 3). On the one hand, empirical studies, opinion articles, and literature reviews came mainly from the United States and had mostly open and secular stances on curricula. On the other hand, conceptual studies came mainly from the United Kingdom

(along with Bishops' curricular guidelines) and had predominantly a dialogical perspective. The first group's concerns were for Catholic schools' academic excellence and the actualization of their curriculum and instruction in line with contemporary educational trends. The second group's concern was about the watering down of school identity due to market-driven societal change. The gap between these two groups revealed a central divide in the landscape of the conversations about the curriculum.

Table 2

Documents on Curriculum in Catholic Schools in the United States since 1993

| Perspective | Types of documents and studies | | | | | | Total |
	Empirical studies	Program evaluations	Conceptual studies	Opinion articles	Literature reviews	Curricular guidelines	
Identity-focused	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
Dialogical	2	2	1	2	0	1	8
Open	2	0	2	9	2	3	18
Secular	6	2	0	2	4	1	15
Total	10	4	4	14	6	5	43

Table 3

Documents on Curriculum in Catholic Schools in the United Kingdom since 1993

| Perspective | Types of documents and studies | | | | | | Total |
	Empirical studies	Program evaluations	Conceptual studies	Opinion articles	Literature reviews	Curricular guidelines	
Identity-focused	0	0	3	0	0	1	4
Dialogical	1	0	5	2	0	3	11
Open	1	1	0	1	0	0	3
Secular	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	2	1	8	3	0	4	18

This core divide in the conversations was related to the three categories that built the framework used to organize and present the literature: types of documents, underlying perspectives on Catholic curricula, and countries from which the studies came. Hence, it was a methodological, ideological, and contextual divide. Perhaps some readers expected more works with an identity-focused perspective from the United States, which was not the case. A possible explanation for this finding is that the review only included scholarly works, and U.S. academic conversations about Catholic education may be more affected by predominant pragmatism and secularism than what Catholic education scholars realize. As Kliebard (1995) suggested, the general trend in U.S. curriculum development after the 1950s has been adopting a social-efficiency approach that has downplayed philosophical and moral considerations. Maybe U.S. Catholic education researchers have unconsciously followed this same path.

Among the largest group of works that came mainly from the United States, a consistent claim was that "the difference between public and Catholic [secondary] schools concerns the high level of academic course taking in Catholic [secondary] schools" (Kelly, 2010, p. 2407). For these researchers, the curriculum in Catholic schools had two specific features: Religious Education as a subject and a strong academic core (Bryk et al., 1993; Ellison & Hallinan, 2004; Kelly, 2010; Lee et al., 1998). The origin of this second distinctive feature was the tradition of giving humanist college-oriented education for all secondary school students, thus offering fewer electives than public secondary schools. Several scholars within this group also proposed that contemporary Catholic curriculum development should be geared toward standards and accountability (CCSE-RCCE, 2012; Manno, 1997; Ozar, 1994, 2012).

Among the group of conceptual studies with dialogical or identity-focused perspectives on curricula, the most pressing contemporary curricular issue for Catholic schools was the lack of curricular integration. This was exemplified by the general focus on the subject of Religious Education instead of concern for the Catholic underpinnings of the curriculum as a whole (Arthur, 1995; Davis, R., 1999). These works identified a risk that, within a secular and competitive context, Catholic schools might emphasize academic results rather than achievement of their spiritual and moral goals (Arthur, 2013; Grace, 2002, 2013; Walbank, 2012). This issue was linked to the idea that there was a lack of theory for Catholic education (Arthur, 1995; Davis, R., 1999; McLaughlin, 1996; Whittle, 2014).

There were a few documents and studies within the literature attempting to bridge the core divide in the field, i.e., connecting concerns for academic excellence with concerns for the spiritual and moral goals of Catholic schools. Among these studies were the qualitative investigations showing that market culture was challenging Catholic schools' curricula (Fuller & Johnson, 2014; Grace, 2002). By exploring the tensions that underlie Catholic schooling at present, these works played a central role in the mapped landscape: They presented the complexity of contemporary curriculum development in Catholic schools because of the countercultural values of Catholicism within market educational systems. All these works had a dialogical perspective on Catholic curricula, which points toward the stance that is needed to tackle the most pressing problems in the field.

