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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Catholic Civics Education in the Early Cold War: Zeal for Democracy, Zeal for Christ

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Abstract

In the late 1940s and 1950s American Catholic educators faced the dilemma of how to transmit Catholic faith and culture to the next generation while also reassuring their non-Catholic neighbors that they were fully American in lifestyle and loyalties. This article examines one response to that dilemma: the convergence of public and Catholic school civics curricula through the widespread use of experiential pedagogy in Catholic civics education. Using a content analysis of civics textbooks and teacher's guides from both school systems, this article demonstrates how both kinds of schools converged on an experiential style of civics education, despite vocal opposition to "progressive" pedagogy at elite levels of Catholic educational discourse. The article then presents a partial explanation for this dissonance, demonstrating the moral certainty exhibited in the same Catholic-school textbooks, and suggesting that Catholic educationists understood American Catholics to be morally privileged in a way that gave them special insight into American democracy and protected them from the negative influences of secular educational philosophy. This case study speaks to larger questions of how organizations manage conflicts between abstract principles and practical action, and suggests the value of including religious schools in the sociological study of "loose coupling" in educational organizations.

INTRODUCTION

In 1948 the Catholic school teachers and administrators at the annual meeting of the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) heard an address entitled "Christian Education for Democracy." The speaker expressed his belief—widely shared at the time in the wider world of civics education—that democratic citizenship was not a

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simple matter of learning how a bill becomes a law. It was instead a matter of individual virtue and disposition, which could only be developed with time and experience:

> The ways of democracy, then, are painfully slow and cumbersome, if only because we ourselves are painfully slow in developing within our own souls those Christian virtues which are so essential to the successful functioning of democracy and in the absence of which, on a widespread scale, democracy will inevitably degenerate and will eventually give way by default to the ever-present forces of tyranny and human slavery.
>
> (Murray, 1948, p. 62)

Here we have an elision of the methods of experiential education—education for skills and disposition, instead of rote knowledge—with the patriotic imperatives of the early Cold War. In the period following the end of the second World War, American Catholic schools faced a newly acute version of a perpetual dilemma: how to educate young American Catholics to simultaneously be ready to assimilate into mainstream American society and preserve the distinctiveness of the Roman Catholic worldview. Catholic participation in the war had brought Catholic patriotism and sense of national belonging to new heights, but newly energized waves of anti-Catholic sentiment put the community under pressure to demonstrate the compatibility of the Catholic worldview and the American way of life. At the same time, growing divides within American Catholicism made it increasingly difficult to identify the essence of Catholic education and therefore the most crucial elements of Catholic schooling.

Within Catholic education circles there were conservative elements who used the label "progressive" to signal a suite of pedagogical ideas that they perceived as threatening in their materialist and/or secularist origins. Conservative Catholics' use of the term "progressive" in such a context was meant to signal a broader political dispute, but the precise complaints they had about certain teaching methods reveal underlying concern with a more fundamental question of moral authority: can moral knowledge be handed down or can experience alone lead a child to moral knowledge?

This article considers this tension by examining as a case study the teaching of civics in Catholic schools in the early part of the Cold War. An examination of civics textbooks, teacher's manuals, curriculum guides and other documents reveals a style of civics education strikingly similar to that which was being conducted in the public schools, with a strong emphasis on experiential learning: the assertion that the proper attitudes toward democracy—as well as the proper behaviors of citizens in a democracy—could only be learned by experience. It is striking in light of the internal Catholic disputes over "progressive" education that this form of experiential civics education would be so consistent in Catholic texts of the time. In this article I focus on one possible element of the explanation for this apparent incongruity: these same texts consistently exhibit what I am calling "moral certainty"—the belief, on the part of these book authors and curriculum reformers, that (a) the power of Catholic education for forming moral individuals and (b) the centrality of Catholic theology in the project of American democracy to meant that the core purposes of Catholic schooling were not susceptible to corruption by pedagogical methods that had their origins in a secular or materialist philosophy.

The nature of the connection between the ideas declared by educational leaders and the details of classroom practice has long been a central question occupying the intellectual territory where the sociologies of education and organizations overlap (Bidwell, 1965; Meyer & Rowan, 1983; Weick, 1976). The American public school has been a primary empirical site for neo-institutionalist analysis that asks questions about the degree of tight or loose coupling between intentions and structures (Bidwell, 2001; March & Olsen, 1976; Meyer, 2002; Meyer et al., 1997; Meyer & Rowan, 1977, 1978; Rowan, 2002), or if a particular degree of coupling contributes to desired educational outcomes (Hautala et al., 2018, p. 253). Legitimacy for schools or school systems is a major focus of this literature, considering legitimacy as something that can simply vary from high to low (e.g. DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p. 148) or considering the historical contexts of more complex "legitimation projects" (Aurini, 2006, p. 85; Rowan, 2006, p. 20).

While this article is primarily intended to be descriptive, the case of Catholic civics education in the early Cold War suggests the value of incorporating religious schools into the sociological study of "loose coupling" and related ideas. Because of the tension inherent in educating children both to belong to the nation and to belong to a distinctive religious tradition, religious schools face multiple, simultaneous, not-always-fully-compatible legitimation projects. In the context of Catholicism's shifting place in American society in mid-century, multiple conceptions of what constituted "Catholic education" were negotiated among multiple audiences, suggesting a more dynamic vision of school legitimation processes. As the sociology of public education has become increasingly focused on a small number of achievement metrics, the example of religious education can remind us of the diversity of ideas about the purposes of schooling that persists in the U.S., despite the unanimity of mainstream education scholarship.

The first section of the paper is a multi-part presentation of background information. The first part describes the social position of American Catholics at the end of the Second World War, describing the tension between assimilation and distinctiveness they faced, of which the schools bore a significant burden. The second part discusses the concept of "progressive education": its broad historical meaning, how that broader meaning relates to the experiential methods described in this article, and how the term "progressive" was used by conservative Catholic educationists. The third part discusses American Catholicism and the perceived communist threat in relation to education. The fourth part of the background section provides an overview of Catholic textbook production and processes of curricular control in the organizational context of urban Catholic school systems.

The second main section presents the empirical case itself: a description of Catholic civics materials in this time period. It is divided into two parts. The first part describes the experiential elements held in common between Catholic and public-school materials. The second part describes the "moral certainty" present in the same materials: evidence of the great confidence these authors had in the power of Catholic schooling to bring about moral formation for both individual Catholic children and for the nation as a whole.

BACKGROUND

American Catholics at Mid-century

At the end of the Second World War, American Catholics were in new cultural territory. Catholic participation in the war had given American Catholics a renewed sense of national pride, and Catholics were seeing unprecedented rates of social mobility (Gleason, 1995, pp. 77, 215). For example, by the end of the Second World War, Catholic rates of college graduation had reached the Catholic share of the population (RJH 15/12, Social Functions of Catholic Education:5). But a new kind of anti-Catholicism was on the rise in elite liberal circles, in part a reaction to the perceived overzealous anti-communism of prominent Catholics like McCarthy, but also exemplified by Paul Blanshard's best-selling *American Freedom and Catholic Power*, which used Catholicism as an avatar of the hierarchical and authoritarian tendencies that were opposed to American democracy (McGreevy, 2003, p. 166). And in some conservative anti-communist Protestant circles, the perceived threat of communism, with its concern over authoritarianism and foreign control, brought to mind parallels with perceived Catholic threats. At the same time changes within Catholic communities brought their own tensions. More and more Catholics were moving out of ethnic Catholic enclaves in inner cities and settling in the suburbs with Protestant neighbors. Divisions along political leanings and educational attainment were coming to replace ethnic identities as the most salient divisions within the body of the faithful. School leaders faced the pressing question of how to balance Catholic difference and Catholic Americanness.