In general, the literature indicated that the work of infusing Catholic identity into the curriculum rested mainly upon teachers, and Catholic curriculum development requires that teachers share a theory for Catholic education (Shimabukuro, 2007). Yet, as Krebbs (2000) found, they generally do not have the training for this task. Most teachers in Catholic schools were prepared in secular settings, which reinforced a disconnect between educational theories and faith (Arthur, 2013). Thus, as R. Davis (1999) suggested, there appears to be an urgent need for restoring the bond between subject areas and the integrated mission of Catholic schools.

This third section of the review has sketched a landscape of the conversations that scholars have been having about the curriculum in Catholic primary and secondary schools in the United States and the United Kingdom since 1993. There are three main characteristics of this landscape. First, conversations about the curriculum in Catholic schools have been few. In particular, there is a lack of empirically based conversations. Second, most of these conversations have been led by U.S. scholars with open or secular perspectives on Catholic curricula that did not analyze the impact that current cultural and economic forces are having on the Catholic curriculum through competitiveness and effectiveness criteria. Third, there has been a disconnect between conversations about excellence and innovation, proposed mainly by U.S. scholars, and conversations about the distinctiveness of Catholic curricula, suggested primarily by scholars from the United Kingdom. This landscape poses questions about who is thinking in depth about what is currently taught in Catholic schools, which relates directly to how Catholic schools are offering spiritual depth or forming students to be social justice oriented bridge-builders in the midst of contemporary socioeconomic, political, and cultural trends.

Some might argue that the key lever for tackling most of the mentioned challenges is not the curriculum but how the curriculum is taught, i.e., teachers and teaching. From this point of view, the distinctiveness of Catholic schools does not relate to specific contents or curricula, but to a Catholic way of doing things, which is lived and transmitted by the educators. Hence, there is nothing surprising nor concerning in this review's findings. However, I suggest that, although teachers undoubtedly are at the center of Catholic schools' mission, ignoring the socializing power of the curriculum is naïve (Apple, 1990; Bernstein, 1971; Jackson, 1968). For instance, educational research at large shows that new teachers usually rely on available curriculum materials for learning to teach (Ball & Cohen 1996; Davis, E., & Krajcik 2006; Grossman & Thompson 2008).

Discussion

The Evolution of Catholic Curriculum Conversations since 1993

The documents' dates of publication demonstrate that there was a historical evolution of the literature that is relevant to the landscape of the conversations since 1993. Fourteen works were published from 1993 to 1999; 19 works were published from 2000 to 2007; and 28 works were published since 2008. This progression indicates that, although conversations in the field have been few, their numbers have been growing over time.

The three-category framework employed to present the literature provided additional insight into this historical evolution. During the 1990s, most documents were opinion articles and conceptual studies; 71% of the works were from the United States and the perspectives on Catholic curricula underlying the documents were diverse (although the dialogical stance was predominant). During the first years of the 2000s, the prevailing types of studies were empirical works and literature reviews; 89% of the works came from the United States and the predominant perspectives on curricula were open and secular. Since 2008, opinion articles and conceptual studies once again have become the most common types of documents; only 57% of the documents have come from the United States and the predominant perspectives on curricula have been open and dialogical. In sum, the historical progression of the landscape shows that, after a concentration of the conversations in the United States from 2000 to 2006, the rise in the number of conversations during the last years has been chiefly due to more participation from scholars in the United Kingdom. Correspondingly, after a prevalence of empirical studies

with open and secular perspectives on curricula during the first years of the 2000s, there has been a return to balance between empirical and conceptual studies, as well as a return to dialogical curricular stances.

A large part of the previous pattern relates to the conversations in the two main journals publishing Catholic education research in the United States and the United Kingdom. Twenty five works were published in the United States-based *Journal of Catholic Education*, founded in 1997; eight works came from the United Kingdom-based *International Studies in Catholic Education*, founded in 2009. The founding dates of both journals partially explain the predominance of work from the United States during the beginning of the 2000s, as well as the later expansion of the conversations with a more significant participation from the United Kingdom.

The rise in the number of conversations about the curriculum in Catholic schools and the return to dialogical perspectives during the last years were also related to larger trends in education such as aforementioned market-driven educational reforms in both countries during the last decades. In Grace's (1996) words:

> Market forces, market values and the inexorable circumstances for institutional survival and financial solvency are threatening the historical mission and values of Catholic schooling…Can a balance be found between Catholic values and market values, or will market forces begin to compromise the integrity of…Catholic schooling? (p. 84)

It is likely that this context has contributed to the rise of the number of conversations about the curriculum in recent years, as well as to the return to dialogical stances. This trajectory has been led by the United Kingdom but can also be identified in the United States, although at a slower pace.

This historical analysis of the literature's evolution demonstrates the dynamic nature of conversations about the curriculum in Catholic schools in the United States and the United Kingdom since 1993. Transformation of educational systems due to market-driven policies, and more research from the United Kingdom have increased the number of conversations and have resulted in more analyses of the tensions between the Catholic and the market rationales for academic excellence. Given this trend, it is reasonable to expect more conversations about the curriculum in Catholic schools in the coming years, as well as further considerations about the outcomes of Catholic schooling. Similarly, it would also be reasonable to expect more collabora-

tion between Catholic theorists and empirical researchers. The complexity of problems related to the reshaping of Catholic education due to global cultural trends requires efforts that bridge the divide in the field.

Limitations of the Studied Documents

There were two important limitations of the reviewed body of literature. First, this review was conducted from the United States. Hence, it is probable that there were studies from the United Kingdom that were not located and thus were not included in the review. Although most journals are internationally available, this is not always the case for books and curricular development guidelines. Given the exhaustive search for the literature and Grace's (2002) assertion that Catholic education research in the United Kingdom was undeveloped until the 2000s, I hope that this work offers a representative depiction of conversations about the curriculum in Catholic schools in both countries since 1993.

The second limitation of the body of literature, somehow suggested in the Findings section, was the low quality of much of the work. For instance, most literature reviews did not outline the criteria used to collect their literature, which raises the methodological question of how they reached their conclusions. Also, the empirical studies based on researcher-designed questionnaires presented little information about the validity and reliability of their instruments. The most concerning issue, though, was that almost no work referred to major curricular theorists from both countries. For example, Apple (1990), Bernstein (1971), Dewey (1900/1990), Goodson (2005), Kliebard (1995), Pinar (2008), Tyler (1949/2013), or Young (1971, 2013) were rarely named, which indicates that conversations about the curriculum in Catholic schools were disconnected from broader curricular discussions. This is worrisome because the distinctiveness of Catholic schools cannot isolate conversations about the curriculum in Catholic schools from larger curricular debates. Of course, there are issues specific to Catholic schools. But there also are many shared spiritual and moral concerns with scholars from other traditions, and Catholic educators should be engaged in fruitful conversations with them.

Curricular Conversations that are Not Occurring

Finally, this third section includes an analysis of the silences in the conversations, i.e., an examination of the issues that were consciously or unconsciously avoided. Among many omissions, four were particularly important. First, there was no mention of the relationship between the curriculum in

primary and secondary schools. Most research referred to secondary schools, and a few studies were focused on primary schools (Proehl et al., 2013; Schuttloffel, 1998), but no work studied the relationship between them, suggesting a discussion about the progression of the Catholic curriculum from childhood to adolescence. This is crucial because, for example, curriculum integration occurs more easily in primary schools than in secondary schools (Venville, Wallace, Rennie, & Malone, 2002). Consequently, infusing Catholic identity into the whole curriculum may require differentiated approaches depending on school levels.

A second major silence in the curricular conversations was the absence of studies exploring the use of textbook and resource materials in Catholic schools. When reflecting upon the applicability of the Common Core State Standards, the USCCB (2014) stated that "principals and teachers in… Catholic schools are acutely aware of the importance of a very careful review and selection of textbooks that support its mission and purpose" (p. 8). However, there was not much more, although the influence of textbook and curriculum-material publishers in schools has been widely documented (Elliott & Woodward, 1990; Rowan, 2002). This is even truer at present, given the availability of online-developed curriculum and digital resources for the classroom. In order to move the right levers, conversations about the curriculum in Catholic primary and secondary schools have to touch upon this topic and suggest ways of navigating its complexity.