Americans' awareness of the communist threat had mixed effects on levels of anti-Catholicism. To some nativists—and the most conservative Protestants—the communist threat was the one thing that could eclipse the Roman Catholic threat (Zimmerman, 2002, p. 90). This reflected a general movement away from a Protestant/

Catholic opposition and towards a right/left opposition. These dynamics caused Baptists, as Richard Hofstadter put it, to "abandon their traditional anti-Catholic animus in order to take part in right-wing ecumenical anti-Communism" (Hofstadter, 1965, p. 70).

For moderate Protestant Americans, the McCarthy era merely left a lingering impression in some minds that Catholics were a monolithic block, thinking as one, and fervent in the extreme in their anti-communism (De Santis, 1965, p. 5). And the abstract fear that (like communists) Catholics were beholden to a foreign power and prone to methods of indoctrination in their schooling was widespread enough in this period that the U.S. Catholic Bishops felt it necessary, in a 1955 pastoral letter, to address the Americanness of Catholic schools. The Catholic school was described as "no foreign importation, no alien growth, but a sturdy native plant, a conspicuous example of a common religious impulse working under the favorable condition of our republic" (Nolan, 1984, pp. 179–184).

The social mobility of American Catholics contributed to the fading of the salience of ethnic and immigrant identities and the generalized importance of the "social universe" of the parish neighborhood that had characterized Catholic urban life in the early part of the century (McGreevy, 2003, p. 220). Following the immigration restrictions of the First World War and the 1920s, the influx of new Catholic immigrants from southern and eastern Europe slowed dramatically. As a result, the proportions of Protestant and Catholic Americans stabilized (as both continued to grow), allowing for the effects of the social mobility of the longest-resident Catholics to be felt in the aggregate (Ahlstrom, 1972, p. 1001; Herberg, 1955, p. 160). The Cold War would further emphasize political divisions among Catholics that were already waxing as their former ethnic divisions waned.

As this social mobility continued, some in Catholic educational circles began to worry that the drive for social mobility was undermining Catholic values. Describing the typical student of the 1940s and 50s, Holy Trinity High School, in its 50th anniversary volume, said that "in many cases both parents were employed, they gave little time to the supervision of their sons' conduct or their study habits at home. Towards the end of the last war, therefore, many parents, alarmed at the attitude of their offspring, hastened to place their sons in Catholic high schools, fondly hoping that the integrity of the religious teachers would repair the damage done by a conformist society and by their own educational incapacity" (INS 01/08:37). By the late 1950s it was clear—to the old guard at Holy Trinity at least—that this "new generation of youth" "bore…the deficiencies of an age of affluence," and that to succeed "the ambitions and ideals of the immigrant fathers had to be awakened" (INS 01/08:42). Thus, American Catholic schools in these early years of the Cold War were faced with a tricky balancing act: they had to simultaneously provide Catholic education that would instill American patriotism sufficiently so as to not alarm non-Catholic Americans, while also imparting the distinctiveness of the Catholic worldview that was threatened by increasing social mobility and assimilation, and all of this for an increasingly internally-divided constituency.

Catholics and the meanings of "Progressive Pedagogy"

In April of 1953 Kitty Jones, the mother of two fifth graders enrolled in a Catholic school in New Jersey, wrote to Monseigneur Frederick Hochwalt, executive secretary of the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA). Hochwalt was also Director of the Education Department of the National Catholic Welfare Conference and had held both positions since 1944. He was a prominent spokesman for Catholic education in national politics, and a very visible leader of Catholic educational policy and thought. Mrs. Jones had read in the newspaper that NCEA curriculum development teams were working on programs in social studies,[1] and she wrote to express her concern that "social studies" implied an abandonment of the traditional (and to her mind more desirable) separation of history and geography as individual subjects, and marked a turn to, in her words, "progressive" methods. Hochwalt wrote back to reassure her that the curriculum development process originated at the Catholic University of America's Commission on American Citizenship (CAC) and that "progressive education has not taken over the philosophy of the NCEA or of the Catholic schools generally" (Hochwalt to Kitty Jones 1953, HOC 1/3).

This brief exchange shows a Catholic school parent and a national leader of Catholic educational policy sharing the assumption that it is not desirable for "progressive education" to take over Catholic educational philosophy. What did they mean by the term "progressive education," and what relationship does that concept have to the experiential civics education that is the subject of this article?

It is not necessary to define "progressive education" precisely to have a general sense of what Mrs. Jones and Monseigneur Hochwalt had in mind. While the boundaries of the historical entity that is "progressive education" are soft and much-disputed—like its conceptual parent, "progressivism" (see Rodgers, 1982)—its center is widely agreed upon: the use of scientific discoveries (in psychology, management, and other social sciences) to create schooling that was appropriate to the realities of an industrialized and diverse society, and which was concerned not just with intellectual development but holistically with "health, vocation, and the quality of family and community life" (Cremin, 1961, p. viii). Focusing on pedagogical methods, we can see that experiential education, by which children discover truths for themselves, instead of being told them, falls in the very center of the array of pedagogical ideas that came from developmental psychology in the first half of the century. The combining of subjects that Mrs. Jones was worried about also clearly falls in this same general area of ideas.

But if we think of "progressive" as merely a convenient term with which to label a variety of pedagogical methods or ideas, without regard to their origin, we will not understand the assumptions underlying Mrs. Jones's exchange with Hochwalt. Hochwalt's reassurances that these changes originated with the CAC strongly suggest his wanting to emphasize that they did not originate with the secular world of public education. A pamphlet published by the Paulist Press in 1951 sheds light on why Mrs. Jones might have been on the lookout for evidence of progressivism in her children's school. "Is Your School Progressive?" warns that progressivism in education should not be mistaken for education that simply "is modern or that makes progress," but that it is grounded in philosophical naturalism and socialism (Mitchell, 1951, GEN 95/3709:4). The author traces this insidious trend back to John Dewey, who opposed any traditional teaching methods in which "subject matter and standards of conduct were handed down from the past," believing that "there *are* no fixed truths and therefore none should be taught, and that all control should be social control" (Mitchell, 1951, GEN 95/3709:4). According to this pamphlet, progressive educators believe children can learn only by experience, and are capable of arriving at the truth "without revelation and without benefit of the social heritage,"—exactly the opposite of what the Church teaches (Mitchell, 1951, GEN 95/3709:7). Parents were told to be concerned if they saw any warning signs of progressivism in their schools: a curriculum that seems not to be focused on the four 'Rs' (reading, writing, arithmetic, and religion), the absence of letter grades, emphasis on the children enjoying their work, lack of competition between students, self-government among the children, or social pressure used as coercion or punishment (Mitchell, 1951, GEN 95/3709:1–3, 14).[2]

The author of this pamphlet perceived the problem as widespread, saying that many public and private schools have become progressive in this sense, and that "some of our Catholic schools have become infected with it." She then went on to explain a distinction between philosophy and methods that absolves these Catholic educators of full apostasy: "Not that any Catholic educators subscribe to the *philosophy* of the progressives, of course, but in their wish to be modern and keep up with the newest things, they have been sold on the *methods*" (Mitchell, 1951, GEN 95/3709:23, emphasis added). She admitted that some public-school educators have fallen for the same "specious argument that the methods can be used, quietly forgetting the philosophy on which they rest" (Mitchell, 1951, GEN 95/3709:23–24).

In the early years of the Cold War, general fear of the materialist roots of progressive pedagogy—through its connections to Pragmatist philosophy (see Allitt, 1993, p. 45; McGreevy, 2003, pp. 138–140)—became linked in some people's minds to communist materialism. Part of the fear of communist infiltration in the schools was that progressive pedagogy (as opposed to old-fashioned emphasis on intellectual work and top-down discipline) made children soft, open to moral relativism, and thus more susceptible to communist influence. This kind of opposition to progressive pedagogy didn't just come from Catholic circles, it was ascendant in public schools across the country and led to many reforms that attempted to return the focus of the schools to the basics of intellectual training, efforts that reached a peak in the post-Sputnik National Defense Education Act of 1958.

At the same time, child-centered, experiential pedagogical methods had long been a part of Catholic education in the United States. Concerns over the limited effectiveness of the rote memorization of catechism as a method of moral education dated as far back as the Baltimore Catechism's origins in the 1880s. Efforts to make Catholic moral ideas more relevant to the lives of modern children could not avoid participating in pedagogical methods that were associated by some with the word "progressivism."

Some Catholic educational thinkers were openly welcoming of ideas from secular education circles. Thomas Shields, a professor at the Catholic University, in his 1906 *Psychology of Education*, praised Dewey for his child-centered approach to education and called for Catholic education to be more aware of different social environments, the dynamism of individual growth, and the need for activity in learning. Shields advocated for incorporating religious education into all subjects, de-emphasizing the rote memorization of catechism, and carefully aiming texts at particular developmental levels, ideas which were taken up by many authors of Catholic religion textbooks in the early years of the twentieth century. These books sold well but were also criticized by some for their "affinity with secular educational theory" (Kennedy, 1994, pp. 31–32). As the new century wore on, and Dewey's ideas became increasingly dispersed and diluted, Catholic opposition became correspondingly more general.[3] It became increasingly easy for conservatives within Catholic education circles to use the word "progressive" as a political term, to signal a whole host of perceived enemies. The dispersion and dilution of the pedagogical ideas of thinkers like Dewey simultaneously made it increasingly easy for those ideas to be taken up by those within liberal Catholic education circles.

Professional Education Circles and Perceptions of Communist Sympathies

Intra-Catholic struggles over the appropriate degree and style of anti-communism were playing out in education circles, as well. There were long-standing perceptions that elite eastern education schools (especially Teachers College) and the ranks of the National Education Association (NEA) were home to communists and communist sympathizers. Illinois's Broyles Commission on Seditious Activities had a committee specifically for censoring communist ideas in textbooks (Zimmerman, 2002, p. 102). Some felt that the NCEA, which was closely modeled on the NEA, was also at risk of communist influence.

In 1955, a Father Bradley, pastor of a Catholic parish in Sandwich, Illinois, wrote to Frederick Hochwalt to get his advice about a parishioner who taught at the local public school and was in trouble with her superintendent for refusing to join the NEA. She based her argument on an article in the Chicago Tribune which suggested that the NEA was "Communistic dominated or inspired" (Bradley to Hochwalt 14 Oct 1955, HOC 1/6).

The article in question could have been any one of a number published in that general time period. One article, unsubtly titled "Communist Teachers," pointed out that three different congressional committees "have been engaged for many months in investigating the leadership of the National Education Association, the other pedagogical societies, the teachers' colleges, and the whole educational setup which preaches hate toward anti-Communists and minimizes the facts of communist penetration in the teaching profession" ("Communist Teachers," 1952). This general suspicion of the communist tendencies of "the whole educational setup" was present when it came to the national Catholic educational organizations, as well.

To many, the NCEA—with its close ties to UNESCO—did not represent the values of the average Catholic parent and was ready to push communist-leaning materials and sex education onto their children. Hochwalt wrote many letters testifying to the anti-communism of the NCEA and the harmlessness of its close ties to the NEA. He was unable to lend any aid to Father Bradley's parishioner's case and noted that many Catholic teachers were members of and held positions of leadership on policy-making committees. His concern about the NEA was that some elements within it were strongly opposed to private education of any kind, but "to say that this idea is Communistic seems to me in all Christian charity to press the point too far." In his experience, most NEA officers seemed to be "Christian, God-fearing gentlemen" (Hochwalt to Bradley 25 Oct 1955, HOC 1/6).

In 1955 Hochwalt responded to accusations that UNESCO was communist-influenced. While he did advise caution since "an organization of its kind could become vulnerable to communist propaganda and to improper use by the enemies of democracy," he as yet saw no evidence that it was "an international plot to destroy America and the West" (Hochwalt to Murphy 01 Feb 1955, HOC 1/4). In the winter of 1956–57 Hochwalt had an exchange with Cuthbert O'Gara over the communist leanings of Catholic educational circles. O'Gara had been bishop of a Catholic diocese in China before being imprisoned after the revolution of 1949 and then eventually expelled from China. Upon his return to the United States, he was a leader of the conservative Catholic anti-communist movement and delivered the invocation at a pro-McCarthy rally at Madison Square Garden in the days before McCarthy was censured by the Senate towards the end of 1954 (Carbonneau, 1994). The President of the Jesuit Educational Association was present at a lecture given by O'Gara, and he wrote to Hochwalt to alert him to the things O'Gara was saying about him and the NCEA. Hochwalt wrote directly to O'Gara, asking him to provide evidence for his assertion in the lecture that communists had infiltrated many agencies in the U.S. and, as O'Gara put it, "it is to be feared, even in Catholic educational circles." Criticizing O'Gara's vagueness, Hochwalt wrote that, "if communistic inroads are being made and if you have the facts, we should all know about these in complete detail so that appropriate action can be taken. I hope that Your Excellency will be kind enough to give us the benefit of your special information and of your advice and counsel" (Hochwalt to O'Gara 04 Oct 1956, HOC 1/5).

O'Gara's response did not contain any of the details that Hochwalt asked for, but instead asked a series of (seemingly) rhetorical questions: "Have you ever made a comprehensive survey of the large number of lay professors—Catholic and non-Catholic, foreign as well as American—in our Catholic colleges and universities, with special reference to their cultural, political and religious backgrounds, but more especially to what some of them are giving out in Catholic classrooms under the guise of Catholic teaching and education?" "Do you think that the Communists are so stupid as to stop short of our Catholic schools, the very well-springs of one of our most effective defenses against Atheistic Communism?" (O'Gara to Hochwalt 15 Oct 1956, HOC 1/5).

Hochwalt responded that the authority to investigate Catholic schools for the purpose of ousting communists rested with each relevant Bishop, not with the secretary general of the NCEA. But despite this he asserted that O'Gara was mistaken in his assumption that he was "more concerned about the evils of communism" than Hochwalt himself (Hochwalt to O'Gara 14 Nov 1956, HOC 1/5). In the final letter of the exchange, O'Gara abandoned any insinuations of communist sympathies and instead attacked the NCEA for general overreach—assuming exactly the kind of authority over the schools that Hochwalt had just denied—and lack of loyalty to Catholic educational principles. He accused Hochwalt personally of showing "too little recognition of the demarkation between the thinking of the Church and the thinking of the world in educational matters" (O'Gara to Hochwalt 09 Feb 1957, HOC 1/5).

By the post-war period, Catholics were in a better social position than ever before in America, but anti-Catholic sentiment lingered, and it came to be linked with fervent anti-communism because of McCarthy (Allitt, 1993, p. 23). The Church (through its schools) faced the dual task of continuing the project of assimilation—convincing other American's that Catholics were as American as anyone and appropriately anti-communist—and simultaneously maintaining the distinctiveness that was key to the meaningfulness of Catholic education.