A third important absence in the mapped landscape was the hidden curriculum (Jackson, 1968), which consists of the unwritten, unofficial, and often unintended lessons, values, and perspectives that students learn in school. Two empirical works touched upon the hidden curriculum when studying character and civic formation in Catholic schools (Meidl & Meidl, 2013; Sikkink, 2004), but no work dug deeper in the unintended social and religious reproductive dynamics in Catholic schools. It is shocking that since 1993 there has not been research and discussion among Catholic educational scholars about "how Catholic schooling … plays a fundamental role in the socialization of students and the reproduction of the dominant culture" (McLaren, 1986, p. 72). In a time of claims for cultural, social, and racial inclusion, this silence in the Catholic curricular conversations indicates insufficient critical reflection in the field.

The latter omission was connected to a fourth silence in the landscape of the conversations: Preparation for work or vocational education and training (VET). It was surprising that all works assumed that secondary schools

prepare youth for college, especially in the United Kingdom, where 44% of all upper-secondary-school students—the equivalent to 11th and 12th grade students in the United States—are in VET programs (Eurostat, 2015). In the United States, only 5% of all high-school students attend vocational schools (NCES, 2010). There were references to training talented underserved students for college, which is undoubtedly praiseworthy, but the unquestioned ideal was always college. This silence speaks about a social-class bias underlying curricula in Catholic schools that relates to the tradition of offering a liberal arts education for all. The problem with this paradigm is that it was developed when few attended secondary school. At present, when secondary school is compulsory, many transition directly from school to work or enter the military (Blustein et al., 2002). Thus, secondary schools' curricula cannot only be oriented to college. The famous UNESCO report by Delors et al. (1996) put it this way:

> Secondary education must be rethought…The key principle is to arrange for a variety of individual paths…The diversity of secondary schooling…should provide a valid answer to the challenges of mass education by dispelling the obsession with a one-and-only educational *king's highway*. (p. 139)

This scenario implies important social justice challenges for Catholic education leaders and curriculum developers that go beyond helping the smartest low-class students to get into college.

Future Challenges

After mapping the landscape of the conversations about the curriculum in Catholic schools in the United States and the United Kingdom since 1993, and discussing its evolution, limitations, and major silences, this section outlines five challenges for the field. These challenges emerge from the sketched landscape, and from the initially disclosed concern for the consequences of global cultural trends and neoliberal educational policies on both religious practices and social justice commitments. Hence, the assumption that Catholic schools' curricula should foster communal and solidary values, which are countercultural to contemporary individualist and competitive tendencies, underlies these challenges.

More Conversations about Curricula and Better Quality Research

The first challenge is increasing the number of conversations about the curriculum in Catholic schools. This challenge implies greater concern from Catholic education scholars for what is taught and learned in Catholic schools, which assumes weighing adequately the socializing power of the curriculum for both students and teachers. In this sense, the ideal of infusing Catholic values and beliefs cannot rest solely on teachers; it requires institutional supports and structures among which curricula shaping everyday experiences are central. Along this line, having more (and deeper) curricular conversations necessitates more and better-quality research. For instance, there is an urgent need for evaluating the moral and spiritual outcomes of Catholic schools. Gathering evidence around what happens in these areas is the only way of moving discussions about Catholic schools' curricula beyond normative, reassuring statements about what is learned. The complexity of this work indicates the need for collaboration in the field, as well as more dialogical perspectives that bridge the core divide in the conversations. In practice, this means encouraging more interdisciplinary teamwork to study changes in Catholic education stemming from global cultural trends.

Curriculum Integration

The second crucial challenge is to deepen the understanding of the lack of curricular integration that many conceptual studies identified as the most pressing problem for the curriculum in Catholic schools at present. In other words, research must better outline what it means—and requires—to restore the bond between the subject areas and the core mission of Catholic schools (Davis, R., 1999). In general, evidence indicates that curriculum integration is difficult because it implies changes in thousands of everyday school routines (Tyack & Tobin, 1994). However, the most difficult challenge is that curriculum integration may present problems for university entrance examinations, so it is usually resisted by parents who are concerned for the cultural capital of their children (Venville et al., 2002). This is one reason why curriculum integration is easier in primary schools than in secondary schools, where social demands over schooling make curricular reform very difficult. In this sense, R. Davis (1999, 2013) was right when he pointed out that the recovery of a Catholic principle of curricular integration would highlight the countercultural values of Catholicism. To tackle this challenge, scholars should conduct more evaluations of curriculum integration experiences in Catholic schools, and look at other contemporary efforts for an integrated curriculum, such as the IB (Jamison, 2013; White, 2012).