Textbooks, Textbook Selection, and the Problem of Unified Pedagogical Identity

Textbooks are capable of being evidence for both cultural unity and its absence, as they are themselves intended to create cultural unity. Textbooks are both tools of top-down nation-building (e.g. Luke, 1991, p. 167) and tools for minority cultures to claim a place in the nation. The history of American textbooks is a history of the tension between standardization and specialization, a tension which is particularly fraught for a group like American Catholics, trying to maintain a distinctive moral culture while simultaneously making the case for full inclusion in the American project. This article is based primarily on textbooks and the curriculum guides and teacher's manuals

that accompany them. This section will briefly present a history of American textbooks as it related to the question that is at the center of this episode in Catholic education: to conform or to remain distinctive. On the side of conformity or standardization, we can see both factors driving standardization within a given system (publishing efficiencies, national curriculum movements) and reasons, from the Catholic perspective, to want to make Catholic texts more like public school texts.

From the nineteenth-century origins of textbook publishing in the U.S., publishing houses always faced incentives to produce books that were as widely marketable as possible. And when a book became a bestseller, other publishers would copy it, such that the diversity of titles overrepresented diversity of content (Ravitch, 2000, p. 21; Reese, 1995, p. 104). But there were also sufficiently vocal minorities to make it worthwhile for publishers to cater to niche markets. Most prominent by the turn of the twentieth century were disputes about history textbooks. Parochial schools in the urban north accurately identified anti-Catholic bias in textbooks and segregated white public schools in the south wanted very particular treatments of the Civil War (Moreau, 2003, p. 15, Reuben, 2005, p. 14), believing (as they had in the antebellum) that "Yankee books were a Trojan horse" of northern values (Reese, 1995, p. 104).

The consensus model of textbook content was reinforced by the dominance of a particular style of textbook publishing: the nationally marketed, multi-grade textbook series became the standard for the public-school market in the post-war period and was bolstered even further by federally-funded curriculum development projects in the 1960s and 1970s that strongly encouraged standardization (Elliott, 1990, p. 42). At the level of individual cities, Catholic school systems had already moved towards textbook standardization as part of an effort to dismantle ethnic allegiances and replace them with a broader Catholic identity.[4] In those first decades of the 20th century Catholics would participate in the same curriculum development fads of the public schools, resulting in national textbook series that paralleled those used in the public schools. The *Our Quest for Happiness* series (1945), a four-volume high school religion text was widely popular (Bryk et al., 1993, p. 111) as were the *Faith and Freedom* Readers, which were a product of the Commission on American Citizenship at the Catholic University of America (Kennedy, 1994, p. 103ff), the same commission that produced the social studies curricula Mrs. Jones was so worried about.

The pendulum of educational thought is always swinging, and so the general movements towards standardization of textbooks, both within public and Catholic school systems and between them, simultaneously created openings for a return to specialization. Textbook uniformity began to shift from an ideological unity (a "republican pan-protestant religious-political ideology") to a "technical unity" as movements for scientific management and the national professional identities of teachers made themselves felt in the schools (Tyack & Hansot, 1982, pp. 94–95). Textbooks were increasingly presented as neutral bearers of skills, rather than contentious bearers of particular values (Luke, 1991, p. 171), providing renewed incentive for Catholic educationists to write their own texts.

The result of this persisting tension was that in the immediate post-war period there were Catholic schools using three kinds of text books: (1) texts marketed to a national audience of both public and Catholic schools, intended to be inoffensive to Catholics, (2) texts marketed to a national audience of Catholic schools, either by Catholic entities like the CAC or by Catholic-book departments in the big publishing houses, and (3) texts written specifically for use in individual Catholic dioceses and archdioceses.

The texts that form the core of this article's empirical analysis are textbooks and teacher's guides that were published with a national audience in mind. The texts that are quoted directly were chosen as representative from a review of all the civics textbooks from the 1950s in the textbook collection of the Center for Research Libraries. In addition to these national texts—and other documents from national leaders of Catholic educational thought—I use the Archdiocese of Chicago as a partial case study, examining a civics textbook commissioned and published by the Archdiocese of Chicago School Board for use in its own schools, and considering how textbook selection and curriculum changes were controlled in Chicago as an example of those processes in American Catholic schools.

In this period in American Catholic educational history, Chicago is more prominent than it is representative. Chicago stands out for the relative scale of its Roman Catholic population and therefore its Catholic school system.

By 1965, 29.8 percent of all Chicago school children attended Catholic schools (RJH 109/7:4–5; see also Sanders, 1977, p. xii). The energy and scope of Chicago's liberal Catholic activism (McGreevy, 1996) and its leadership role in education reform movements of all kinds (Shipps, 2006; Tyack, 1974, p. 256ff) place it at the vanguard of Catholic educational change in the post-war period.

Serious efforts at standardizing curricula in Chicago Catholic schools began in the interwar years, but with highly variable or absent enforcement mechanisms—especially towards schools privately run by financially independent religious orders—those efforts never came to fruition (see McCamant, 2020, pp. 42–47). Archdiocesan school offices served in an advisory capacity to individual schools. The decision-making structures within individual schools were also highly variable, depending on the presence or absence of a lay school board, a principal separate from the parish clergy, the scope and type of the order that provided religious teachers, and a host of other factors. Decisions about what textbooks to use (and how to use them in the classroom) could thus be made at every administrative level, from national projects like the Commission on American Citizenship producing texts and teachers guides, through diocesan superintendents recommending or requiring books to the schools in their city, to individual teachers choosing to skip chapters or passages in their daily use of a text.

Variation in the use of certain kinds of texts was determined by questions of practical exigency, with local superintendents or boards more likely to use the books that were available. Catholic educationists with more abstract responsibilities were able to be pickier and hold a firmer line on what qualified as a sufficiently "Catholic" text. For example, in 1958, Hochwalt was asked to review a career guidance textbook to gauge its suitability for the Catholic schools. In Hochwalt's response to the author, he explained that while it seemed a very good book for a secular audience, it could never be used for Catholic audiences because the "philosophical basis of the text" was completely secular. Books used in Catholic schools needed to be "integrated with Catholic theology and philosophy." Hochwalt did not think it would be possible to write a guidance text that would be appropriate to both audiences, and that this book in particular was not one "that can be 'baptized'" by minor changes or additional chapters; "a book on guidance destined for Catholic schools would have to be written with the Catholic outlook on life as a basis" (Hochwalt to McLaughlin 1958, HOC 1/3).

In terms of the intended audience of civics textbooks from this period, there is no ambiguity. In most cases many factors combine to indicate a book is meant either for Catholic or for public schools. In the analysis that follows I describe as "Catholic" texts those authored by people who were in Catholic religious orders, which make specific reference to the Church, which were published by the Catholic University of America, and/or which bear an imprimatur. Similarly, I describe as "public" texts those authored by people employed at public high schools or which make references to the project of public schooling as a tool of democracy. I do not have data on how widely used these books were, and in fact, such data is not easy to come by due to the open, ad hoc structure of Catholic schooling. My focus is therefore on the *intention* of the textbook authors, and the educators who demonstrated their shared intentions by choosing to use the textbooks. While textbooks do not necessarily reveal much about what was actually happening in classrooms, they do reveal what many prominent actors *wanted* to be happening in those classrooms. And accordingly, they reveal how those actors thought the life of the classroom should relate to the position of Catholics in American society.

CIVICS EDUCATION THROUGH EXPERIENCE

Civics education in the immediate post-war period was striking for the similarities in how it was taught between public and Catholic schools. This section will present the way those commonalities manifested in textbooks. The section begins with a brief overview of the political and institutional context of civics education at mid-century, and then turns to the content of the textbooks themselves. What the Catholic and public-school books had in common was a reliance on experiential methods. Civics texts from this period presented life in a democracy as being

fundamentally about problem-solving, and they asserted that good citizenship—that is, facility at social problem solving—could only be learned experientially, with the school acting as microcosm of society.

While educational philosophers since time immemorial had considered preparation for citizenship to be an important aspect of education, it was after the Second World War in the United States that the schools most explicitly began to be seen as tools of the nation's foreign policy objectives. A vocal proponent of this view was U.S. Commissioner of Education under Truman, John Ward Studebaker. Studebaker introduced a program in the spring of 1947 called "Education to Implant the Ideals and Benefits of Democracy and to Reveal the Evil Character and Tactics of Communism" or, more briefly, "Zeal for Democracy" (Hartman, 2008, p. 70).

American history had been the traditional vehicle, however contested, of civics education (Reuben, 2005, p. 12; Zimmerman, 2002, p. 216), and when it was subsumed under multidisciplinary social studies curricula, its civics lessons went with it (Hartman, 2008, p. 117). By the mid-twentieth century social studies or social sciences courses incorporated material into a program intended to encompass world history, American history, geography, human relations, sociology, government, and civics (Report card 1952, HPH 8/12; INS 01/08:71–81). The need for such knowledge could be couched in terms of democratic citizenship. For example, the Social Sciences department at Chicago's public Lake View High School explained that the study of the many fields that make up the social sciences "is necessary, if we are to develop into Americans who are appreciative of our hard won heritage. Not only for our own country, but reaching far across the seas to lands that are foreign to us, this Department purposes to increase our knowledge of our native land and other countries, and causes us to be mindful of the treasures we possess upon a free soil" (LVHS 10/4:28). At Lake View the language of civics education permeated materials about all aspects of the curriculum, even beyond social studies. For example, they advertised to students in 1948 that shop classes would provide "Democratic Fellowship," as they learned manual skills side by side (LVHS 9/6:24).

It is helpful to break down the various tasks and activities of mid-century civics education into two categories. The most obvious was what we might call instruction in government, which sought to impart information about the structure and function of American governmental institutions. The other category, which became increasingly prominent across the first half of the twentieth century, were those practices intended to develop the dispositions, habits, skills, and attitudes of a citizen. This category of civics education reflected the growing understanding of democracy as a culture (see McGreevy, 2003, pp. 169, 182). It sometimes included the study of specific social issues (e.g., communism, fascism, civil rights, crime, poverty) intended to form certain attitudes towards these problems and the skills and inclinations to solve them. Both categories were evident, for example, at public Lake View High, where in the 1951–52 school year civics students created posters diagramming how a bill becomes a law (LVHS 10/4:29), and all students got practice in the skills of democratic citizenship by voting for student council elections on "real voting machines" (LVHS 11/4:130).

The shift in emphasis away from instruction in government and towards the formation of good civic dispositions was never complete; civics texts of an experiential slant would still contain information about the structure and processes of government, but always secondarily: as information useful to a person who had already developed the proper attitudes and dispositions of the citizen. This held true for Catholic texts as well as for public school texts. As the Archdiocese of Chicago's 1951 seventh and eighth grade civics textbook put it, "Christian social living….involves the familiar word 'citizenship' which is something to be thought and lived, rather than merely learned" (ACSB, 1951, p. 3).[5] A public school text of similar vintage made the same point by analogy: "You didn't learn to swim, for example, by reading about swimming. You don't learn to drive an automobile by reading about it. You know that you get in the water to learn to swim, and that you get in a car to learn to drive. *You learn by doing*" (Allen & Stegmeir, 1956, p. xiv).

Textbooks and teacher's guides from public schools in the 1950s presented democracy as an attitude towards a particular style of problem-solving. The method described was collaborative, discursive, and grounded in reason. The 1956 *American Values and Problems Today* listed the four fundamental American values as, "1. A respect for the individual….2. The willingness and ability to coöperate in the solution of common problems and the promotion of the general welfare….3. The willingness and ability to solve problems through the use of reason—a faith in man's

intelligence….[and] 4. Faith in the democratic processes as the means by which we can solve our national problems" (Babcock & Quillen, 1956, pp. 25–26). The 1956 *Youth Faces American Citizenship* said that "democracy seeks the perfectibility of human relations. It is based upon a faith that fellow Americans can always improve their ability to work and live together" (Alilunas & Sayre, 1956, p. 3). The 1951 *You and Democracy* described democracy as "a growing thing that moves steadily forward not backward" (Gordon, 1951, p. 43).

Each of these books, in addition to presenting a particular vision of democracy, presented an understanding of what kinds of citizens would enable that democracy to persist. Again, these citizens were not people with particular skills or knowledge about the workings of institutions, but people with certain attitudes and dispositions. In the teacher's guide to the 1956 *Civics for Americans*, also aimed at a public-school audience, the characteristics of good citizens were listed as "1. Devotion to the Constitutional government of the United States 2. Respect for law, with consequent obedience to it 3. Appreciation of the advantages of a free-enterprise economy and the desire to play a part in maintaining this system 4. Faith in the tenets which distinguish our way of life 5. Willingness to assume the responsibilities of school citizenship now [and] 6. Self-reliance and initiative" (Clark & Aitchison, 1956, p. 1). What was desired was not knowledge of the government or the law, but devotion to and respect for both. What was expected was not particular economic practices or a particular lifestyle, but appreciation of and faith in those practices. And all must be couched in willingness to bear responsibility, self-reliance, and initiative. This was not just civics education but moral education.

The teacher's guide to *Civics for Americans* listed the relevant "attitudes" that each chapter demanded. For example, the first unit aimed to develop "faith and pride in the American way of life," as well as "admiration and respect for the moral strength of the founders of our country (Clark & Aitchison, 1956, pp. 11–12). Words like "willingness," "faith," "pride," "determination," "admiration," and "appreciation" appeared over and over again in these lists.

Catholic materials reflected this general trend. Catholic textbooks and professional education writers alike acknowledged the experiential education that resulted from the integration of Catholic schooling with Catholic home and parish life. The social scientist Robert Havighurst, who studied Catholic schools as part of a broader interest in urban schooling, wrote that in general, "the process by which the church teaches is better called *socialization* than *instruction*….The entire church life is a teaching program, just as family life is a teaching program" (RJH 46/4, Church as Educative Institution:5).

While much of the public-school curriculum at this time, in part in response to anti-progressive sentiments, was focused on intellectual development and was composed of isolated academic subjects, in civics education holism and the value of experience persisted. The rationale for this was often presented in public school texts as stemming from the nature of democracy itself. Democracy "should be at work everywhere in our lives, not just in politics and government, but in our everyday habits and customs, our treatment of people of other races and religions, our attitude toward our schoolfellows and neighbors, in work, in sports, games, and everything we do" (Wagner & Green, 1952, p. 17). Thus, democracy was presented as "more than a form of government. It is a way of life in the home, in the school, in the community" (Gordon, 1951, p. 40).

It was widely discussed, both in the professional discourse about Roman Catholic civics education and in instructional materials themselves, that Catholic civics education was to be much more than imparting factual information about the workings of government or the rights of the citizen. Father Thomas Quigley, superintendent of Pittsburgh schools from 1939–1955, explained that Catholic civics education was not primarily intended to transmit information but to develop "the activities and experiences through which children learn the habits of allegiance, reverence, obedience, and love for family, parish, community and country" (as quoted in Kennedy, 1994, p. 63). Of course, while both Catholic and public-school educationists agreed on the importance of experience for developing the proper civic disposition, they differed on the range of experiences that were appropriate. The 1946 *Official Handbook of the Catholic Civics Clubs of America* explained that the two necessary elements for good citizenship were knowledge about your community—which you would gain in your civics course—and "inspiration to guide your daily actions," which would come from "the teachings of Christ that have to do with your social living" (DRP 1/10.27:4).