A Theory for Catholic Education

An essential condition for curriculum integration, according to Bernstein (1971), is an explicit consensus among educators about the principles of integration. From this perspective, a third challenge is outlining a contemporary theory for Catholic education that grounds curricular development in Catholic schools. Many scholars believe that the foundation of this theory should be theological, not philosophical (Arthur, 1995; R. Davis, 1999; Whittle, 2014). Among other things, a contemporary theory for Catholic education should include a Christian idea of the unity of knowledge that links apparently unrelated subject matters in a way that is fully consonant with faith, shedding light upon the infusion of Catholic identity into the curriculum as a whole (Porath, 2000). This theory should also provide a Catholic understanding of excellence and success, comparing it with the predominant understanding at present: high scores in standardized tests. Necessarily, this theory should also address the tensions associated with having Catholic schools within plural societies, which relates to a concept of democracy in which educating in particular values and beliefs is not opposed to the common good. In this spirit, a contemporary theory for Catholic education should be deeply open to public dialogue.

Teachers as Curriculum Makers and Principals as Curriculum Leaders

The fourth challenge is working with teachers as curriculum makers (Clandinin & Conelly, 1992) and school principals as curriculum leaders (Glatthorn et al., 2009). This is key because, although the conditions of possibility for Catholic curricula imply challenges beyond individual teachers' agency, the Catholic tradition of trusting local educators instead of centralized bureaucracies suggests that concrete curriculum development should rest upon local schools. On the one hand, this implies training educators for attaining coherent syntheses between faith and life and between faith and culture, which necessitates helping them to see the epistemological issues at stake in curriculum development, as well as the challenge of conveying a Catholic identity that is both Catholic and open. On the other hand, teachers and principals not only lack the preparation required for infusing the curriculum with Catholic identity (Krebbs, 2000), but they also lack the time needed for high-quality curriculum development. This reality reveals the challenge of developing curricula in networks of educators that achieve centralized structures' efficiency, while remaining connected to schools.

Catholic Secondary Schools for All

Finally, as was revealed through the silences in curricular conversations, a crucial challenge for Catholic scholars in the present era of compulsory secondary education is conversing more about the paradigm of giving a college-oriented education for all secondary-school students. Although the ideal of college for all has powerful egalitarian roots, it also neglects the experiences of many people, perpetuating inequality. In this sense, Van Galen (2007) suggested that, in general, research from the United States avoids social class questions because of faith in the promise of education. However, the reality is that, while people believe that school can enable all motivated young people to attain the American dream of self-directed success, most have found this success very elusive. Because of their commitment to social justice, Catholic scholars from the United States and the United Kingdom have the challenge of reframing conversations about curricula in Catholic secondary schools in line with UNESCO's recommendations (Delors et al., 1996; Marope, Chakroun, & Holmes, 2015), so they become more inclusive of diverse trajectories. This last challenge is to have open discussions about how to advance justice while addressing the complexities of social reality and social-class biases, thus including topics such as preparation for work and VET.

Conclusion

This literature review has mapped the landscape of the conversations about the curriculum in Catholic primary and secondary schools in the United States and the United Kingdom since 1993. By drawing a picture of what has been researched and debated, and subsequently discussing what has not been addressed, this review confirmed that there has been a lack of discussion about the topic among Catholic education researchers, even though this is beginning to change. Similarly, this work has confirmed that most conversations about the curriculum were not addressing the impact of global cultural trends on Catholic education deeply enough, even though this is also changing. Based on these findings, the review ends by conveying a positive perspective of the future of Catholic primary and secondary curricular development, and proposing challenges for the field.

A theme spanning across the five proposed challenges is the countercultural character of Catholic values and beliefs at present. This implies several tensions associated with the cultural and social capital that many parents demand from their children's schools, and the epistemology required to teach

and sustain both faith and long-term social justice commitments. The complexity of these tensions calls for dialogical perspectives on Catholic curricula that are open to the best developments of contemporary educational policies, yet also are critical of predominant competitive, instrumental orientations. Only these dialogical stances can assure that future Catholic schools will neither be gated communities focused on preserving a narrow identity nor secularized institutions with excellent academic results but an unrecognizable Catholic distinctiveness.

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