It was in their discussions of the practical side of moral and civic formation that these textbooks revealed their vision of the processes and practices that lead to such formation. Two categories of ideas emerge, ideas about the personal circumstances or individual actions that a student can take to undergo moral and/or civic formation, and ideas about the activities of the school that can bring about such formation.

Both school systems put forward the idea that individual action, rather than mere knowledge, was the key to good citizenship development. Catholic teachers using the *Christian Social Living* series were told that "education is an active, not a passive, process; it is something that the learner does for himself under the direction and guidance of his teachers. It is accomplished by means of self-activity" (Smith & McGreal, 1946, p. 6). Similarly, public school children were warned that "if you do not practice the traits that build good character, you will become weaker rather than stronger. Life cannot exist without change. If you do not improve your character, you will make it worse. You will begin to live on a lower level" (Blough & Switzer, 1956, p. 34). While students in their inner lives could, as one public school text put it, "aim to make every thought an honest thought" (Alilunas & Sayre, 1956, p. 48), the school itself also provided opportunities for moral and civic formation, under the assumption that experience was the foundation of all learning and that good citizenship would develop over time if students were given opportunities to practice.

Especially for the Roman Catholic books, this practice was not limited to the school. "For the child [Christian social living] is not a faraway goal which he can reach only in adulthood. It concerns his commonplace actions of the present, at home, in school, in the parish and the larger community; the grace which will help him to lift these actions to a heavenly plane is offered to him now" (Smith & McGreal, 1946, p. 17). The public-school texts had their own style of talking about the experience of the family in its relation to democratic life. The 1956 *Civics* advised students that, "whether it's a question about dating, or a question about money, or some other question that concerns all of you in the family, the democratic way is to talk things over with your parents. More and more and day by day you'll find yourself learning to make sound decisions. This is a democratic way of living. Make the most of it by being a good citizen in your home" (Allen & Stegmeir, 1956, p. 43).

The similarity between the two school systems is even more striking in their discussion of the relationship between the experience of schooling and the development of good citizenship. Compare these two statements, the first from the teacher's guide to *Christian Social Living*:

> Democratic living in the classroom contributes many opportunities for the development of the child's character. It affords him opportunity for self-control and co-operation as well as obedience and respect for rightful authority. It provides freedom for children to work with one another toward common and individual goals under the direction of the teacher, and so promotes the development of character through self-discipline.
>
> (Smith & McGreal, 1946, p. 89)

While the above statement was directed at Catholic school teachers, a similar sentiment can be seen in this excerpt from *You and Democracy*, a public-school textbook directed at the middle grades:

> The most important guardian of our precious jewels is the *understanding* of democracy. Unless you understand what democracy is, you cannot live it. How can children best learn to understand democracy? Education is the answer. The schoolroom is living democracy. There, boys and girls learn to know each other. They learn to play together, to work together. They learn that a community is made up of all kinds of people. They learn that while each child can develop his own personality, every child has a responsibility to the entire group. Later this understanding reaches out to the community, then to the state, to the nation and to the world.
>
> (Gordon, 1951, p. 59)

Democratic values were thus understood to develop through the experience of schooling. But these books also suggested that those values came from a general culture of democracy, in which these students were steeped. Though the logic of how structures of government would influence attitudes towards government was somewhat torturous, this passage from the public-school *American Values and Problems Today* illustrates the general idea:

> One of the greatest influences on our ideals and standards is our democratic heritage. For hundreds of years the spirit of democracy has grown steadily in political, economic, social and religious fields in the English-speaking world. Therefore, all our ideals and standards in every phase of life are greatly influenced by the type of government we have. Since we live in this tradition of representative democracy, the values that serve as a basis for democracy have become a part of each of us. Therefore, we need a clearer conception of the meaning of democratic values and their relationship to the solution of personal and social problems in contemporary America.
>
> (Babcock & Quillen, 1956, p. 24)

The question of the origin of these similarities is beyond the scope of this article. Emerging patterns of Catholic teacher training and Catholic educational professional associations in the first half of the twentieth century would have led Catholic educationists to encounter many forms of "progressive pedagogy," and there is reason to believe there was direct influence between the two school systems. But it is also the case that the version of "progressive pedagogy" whose lineage runs through the work John Dewey and is grounded in pragmatist philosophy is far from the only place such ideas have existed in the history of educational philosophy. In some cases, the Catholic manifestations of this belief seem clearly also to have their origins in the virtue ethics tradition, with an Aristotelian—rather than Deweyan—take on the role of habit in education.

Smith and McGreal's 1946 Catholic curriculum guide emphasized the idea that "we grow in virtue by performing virtuous acts….education produces its best and most lasting results when, under the free guidance of the teacher and in co-operation with his fellow pupils, the child works out his own scholastic salvation" (Smith & McGreal, 1946, p. 13). "Character supposes a will freed not only from ignorance and concupiscence but from the handicap of bad habits as well….The right kind of habits, which are the virtues, must be ingrained through practice; and in the degree that they are, the wrong kind will atrophy and disappear"(Smith & McGreal, 1946, p. 8). Similar ideas—though without the language of 'virtue'—were found in the public school materials. Students were told "your habits will also help determine your personality and character. Habits are activities which have been recreated so often that they become automatic. You are largely the product of your daily habits….Even getting joy out of life is to some extent a habit" (Alilunas & Sayre, 1956, p. 48).

One of the ways these books suggested one could form good habits was to carefully regulate one's mental life. In a rare reference to the Bible in a public-school text, *Youth Faces American Citizenship* provided a quotation from Proverbs, "'As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he,'" and went on to explain, "you are not what you think you are, but what you *think*, you *are*. Clean thoughts will bring you happiness, inner peace, and personal power…. Good thoughts and actions produce good results" (Alilunas & Sayre, 1956, p. 61). *Fundamentals of Citizenship* struck the same note: "You are changed for the better or for the worse by the kind of thinking you do. Your mind is affected by your thoughts as your body is affected by your food. If you eat impure food, you build impurities in your body. If you think evil, you build evil into your mind and so affect your whole being" (Blough & Switzer, 1956, p. 33).

While these public-school textbooks did not provide any specific advice on how to control your thoughts in this way, the Chicago Archdiocese's textbook made it clear that individual will was the key. It warned its middle school readers that "the qualities which make a good citizen cannot be obtained from others or learned from books. They are the fruits of personal effort and achievement. They are not obtained quickly and easily, but are the work of a lifetime. Intelligence alone is not enough to acquire them. Knowledge must be accompanied by will-power which is trained and strengthened in good homes and in the practice of one's religion" (ACSB, 1951, p. 38).

MORAL CERTAINTY AND OPENNESS TO EXPERIENTIAL METHODS

Thus, we see a maintenance of a firm line against progressive pedagogy, at the level of national professional discourse, and an openness to influence from the public schools at the level of individual teachers, schools, and textbook writers. I have suggested above that this openness was partly due to increased contact between Catholic and public-school teachers, and mutual influence through the big national educational associations. But I believe that there is more to the explanation, that this openness is not merely a practical stance taken by actors on the front lines of Catholic education, but is a principled stance, grounded in a deep belief in the power of Catholic moral formation. I contend that Catholic educators felt so secure in the strength of the moral formation that their schools provided that they did not fear individual teachers experimenting with experiential pedagogical methods. I refer to this belief as "moral certainty." Despite the assertion of the "Is your school progressive?" pamphleteer that school practices can never be detached from their underlying philosophy, there is ample evidence that many Catholic educators believed just that—that the underlying Catholic philosophy of education was so robust (especially in the context of civics education) that it would shine through any methodological apparatus that might overlie it. That robustness has two primary elements: a certainty in the force of individual moral goodness, and a belief in the Catholic origins of all democratic institutions. I make no claims as to the extent to which these two ideas were widespread in other Catholic circles. But the juxtaposition of these ideas with the experiential pedagogical methods described in the previous section raises the possibility that for these textbook authors and curriculum designers, the ideas were related.

Individual as Source of Moral Goodness

Msgr. Daniel Cunningham, superintendent of Chicago Catholic schools from 1928 to 1957 summarized the Catholic philosophy of education in 1950:

> The task of education is the integration of personality, an integration made necessary by original sin, which has resulted in the disorganization of man's powers....[The aim of Catholic education is] to use all the means at hand, all the means offered by the arts and the sciences, history and literature, and God's revelation in order to put our students in harmony with God's views as to the meaning of life and the meaning of the material world about them, to produce, in fact, what Pope Pius XII termed "the true and finished man of character....who thinks, judges, and acts constantly and consistently in accordance with right reason illumined by the supernatural light of the example and teaching of Christ".
>
> (Cunningham et al., 1950)

This quotation reminds us that the moral and civic education envisioned by the Catholic schools was intended to be holistic. "Integration of personality," as Msgr. Cunningham meant it, was a feature of a whole person. It was then that person, that true and finished man of character, who was to be the bulwark protecting the Catholic church from any of the threats of modernity.

Catholic civics education in this period—which happened both in independent civics classes in middle schools, and as part of religion classes in elementary schools—was a major vehicle of that process of formation:

> We are all in agreement that the religion course is the core of our curriculum. The answer to the question, 'Are we training our pupils for citizenship?' is to be found in the answers to two other queries: 'Are we developing the moral virtues among our pupils? Are we fostering, by all the experience we provide, in and out of class, good habits of respect for authority, honesty, justice,

> temperance, chastity, courage, patriotism, responsibility, charity?'....the good citizen must first be a good man.
>
> (McCluskey, 1948, pp. 382–383)

This individualistic approach seems somewhat contradictory to the Church of *Rerum novarum*, but is perhaps more understandable when seen in the light of the anti-communist fervor of the immediate post-war.[6] Such individual moral goodness, in this understanding, was the only proper avenue of social change. The Commission on American Citizenship put it directly in their handbook for Catholic civics clubs:

> Christian social living will bring—when we all really try to live by its principles—better wages and working conditions for those who labor, better homes, better public officers, better laws, better times; for Christlike living will make better men and women who will make all this possible. It will do all this, not by any change in government but by a change in the minds and souls of the people. The only way this can come about is by individual change. Every citizen must learn what Christian social living means for him; and he must learn how to practice its principles in his own daily life (DRP 1/10.27:5).

If the content of individual moral formation is sound enough, if it is built upon the correct foundations, it is perhaps enough to ward off any dangers from the questionable philosophy underlying such pedagogy. These materials suggest that American Catholic educationists believed that Catholic school children had, through their individual faith, special protection from the harms of modern society. There was also a line of discourse in these materials that suggests a similar understanding that because of this moral privilege, American Catholics had a special moral responsibility to the nation.

Catholics as having special moral knowledge

In 1939 Pius XI wrote a letter to the American hierarchy, which John McCluskey, a prominent Catholic educational theorist, quoted at length at presentation to the NCEA in 1948:

> Since the sciences of civics, sociology, and economics deal with individual and collective human welfare, they cannot escape from the philosophical and religious implications of man's origin, nature, and destiny....Christian teaching alone, in its majestic integrity, can give full meaning and compelling motive to the demand for human rights and liberties, because it alone gives worth and dignity to human personality. In consequence of this high conception of the nature and gifts of man, the Catholic is necessarily the champion of true human rights and the defender of true human liberties; it is in the name of God Himself that he cries out against any civic philosophy which would degrade man to the position of a soulless pawn in a sordid game of power and prestige, or would seek to banish him from membership in the human family; it is in the same Holy Name that he opposes any social philosophy which would regard man as a mere chattel in commercial competition for profit, or would set him at the throats of his fellows in a blind, brutish class struggle for existence. The Catholic school, then, because it is Catholic, has the traditional mission of guarding the natural and supernatural heritage of man. In the fulfillment of this sublime mission, it must, because of the exigencies of the present age, give special attention to the sciences of civics, sociology, and economics.
>
> (McCluskey, 1948, pp. 384–385)

McCluskey went on to explain that individual Catholics had "a very special obligation to enter actively into community activities of all kinds. What the world needs, we possess; we are derelict in our duty if we hoard up the grace that is in us and separate ourselves from other men of good will" (McCluskey, 1948, p. 389). This idea, that Catholics possessed a special moral knowledge that was particularly relevant to American democracy, became prominent in American Catholic thought after the First World War (Gleason, 1995, p. 125) and by the 1950s was a common argument among Catholic intellectuals like John Courtney Murray (Massa, 1999, pp. 34, 226; McGreevy, 2003, p. 192). This idea was widespread in civics texts of the early Cold War period.

Beyond asserting the compatibility of Catholicism with American democracy, the Roman Catholic books claimed Christianity as a necessary grounding of that democracy. In the essay "Education for Life" that prefaced the major curricular volume produced by the Commission on American Citizenship in 1946, it was put this way: "The American form of government and the ideals that inspire the American way of life not only accord with the principles of Christianity, but apart from them lack any substantial foundation. The national heritage which we wish to impart to our children in all its fullness is bound up in its essentials with the teachings of Christ" (Smith & McGreal, 1946, p. 5). In these books, democracy was a fight for the rights of all—as well as a relationship between citizens that demanded being mutually responsible for the well-being of all (ACSB 1951, pp. 60–61)—precisely because Christianity demonstrated the worth and dignity of the individual person.

Chicago Catholic children were told that "the government set up by our Constitution is based on the Christian principle: 'Every man has individual worth and dignity.' Through that government, Americans try to insure every man a life worthy of his dignity as a child of God. It guarantees every man his God-given rights and obliges others to respect them" (ACSB, 1951, p. 171). The Christian origins of American democracy implied that proper citizenship demanded Christian living. "The Christian who is a citizen of the United States will strive to the best of his ability to translate his faith into action that squares with the ideals of democratic living. With the aid of the grace that has been given him, he will strive to contribute in his own way, be it small or great, to the making of a better and finer America" (Smith & McGreal, 1946, p. 9).

This obligation to bring the Catholic faith to the practice of democracy extended to the international stage. The Chicago Archdiocese's textbook explained to students, "as zealous Christian citizens you will want to extend the horizon of 'liberty and justice for all' until it includes not only America but also the entire world" (ACSB, 1951, p. 171). The CAC's elementary school curriculum guide, *Guiding Growth in Christian Social Living*, made the same point "As Christians, we have responsibilities toward the people of other countries for their spiritual and physical welfare. Justice demands that we give them all that is owed to them. Charity demands that we help to satisfy their needs" (Smith & McGreal, 1946, p. 48).

The Chicago Archdiocese's seventh and eighth grade civics textbook asserted that the Declaration of Independence "proclaims Christian ideals" (ACSB, 1951, p. 50). In their end-of-unit review exercises, students were encouraged to debate the resolution, "Democracy is a product of Christianity" (ACSB, 1951, p. 63). In case their debate left the students in any doubt, they were told in the very next chapter that "*American democracy is a by-product of the teachings of Christ*. The political principles Jefferson penned were not original. Each one had been thought of and said before by Catholic theologians like Suarez and Bellarmine, the great Jesuits, more than a hundred years before" (ACSB, 1951, p. 67, emphasis in original).

Catholic educational theorists took the idea further however, asserting not just that the foundations of democracy were Catholic ideas, but that today's Catholics had special spiritual power to perceive threats to American democracy. Whereas some people might see communism as simply a political, military, or economic opponent of the United States, the Church had "done a splendid job of educating its own members as to the total nature of communism" (Cronin, 1954, CC 1954 N [2]/13:3). Catholics only could clearly see that the enemy underlying communism was "atheistic materialism. Whether it be entrenched in the organs of a foreign state, or in one of our own domestic institutions, it is atheistic materialism that seeks to destroy us" (Victory Our Faith CC 1954 M-N/12:2).

Chicago's Catholic middle schoolers in Chicago got the same basic message:

> As you study the units of the course, may the Holy Ghost set you on fire with His charity. May you always apply the principles of Christ to your own problems. Those who live this kind of life will be 'crack troops' in Christ's army. They will establish the beachhead in the campaign to save America for Christ and democracy for America....The ideal of brotherhood is as dangerous as dynamite to governments built on power and might, to Communism, Fascism, or tyranny of any sort. On the other hand, it is the foundation of democracy, for only by Christian social living can true democracy be attained and preserved by the people in any nation. If Christ-like living is practiced in our American democracy, it will be the best guarantee for the future of *all* democracy.
>
> (ACSB, 1951, p. 4)

Taken together, these two ideas—that individual moral formation was the appropriate mode of social change and that American democracy had special defenders in its Catholic population—automatically placed the inculcation of democratic values subordinate to Christian formation. The danger of pragmatism or other materialist philosophy, unknowingly imported with experiential pedagogical practices, faded in the light of this worldview.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The primary purpose of this article has been to describe the phenomenon of experiential civics education as it existed in Catholic textbooks, teacher's manuals, and curriculum guides of the early Cold War. Consistent with their public-school counterparts at the time, these Catholic texts demonstrate a belief in the primacy of experience—as opposed to knowledge—for developing democratic citizens. Emphasis was taken away from instruction in the mechanics of government and put on the cultivation of democratic dispositions, attitudes, and habits. Self-discipline was encouraged, as was the development a school culture of democracy.

In addition to this commitment to experiential methods, these same materials demonstrate an attitude I have referred to as "moral certainty": the idea that the project of Catholic education is protected from the negative influence of secular educational philosophies by the power of the moral formation it provides, both to individuals and to American society broadly. These textbook authors may have been emboldened by this moral certainty to adopt pedagogical methods that might otherwise have been considered threatening to a traditional Catholic worldview in which the Church holds exclusive moral authority and the Church's primary purpose is the intrinsically conservative task of "proclaim[ing] a message received long ago" (O'Malley, 2019, p. 8).

This case study shows Catholic educators wrestling with a question that has pre-occupied sociologists of education for half a century: the necessity of a tight connection between abstract ideas about the methods and purposes of education and the practical exigencies of day-to-day classroom life. The literature surrounding this question has been focused on public schools and has concerned itself with the question of how school organizations balance the legitimation task that is particular to a public school with the realities of their on-the-ground functioning. This case suggests that religious schools—constantly negotiating the tension between belonging and distinctiveness—face a more complex, multi-audience legitimation task.

In the sociology of public schools, school legitimacy is considered on a spectrum from high to low. Scholars tend to bracket the prior question of what the fundamental task of a school ought to be, as if the goal of American public schooling were both fixed and agreed upon. The achievement of specific outcomes like college attendance or middle-class employment are assumed to be the purpose of schooling, and so the task of school legitimation is to manage perceptions of effectiveness in bringing about those outcomes.

As the case of Roman Catholic schooling in the early Cold War demonstrates, religious schools in the U.S. must continually grapple with these deeper questions about the purposes of education. The role of experiential civics

education in Catholic schooling in this period cannot be fully understood outside of the context of the dynamic negotiation within Catholic education circles about the place of Roman Catholics in American society. It is my suggestion that similar attention to the historical contingency of educational philosophy would reveal a similar dynamism in the world of public schools, where multiple audiences with multiple ideas about the purposes of schooling persist under an appearance of achievement-oriented unity.

This episode in Catholic schooling also represents a kind of microcosm of larger debates internal to the Catholic Church at mid-century, as the mentality of a "ghetto Church under siege by an unfriendly world" (Bryk et al., 1993, p. 111) yielded to improved social mobility for American Catholics, as the tenor of anti-Catholic sentiment shifted, and as the salience of internal ethnic rivalries decreased, to be replaced by political divisions that mirrored those in the broader society.

This case also serves as a reminder of the multiplicity of "Catholic education" as a phenomenon, and the dynamism of its negotiation in history. The idea that a democratic or civic disposition should be taught in a classroom at all—whether it is a public school or Catholic classroom—as opposed to in the natural course of community life, itself indicates a narrowing of attention from "education" to "schooling." But even having restricted our inquiry to Catholic schooling, as this article has done, it is clear, to paraphrase the great historian of American Catholic education Harold Buetow (1970:xii), that there is no Catholic school system, only a Catholic school *pattern*. Bounding a category like "progressive" or "Catholic" is not just an analytic task for social scientists, but was an urgent task for these historical actors. The author of the "Is Your School Progressive?" pamphlet and the authors of these civics textbooks were both engaged in an active negotiation of what constituted "Catholic education." The textbook authors came to strikingly consistent conclusions about what should qualify as Catholic civics education, but that philosophical unity belies the diversity of ideas across the broader landscape of Catholic educational thought.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available in published materials and manuscript materials held by the Center for Research Libraries, the University of Chicago Special Collections Research Center, the University of Notre Dame Archives, and the Joseph Cardinal Bernardin Archives and Record Center. Manuscript-based data are available from those institutions according to their research access policies.

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ENDNOTES

[1] Mrs. Jones was somewhat behind the times. For example, social studies appeared in Chicago Catholic classrooms in 1942 (Archdiocesan School Board, 1942).

[2] It is clear that this understanding of "progressive pedagogy" was associated in some people's minds (and not for no reason) with a general lack of authority on the part of the teacher or general lack of discipline on the part of students. Both teachers and parents have an obvious interest in this kind of hyper local authority (see Wilson, 1981, p. 67ff).

[3] Catholic educationists' fixation on Dewey was most likely symbolic. Dewey is not a good representative of what was going on in the mainstream of what was called "progressive education" by the end of the war. Dewey's own focus had shifted away from educational matters by this time (though he would continue to write on education occasionally). And the movement he was so instrumental in starting had "lost its intellectual vitality." But Dewey was still a symbol of progressive education, perhaps most for those who didn't know that much about it. He was the symbol of the stereotype, "a symbol of the educational hopes and despairs of the American people at any given moment in their history" (Cremin, 1961, pp. 234, 239, 332–333).

[4] e.g. Archdiocesan School Board 1928:13. Mundelein began these efforts as soon as he arrived in Chicago, at first allowing religion and language classes to be taught in parish languages, but even then standardizing curricula for the entire

ethnicity (RJH 109/7:3). This kind of standardization was a step in the culmination of the Catholic schools' own "common school" movement (Tyack & Hansot, 1982, pp. 72–73).

[5] It is common for books like this to use the word "Christian" to describe the moral or social values they are trying to impart. And while these books also have a generally ecumenical outlook, presenting the triumvirate of American religions as deserving respect, I believe that this usage of 'Christian' is not a nod to the moral values the Catholic church has in common with Protestant churches, but a natural usage for an author who believes the Roman church *is* the Christian church.

[6] O'Malley tells us that in the decades between *Rerum novarum* and Vatican II, Catholic moralists "recognized the importance of the social encyclicals, but they did not see them as intrinsic to their profession." The focus of moral thought in the Church remained the Ten Commandments and its relevance to the individual believer, "especially as the priest faced the believer in confession and the believer as he faced the priest" (O'Malley, 2019, p. 195).

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